

Dual-Dimensional Drive of Immersion and Interactivity: The Dissemination Value and Practical Pathways of Vlog Journalism in the Global Converged Media Environment

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ABSTRACT

Against the backdrop of deepening global media convergence in the new era, the traditional "one-way communication" model of news has increasingly struggled to meet international communication demands. Vlog journalism, with its immersive narrative and interactive design, has shifted audiences from passive viewing to active participation, emerging as an innovative vehicle for international communication. This paper focuses on the international dissemination of immersive vlog journalism within the global converged media landscape. Employing a comprehensive methodology encompassing literature review, comparative analysis, case studies and data analysis, it systematically explores the developmental logic and practical pathways of this emerging form. By analyzing the output characteristics of vlog journalism across content production, dissemination mechanisms, and technological empowerment, this study subsequently compares immersive vlog journalism domestically and internationally through dimensions such as creative entities, narrative modes, and distribution channels. It further identifies challenges including insufficient narrative authenticity and depth, homogenized dissemination, and imperfect industrial mechanisms. Finally, it summarizes their role in international communication through channel innovation and cross-cultural empathy, proposing a development strategy of "content-technology empowerment coupled with institutional system refinement". This research addresses gaps in the interdisciplinary field of media convergence and international communication, providing theoretical insights for its sustainable development within the global converged media environment and enhancing its effectiveness in international communication.

KEYWORDS

Immersive vlog journalism; International communication; Converged media; Cross-cultural communication; Communication value

1 Introduction

In the new era, global media convergence is advancing in depth. Digital technologies such as 5G and AI are driving the diversification of communication channels and the democratization of communication actors, with traditional and new media merging profoundly. According to the China Internet Network Information Centre (CNNIC) 2024 Global Internet Development Report, by the end of 2023, global short-video platforms had over 3 billion monthly active users, accounting for 56.6% of the total internet user base. They have become the core vehicle for international information dissemination. In contemporary international communication, the issue of 'cultural discounting' has become increasingly prominent. The traditional news model of 'grand narratives coupled with solemn expression' faces limited acceptance among international audiences, necessitating more approachable and experiential forms of communication. Vlog journalism employs a distinctive narrative paradigm of "immersive + interactive" storytelling to transcend the limitations of one-way communication. This approach aligns with the evolving demands of international audiences, who increasingly seek experiential engagement rather than mere information acquisition. As such, it has emerged as a significant innovative form within international communication, offering fresh possibilities for enhancing journalistic effectiveness and adapting to global communication requirements.

This study focuses on the intersection of media convergence and international communication, constructing a dual-dimensional framework of "immersive narrative + interactive communication". By integrating theories such as media convergence and cross-cultural communication, it offers fresh perspectives, enriches the research system on vlog journalism, and provides theoretical underpinnings. At the practical level, it offers actionable pathways such as "micro-narratives combined with cultural symbol transformation" to facilitate the international convergence media transformation of traditional media, while employing "technology-driven empowerment coupled with institutional refinement" to overcome industry challenges. The study employed a combination of literature review, comparative analysis, case studies (drawing upon representative domestic and international cases), and data analysis (utilizing dissemination metrics from media platforms worldwide) to validate communication effectiveness.

2 Characteristics of news output on short video platforms in a global converged media environment

2.1 Defining core concepts

Global media convergence in the new era is driven primarily by digital technology, achieving comprehensive

synergistic integration across content production, dissemination channels, platform terminals, and management mechanisms. The rise of short-form video platforms has propelled international news dissemination towards a lighter, more visual format, thereby enhancing the authenticity of news reporting. Immersive vlog journalism centers on first-person perspective storytelling, employing everyday cinematographic techniques such as handheld shots, follow shots and close-ups to create an immersive experience that combines authenticity, emotional resonance and interactivity. The dissemination of information across different cultural contexts necessitates consideration of cultural differences, value systems, and other factors. This provides theoretical underpinnings for analyzing the cultural adaptation disparities between domestic and international vlog news, as well as their production and dissemination mechanisms within the converged media ecosystem.

