

Study on News Consumer Behavior Patterns and Media Transformation Paths in the New Media Environment—Based on the Analysis of News APP User Characteristics

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the changes in news consumers' behavioral patterns and explores media transformation paths in the new media environment. Through in-depth analysis of news app user data, it reveals the reading habits, information preferences, and interactive behavior characteristics of news consumers. It is found that consumers in the new media environment are more active and selective in acquiring and sharing information. They can create certain values of consumption power, productivity value, and correction power, thus putting forward higher requirements for media content and services. Based on this, this study explores the transformation strategies of media organizations in terms of content innovation, user profile construction, and operation mode transformation, aiming to provide scientific guidance and practical paths for media organizations. The results of this study show that media organizations need to follow the development trend of new media and continuously optimize their content and services to meet the increasing personalized needs of news consumers and achieve sustainable development. This study provides a new perspective and theoretical basis for the study of news consumer behavior and the exploration of media transformation paths in the new media environment.

KEYWORDS

User Profiling News Consumer Patterns; News Consumer Model; Media Transformation Path; News Consumption

1 Introduction

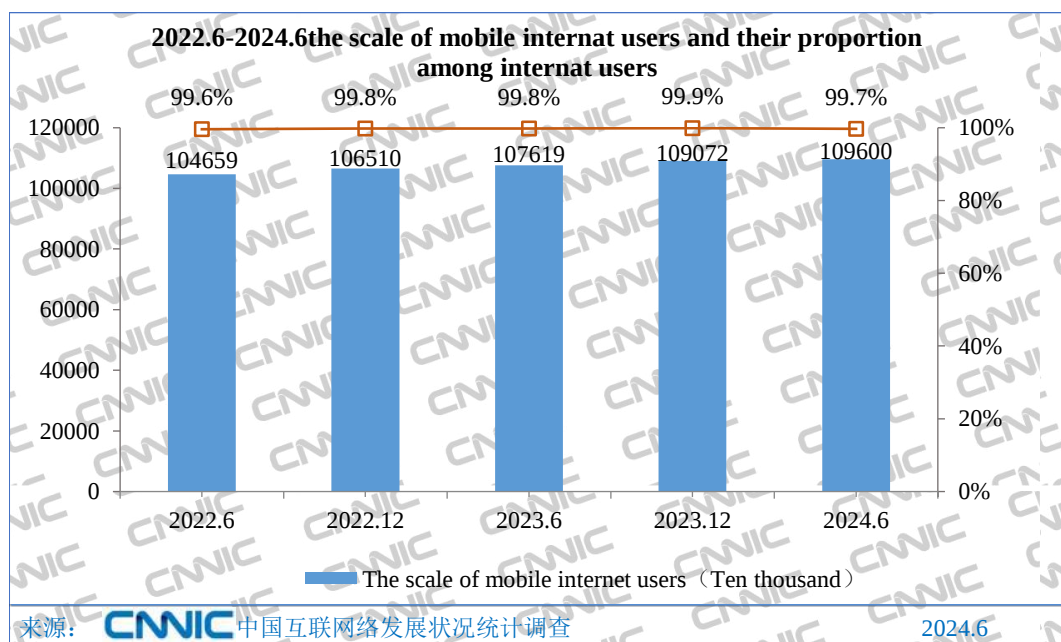
Today, with the continuous progress and popularization of new media technology, the behavior pattern of news consumers is undergoing profound changes. The traditional way of news dissemination has been difficult to meet the needs of modern consumers, and news apps, as an important communication channel in the new media environment, are gradually changing people's reading habits and the way of information acquisition. This study aims to deeply explore the behavioral patterns of news consumers in the new media environment and the impact of this change on the path of media transformation to provide useful reference and guidance for media organizations. With the popularization of smartphones and the development of mobile Internet, news apps have become an indispensable part of people's daily lives. Through news apps, users can get the latest news information and learn about the dynamics around the world anytime and anywhere. However, news consumers in the new media environment are not passive receivers of information; they are more active and selective in acquiring and sharing information, which also puts higher requirements on media organizations. This study will conduct a comprehensive analysis of news consumers' behavioral patterns based on news app user data. We will focus on key features such as users' reading habits, information preferences, and interactive behaviors. Through in-depth mining and analysis of user data, we can more accurately grasp the needs and behavioral patterns of news consumers and provide more targeted content and services for media organizations. On this basis, we will further explore the transformation path of media organizations in the new media environment, taking into account the characteristics and trends of new media. Through this study, we hope to provide a scientific basis and practical guidance for the innovative development of media organizations in the new media era and help them stand out in the fierce market competition and achieve sustainable development.