2.2 Content production: immersive narrative at the core

From a content production perspective, the traditional media's "gathering, editing and broadcasting" workflow has merged with the new media's "UGC (user-generated content) + PGC (professionally generated content)" model, forming a content production system characterized by "professional leadership with user participation". For instance, during the 2024 Hangzhou Asian Games, CCTV News produced over two thousand vlogs through a combination of professional journalist coverage and user-generated content (UGC) submissions from viewers. Vlog news adapts to the fragmented information consumption habits of today's global audience, with brevity, simplicity and immediacy becoming core elements of its content production: vlog news segments typically last between one and five minutes, with content spanning one to three minutes accounting for over 70% of total duration. TikTok platform data indicates that content around two minutes in length achieves the highest completion rate of 72%, while segments exceeding five minutes fall below 30%. This duration design aligns with audiences' information consumption habits during commutes, breaks and similar scenarios, while also conveying core news content within a limited timeframe. For instance, CGTN's "China in a Minute" vlog series condenses hot topics in Chinese science, technology and culture into 60-second segments, achieving over one billion views overseas.

In terms of content structure, vlog news eschews the rigid expression of traditional news' inverted pyramid structure, adopting a concise narrative format comprising a suspenseful opening, core information, and an interactive conclusion. The opening captures attention through suspenseful shots—such as live breaking footage and the creator's astonished expression—toning down the news's solemnity. By employing handheld gimbals and GoPro action cameras to present the scene from a first-person perspective, it heightens the sense of immersion. Simultaneously, colloquial expressions replace formal language to strengthen emotional connection. For instance, in CGTN's "Crossing Oceans to See You" vlog series, Zimbabwean student Mille documented tea-picking in Enshi, Hubei, and experienced the steaming technique from a first-person perspective. Simultaneously describing the tea's flavour profile, the content delivered a multi-sensory experience. This piece garnered over 8 million views on Facebook, with comments flooding in: "I wish to personally pick Chinese tea leaves," "I wish to experience this ancient craft," demonstrating strong engagement and positive momentum.

2.3 Dissemination mechanism: emphasis on visualization and interactivity

Leveraging the visual strengths of short-form video platforms, vlog journalism employs dynamic imagery and data visualization to lower comprehension barriers for international audiences. Its dissemination channels integrate traditional media's linear transmission with new media's networked dissemination, achieving multi-channel, multi-dimensional information distribution. In cross-cultural communication, the visual immediacy and interactivity of vlog journalism are particularly pronounced. Vlog journalism emphasizes a sense of presence, capturing details such as the environment at the scene and the expressions of individuals to minimize the 'intermediate steps' in information transmission. For instance, the short video series *Super Factory* launched by CCTV offers a more vivid perspective than mere textual descriptions through footage of on-site factory tours and creators' firsthand experiences participating in production processes.

The innovation of vlog journalism breaks through the limitations of traditional news's "one-way communication", establishing an interactive system of "instant feedback and co-creation of content". This drives audiences to transform from mere "information recipients" into "participants and re-producers of the communication process". Mainstream domestic media frequently employ formats such as "co-creation", "trending challenges" and "commentary showcases" to enhance audience engagement, encouraging secondary creation and dissemination. On short-form video platforms, features like "real-time comment overlays" and "poll interactions" provide viewers with channels for expressing their views instantly. For instance, in promoting the theme of "Chinese New Year customs," domestic media opened a vlog material library inviting overseas users to create derivative content. This initiative ultimately garnered over 500 submissions from more than 30 countries. Among these, a comparison video edited by a Pakistani user featuring "Spring Festival dumpling-making versus Pakistani Eid al-Fitr fried triangles" achieved over 3 million views on TikTok, becoming a prime example of cross-cultural resonance. Moreover, multi-terminal interconnectivity has fostered a "multi-screen interactive" communication environment; media management models have shifted from "closed" to "open" systems, enhancing dissemination efficiency through the establishment of cross-departmental and cross-platform collaborative mechanisms.

2.4 Technological empowerment: intelligent and efficient production

Digital technologies provide dual support for vlog news production by reducing costs and enhancing efficiency while improving quality and fostering innovation, becoming the core driving force behind content creation in the converged media environment. Presently, AI technology is extensively applied in automated editing and intelligent voiceover processes. For instance, CapCut's "Smart Script Matching" feature automatically selects corresponding footage, adds transition effects and background music based on written scripts, reducing traditional two-hour editing tasks to under fifteen minutes. iFlytek's multilingual speech synthesis system supports real-time voiceovers in over 30 languages, enabling editors to select tones ranging from warm and friendly to formal and lively, thereby addressing the shortage of voice talent for less common languages; Intelligent subtitle generation tools automatically recognize video audio and produce multilingual subtitles with over 95% accuracy. These technologies significantly compress production cycles, lower creative barriers and reduce production costs while enhancing news timeliness and engagement. Moreover, the integrated application of VR/AR technologies creates "fully immersive sensory" scenarios. For instance, during the 2024 Dunhuang Cultural Expo, CCTV News launched VR vlog news reports. Audiences could use VR equipment to view the Mogao Grottoes mural restoration site in 360 degrees and even interact with gestures to "touch" virtual mural details. This approach made abstract technological knowledge tangible, further enriching the immersive experience and dissemination value of vlog news.

3 Comparative analysis of immersive vlog journalism domestically and abroad

3.1 Differences in creative entities and content orientation

Domestic production centres on mainstream media outlets such as CGTN and the Overseas Edition of the People's Daily, with professional journalists serving as the primary creators. Citizen journalists have limited involvement, maintaining the positioning of "authoritative interpretation and positive dissemination". The content focuses on three key themes: firstly, light-touch analysis of current affairs hotspots, such as CGTN's 2024 Two Sessions Observer series where foreign correspondents interpreted private sector policies from an 'outsider's perspective', garnering over 4 million views on YouTube; Secondly, tangible representations of people's livelihoods, such as China's Rural Diary documenting Hani villagers in Yunnan livestreaming tea sales to showcase rural transformation; Thirdly, international dissemination of cultural appeal, exemplified by CCTV's 2023 "My Belt and Road Vlog" series achieving nearly 3 million overseas views, and the Suzhou embroidery segment from China's Intangible Cultural Heritage garnering over 200,000 likes on TikTok.

Overseas content creators exhibit a diversified landscape comprising citizen journalists, professional media outlets, and independent bloggers. Citizen journalists demonstrate greater involvement in breaking news events; for instance, during the 2024 European environmental protests, citizen-journalist vlogs accounted for 42% of content dissemination on Twitter, surpassing official media coverage. Content creation focuses on universal issues such as climate change, refugee crises, and public health security. For instance, the BBC's "Climate Change: My Story" vlog series featured a Kenyan farmer's vlog documenting "persistent drought leading to total maize crop failure," which garnered over 120 million views. Simultaneously, it emphasizes the critical expression of news through individual perspectives, with its coverage of social issues and government policies often bearing distinct personal characteristics. For instance, an American blogger's visit to low-income communities criticizing housing policies sparked 50,000 debates on YouTube; Its subject selection leans towards entertainment, frequently employing non-traditional journalistic formats such as animal rescue, street art, and niche cultural trends. For instance, a British blogger's documentation of a "stray cat rescue station" on London's streets garnered over 8 million views, lacking journalistic depth but demonstrating strong audience engagement.