2 Related Research

2.1 A Study of Foreign News Consumers

Oxford Reuters Institute of Journalism has rich experience in conducting internationalized research on news consumers' news consumption, and the scale of the study is very large, covering news consumers in many countries around the world. For example, to publish the 2016 Digital News Research Report, the Oxford Reuters Institute of Journalism interviewed "news consumers from 26 countries (excluding China), including the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Japan, and South Korea, totaling more than 50,000 people, through online questionnaires^[1]." The survey showed that in all countries surveyed, respondents under the age of 45 generally considered online news to be more important than TV news. This finding reflects a profound change in the younger generation's preferences for

how news is accessed. They are more likely to access news through digital channels such as social media and smartphones than through traditional television or newspapers. Specifically, 51% of respondents read news on social media weekly, and 12% of them even consider social media as their primary source of news access. Social media has slightly overtaken television in the race to be the primary news source among younger 18- to 24-year-olds, with 28 percent of that age group citing social media as more commonly used, compared to 24 percent in favor of television as the primary news source. At the same time, the popularity of smartphones is dramatically changing patterns of news consumption. More than half of respondents (53%) say they use their smartphones to get news. Heavy smartphone users can access news more frequently compared to desktop, laptop, and tablet users. As the number of smartphone users continues to grow, distributed content has become the dominant way of presenting content. Social media on smartphones has even become the most dominant way for respondents to access news, while traditional websites and app portals are losing their appeal. However, despite the growing importance of social media and smartphones in news consumption, the consumption of video news has not flourished as expected. Only about a quarter (24%) of the total sample surveyed said they viewed online video news in the given week. Of these, the U.S. had the highest share of video news consumption at 33%. This may be related to increased news output, increased investment in advertising, and social media distribution channels by many news organizations in the United States. In contrast, however, survey data from European countries show that less than a quarter (22%) of those surveyed watched video news in a week, with Denmark (15%) and the Netherlands (17%) having the lowest rates. On the other hand, the decline of print media is indisputable. Only 6% of the young 18-24-year-olds surveyed use print media as their primary source of news, and only 12% of those in the 55 and older age group follow print media. Although paper media is fading into history, some 45% of respondents still buy a newspaper at least once a week, reflecting the adherence and reliance of some segments of the population on traditional news sources. Paying for online news, however, is not encouraging. Only 9% of all respondents from the U.S. said they had paid for online news in the past year. In contrast, some smaller countries have been able to achieve payment rates of 20% or more due to geographic and linguistic protections, especially those with traditional newspaper subscription habits. While the subscription newspaper model still dominates in the U.S., Americans spend more on online news. Americans spend an average of \$87.48 per year on online news, while the UK and Switzerland spend even more, at \$116 and \$100, respectively. In addition, heavy social media users are roughly 50 percent more likely to be exposed to online video news than the average user. This finding suggests that social media has not only changed the way people access news but has also influenced their news consumption habits to some extent. However, 8% of all respondents in the survey's sample said they had already installed an ad-blocking device on their smartphones, while about one-third of respondents in countries such as Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States intend to install ad-blocking software on their phones next year. This trend could have far-reaching implications for news organizations' advertising revenues and profit models.



2.2 A Study of domestic news consumers

A study of domestic news consumers Academics have adopted diversified research perspectives on the role of domestic news consumers. These perspectives mainly include an in-depth analysis of the psychological characteristics

and consumption behavior patterns of news consumers; detailed research on specific groups of news consumers; and a detailed examination of the performance of news consumers in specific news consumption activities. In his article "News Consumption Psychology and Media Marketing Planning—Taking Metropolitan Newspapers and Their Audiences as the Research Center," Jiu-Ting Chen analyzes the news consumption psychology of news consumers from the aspects of news consumption needs, news consumption choices, news consumption identities, news consumption emotions, etc.^[2] In the process of exploring the integration of news consumption psychology and marketing planning of metropolitan newspapers, the authors unconsciously reduced the length of independent research on news consumption psychology. Currently, academic research on news consumer behavior focuses mainly on the background of the rapid development of network technology and new media technology. These studies reveal a trend: as news consumers increasingly tend to consume news through new media platforms and smart terminals, their behavioral patterns gradually show the characteristics of immediacy, fragmentation, high interactivity, and socialization. Within this field of research, discussions on how news consumption behavior transforms and changes in the new media environment have dominated. For example, Shen Lu and Wang Yonglun pointed out in their article "Transformation of News Consumption Behavior in the Age of Network Media" that in the age of network media, the news consumption activities of news consumers have changed from "hard to find" to "fast"; the choice of information has changed from "restricted" to "fast"; and the choice of information has changed from "restricted" to "fast." Restricted" to "free"; the mode of news reading from "detailed" to "scanning"; the way of network comments from "one-way" to "one-way"; and the way of news consumption in the era of network media from "difficult to find" to "fast". "One-way" to "multidirectional"; the role of news consumers from "clear" to "vague"^[3].