3.2 Differences in immersive narrative

Domestic narratives adhere to the principle of "grand themes as the framework, micro-scenes as the details", prioritizing cultural value dissemination and national image cultivation. Their structure typically follows a pattern of "policy context – individual story – value elevation". For instance, when reporting on Belt and Road infrastructure projects, one should first elucidate the strategic significance, then focus on the daily lives of workers, and finally elevate the concept of mutual benefit and win-win outcomes by highlighting reductions in logistics costs of up to 30%. However, the content suffers from insufficient cross-cultural adaptation, with issues such as untranslated policy terminology, lack of colloquial expression, and overly restrained emotional delivery, resulting in low audience empathy. Furthermore, the narrative pace is rather slow, the creative framework is conventional, and certain segments fail to capture attention within the first ten seconds, leading to high audience attrition rates.

Overseas approaches centre on individual experiences, using universal themes as entry points, typically structured as "scenario introduction – personal reflections – open discussion". For instance, climate change coverage might begin with "trees withering in one's own neighbourhood", prompting audiences to share observations of environmental shifts. The choice of settings is more casual, often featuring domestic or street scenes as backdrops; emotional expression is more

direct, such as journalists shedding tears before the camera while covering refugees; greater emphasis is placed on 'personalisation' and 'fragmentation', though some content, due to excessive fragmentation, remains mere emotional venting lacking in news value.

3.3 Communication channels and audience differentiation

Domestically, the strategy relies on a matrix of "proprietary platforms + overseas platforms", prioritizing the controllability of communication channels and the consistency of content value. Our proprietary platforms (CGTN official website, People's Daily Overseas Edition app, etc.) serve as core channels for publishing full versions and in-depth analyses. Overseas platforms (YouTube, TikTok, Facebook, etc.) function as international dissemination windows, with content tailored to each platform's characteristics—for instance, TikTok features 1-3 minute highlights while YouTube hosts full-length versions. The audience primarily consists of highly educated individuals aged 18 to 40, with university students accounting for over 55%. Their engagement is largely driven by a desire for knowledge acquisition, characterized by a strong sense of collective identity and predominantly positive interactions.

Overseas reliance on social platforms for decentralized dissemination sees audience-driven sharing play a pivotal role in information propagation. For instance, during the 2024 South American earthquake, on-site vlogs from citizens were published 15 minutes ahead of professional media outlets, garnering over 500,000 shares. Moreover, the audience predominantly comprises individuals aged 15 to 35, fostering a more open, critical and creative interactive environment that permits the expression of diverse viewpoints.

4 Current development challenges facing immersive vlog journalism

Since its inception, immersive vlogging has accelerated its pace of development with continually evolving innovative formats. However, in an era of accelerating global convergence media, its advancement now faces three significant challenges: narrative construction, dissemination mechanisms, and industrial management. At the level of immersive narrative, the individual-centred approach presents dual challenges concerning authenticity and content depth. Some creators have been known to over-dramatize content in an attempt to heighten the sense of immersion. Coupled with expedited production schedules, this often bypasses the safeguards of professional editorial processes, making such material highly susceptible to factual inaccuracies and posing significant authenticity risks.

Meanwhile, the fragmented production cycle of 1-5 minutes struggles to accommodate in-depth content. Compounded by insufficient consideration of overseas cultural sensitivities in localized creations, this readily forms "cultural barriers". At the dissemination mechanism level, issues of homogenization and adaptability are particularly pronounced. Video topics predominantly centre on trending events and everyday documentation, with insufficient content innovation leading to audience fatigue. In cross-cultural communication, the phenomenon of 'cultural discounting' is pronounced, stemming both from comprehension barriers caused by the popularization of specialized terminology and negative feedback arising from misinterpretations of cultural symbols, coupled with an inaccurate grasp of overseas audiences' needs and preferences. At the industrial level: current production and management mechanisms within the international communication sector remain inadequate, with a significant shortage of professionals possessing both an international perspective and expertise in cross-cultural studies. This imbalance in talent structure severely impacts the quality of content produced.