The 54th Statistical Report on Internet Development in China pointed out that as of June 2024, there were nearly 1.1 billion Internet users in China (1,099.67 million people), an increase of 7.42 million people compared with December 2023, and the Internet penetration rate reached 78.0%, an increase of 0.5 percentage points compared with December 2023. The rate of college student news consumer groups and youth news consumer groups making contact with the Internet is as high as 100%. Yang Yang and Liu Yun pointed out in "Research on News Consumption Behavior and Influence of College Students in the Era of Intelligent Media" that social media has become the main channel for college students to obtain news. Zhang Kai, a professor at the School of International Communication of the Communication University of China, in his article "Survey and Research on News Consumption of Young People", studied the news consumption channels, news consumption purposes, news consumption needs, and self-interest awareness of the young news consumer group employing questionnaires. Among the research results about the specific news consumption activities of news consumers, the research on the online news consumption activities of news consumers takes up a large proportion. For example, Gao Hui and Li Yan, in the article "Exploration of Network Video News Consumption of Youth Groups under Multidimensional Communication Patterns", explored the network video news consumption characteristics of youth news consumer groups from the aspects of content selection of network video news, access to network video news, and attitudes toward UGC-type network video news^[4]. When reviewing the results in this research field, it can be found that researchers have explored news consumer roles in depth from multiple perspectives. Specifically, the research on the role of foreign news consumers is mainly dominated by empirical research, and through the combination of quantitative research and qualitative analysis, the role of foreign news consumers and their related consumption activities have been systematically studied. In contrast, the research perspectives of domestic news consumers' roles are more diversified, not only covering the analysis of news consumption psychology and behavior, but also exploring in-depth the characteristics and specific activities of specific consumer groups in news consumption, and this diversified research path embodies a segmented examination of news consumers' roles. However, as the core subject of news consumption activities, news consumers are characterized by both subjectivity and wholeness, and it is difficult to comprehensively reveal these key attributes in a purely segmented study. At present, most of the domestic observations and reflections on the role of news consumers remain at a superficial level, and the research on the new characteristics of the role of news consumers in the context of the new media era is not in-depth enough, and there is also a lack of sufficient exploration of the value of the role of news consumers. In addition, in the context of the increasing popularity of algorithmic recommendation and filtering mechanisms, the risk of categorization and manipulation of the role of the news consumer has not been sufficiently emphasized and analyzed.

3 New features of news consumption psychology of news consumer role in the new media era

In 1994, Chen Lidan, a professor at the School of Journalism of Renmin University of China, pointed out when defining news consumption: "News consumption is a reduced concept of information consumption in information economics, which refers to the process of people using news products or satisfying their spiritual needs through receiving news products^[6]." With the rapid development of new media technologies, the news consumption experience of news consumers has been greatly enriched and expanded, with diversified, quantitative, and dynamic news consumption