Moreover, the copyright protection system remains inadequate, with content infringements occurring frequently. The difficulty of enforcing rights across borders, coupled with the absence of unified production standards and evaluation systems within the industry, has to some extent impacted the overall reputation of immersive vlog journalism in international communication.

5 The international communication role and future development prospects of immersive vlog journalism

Leveraging "technological empowerment and narrative innovation", immersive vlog journalism fulfils four core functions in international communication: In terms of channels, it overcomes geographical constraints of traditional media through global platforms like YouTube and TikTok, enabling the unrestricted flow of information. For instance, CCTV's "My Belt and Road Vlog" achieved multi-platform distribution reaching audiences across over 120 countries, with related thematic content garnering over 5 million views. Comment interactions increased by 55% compared to traditional news coverage, while positive comments rose from 48% to 62%. In cross-cultural communication, first-person, everyday narratives significantly bridge cultural divides, markedly enhancing international audience receptivity. Regarding dissemination efficacy, immersive experiences transform information from passive reception to active perception, boosting information retention rates by 55% compared to traditional text-based reporting. Interactive features such as likes, comments, and shares effectively extend the dissemination cycle. Regarding national image building, immersive vlog journalism fills gaps in grand narratives through micro-scenarios, translating abstract development concepts into

tangible, relatable experiences. This approach effectively circumvents the limitations of "symbolic" expression inherent in traditional external communications.

Amidst the accelerating convergence of global media dissemination and the vigorous advancement of digital technology, immersive vlog journalism demonstrates significant potential for international communication. Future efforts must focus on both content technology and institutional development, centering on the principle that "technology empowers content, while content anchors value". This involves integrating VR/AR technologies to create immersive panoramic environments, optimizing AI applications to achieve precise content recommendations, and implementing intelligent fact-checking mechanisms.

In creative endeavours, focus on cultural diversity and issues of universal human concern, constructing a "micro-narrative + in-depth contextual background" framework. Establish localised overseas production teams to enhance cross-cultural adaptation and minimise "cultural discounting". Simultaneously, accelerate the development of robust safeguarding systems, establishing a "mainstream media leadership + multi-stakeholder participation" model with clearly defined production standards. Build transnational exchange platforms to foster collaboration between mainstream media and overseas platforms, ensuring precise audience reach. Establish a copyright protection framework combining domestic regulations with international collaboration, refine registration systems and advance the formation of transnational alliances, while establishing dedicated funds to incentivise high-quality content. This will safeguard creators' legitimate rights and interests, stimulate creative vitality, and support the high-quality development of international dissemination.

6 Conclusion

Immersive vlog journalism operates on the core logic of "technological empowerment coupled with narrative innovation". Enhancing its international communication efficacy necessitates a three-dimensional framework comprising "differentiated content production, cross-cultural adaptation in dissemination, and robust institutional safeguards". As an innovative form of international communication in the era of global converged media, immersive vlog journalism effectively addresses the reception challenges of traditional news' grand narratives through first-person perspective storytelling and interactive dissemination. It demonstrates unique value in transcending geographical constraints, bridging cultural divides, and shaping a multidimensional national image. However, immersive vlog journalism currently faces practical challenges such as verifying authenticity, content homogenization, and cross-cultural adaptation. Moving forward, technological innovation must underpin efforts to integrate VR/AR and AI technologies, thereby enhancing immersive experiences and content quality. Content development should be centralized around exploring issues of universal human concern, establishing an expressive framework combining micro-narratives with in-depth contextualization, and strengthening the translation of cross-cultural symbols. Institutional refinement must serve as the safeguard, fostering diverse collaborative creation models and establishing multinational copyright protection alliances.

Only in this way can immersive vlog journalism achieve high-quality development in international communication, providing a more dynamic vehicle for enhancing the nation's cultural soft power and international communication capabilities.

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