resources. These technologies have not only greatly broadened the channels of news acquisition but also continued to satisfy the growing consumption needs of news consumers. In this context, news consumers' news consumption demand shows the characteristics of rapid change, i. e., rapid change, which signifies that the news consumption field is experiencing unprecedented change and upgrading. In the context of the new media era, the fast-changing nature of news consumption demand has become more and more prominent and has become a significant feature of the news consumption field. This change not only reflects the news consumption behavior pattern of news consumers but also reveals the deep-seated psychological trend of "liking the new and loathing the old" behind it. The change cycle of news consumption demand is shortening, showing a rapid change trend, which puts forward new challenges and requirements for news dissemination, content production, and media strategy. The rapid development of new media technology has made the dissemination of news and information reach an unprecedented level in terms of speed, breadth, and depth. The explosive growth in the amount of information makes it easier for news consumers to feel "information overload" in the face of massive information. In this environment, news consumers for the news content of the freshness and timeliness requirements are increasingly high, and for the traditional news information, patience and attention are relatively reduced. What comes out of this is the psychological phenomenon of news consumers' "fondness for the new and tired of the old," which is particularly prominent in the era of new media. On the one hand, consumers have a high demand for freshness and innovation of news information. They are eager to get first-hand information and show great interest in exclusive reports and in-depth analysis. On the other hand, when the content, form, or presentation of news information lacks novelty, consumers' interest and attention will rapidly decline, and they will turn to other, more attractive news content. At the same time, the news consumption demand of news consumers' roles in the new media era is gradually characterized by pan-entertainment. On the one hand, news content is no longer limited to the traditional political, economic, social, and other fields but covers more diversified topics such as entertainment gossip, sports events, and celebrity dynamics. On the other hand, the way news is presented also pays more attention to fun and interactivity, such as short videos, live broadcasts, H5 interactive pages, and other forms of news more and more, attracting the attention of a large number of young consumers. There are multiple reasons behind the trend of pan-entertainment. First of all, the rapid development of new media technology provides the possibility of diversification of news content and innovation in presentation. The rise of short videos, live broadcasts, and other new media forms has made news content more vivid and interesting, satisfying consumers' pursuit of freshness and excitement. Secondly, the influence of social pressure and fast-paced life makes consumers more inclined to choose relaxing and enjoyable news content to relax and relieve pressure. In addition, the rise of the younger generation of consumers, who pay more attention to personalization and self-expression, has created a higher demand for news content that is entertaining and interesting. This kind of pan-entertainment is prone to problems such as over-entertainment and vulgarization, which undermine the credibility and authority of the news media. In addition, the trend of pan-entertainment may also affect the public's objective judgment of news events, leading to biased and misleading social opinions. Motivation is a psychological term for "the psychological tendency or internal drive that excites and sustains an organism's action and moves that action toward a certain goal^[7]". News consumption motivation is a specific application of motivation theory in news consumption, which reflects the specific psychological state of news consumers to meet all kinds of news needs. It is the internal driving force to promote their participation in news consumption activities. At the same time, news consumption motivation is closely connected with news consumption demand, in which the demand is the inner foundation of the motivation, while the motivation is the external display of the demand. In addition, news consumption motivation also has distinctive characteristics of the times; with the changes in the media environment, news consumption motivation in different periods shows their unique style of the times, which is the product of the interaction between the internal needs of news consumers and external environmental factors (such as the media environment). With the continuous progress of new media technology, news consumers' demand for convenience continues to escalate. They are no longer satisfied with the traditional media era of the kind of regular release, waiting to receive the news information mode, but to pursue more convenient and rapid access to news at any time, anywhere through the "independent search" and smart terminal "real-time push," and so on. In the context of the new media era, the vast amount of news information is divided into two categories: paid news information and free news information. Although paid news information guarantees the quality of content and the cost is becoming more and more humane, news consumers still prefer to get free news information, which reflects that the profit motive has been further strengthened in the new media environment.

4 Exploring the communication path of media transformation

In the new media environment, data has become an important resource for media organizations. Through the analysis of news app user data, media can accurately understand users' interest preferences, reading habits, and interactive behaviors, thus guiding content production. Data-driven content production not only means paying attention to users' explicit needs, such as news categories and topic preferences, but also digging deeper into users' implicit needs, such as

emotional tendencies and values. This requires media organizations to establish a powerful data analysis system to track and analyze user data in real-time, providing a scientific basis for content production. At the same time, there are differences in the characteristics and needs of user groups in different channels. In addition to traditional newspapers, TV, and radio, emerging media forms such as social media, short video platforms, and news apps have become important channels for news dissemination. Media organizations should actively expand these emerging channels to realize cross-platform dissemination of news content. Media organizations should customize content and differentiate communication according to the characteristics of the channels to improve communication effect and user satisfaction. Media organizations should focus on improving the readability and accessibility of news content, optimizing interface design and interactive experience, so that users can easily access the information they need. At the same time, media organizations should also strengthen interaction and communication with users and enhance their sense of participation and belonging through interactive sessions such as user comments, voting, and Q&A. This interactivity not only helps to improve user satisfaction and loyalty but also provides media organizations with valuable user feedback and opinions to guide the adjustment of content production and communication strategies. "Technology is essentially a discovery of nature and an extension of human beings, for the sake of more harmonious coexistence between human beings and nature and more effective interaction and communication between human beings ^[5]." Technological innovation and integration development have become important driving forces for the transformation and upgrading of media organizations. Media organizations should actively explore the application of new technologies in news dissemination, such as artificial intelligence, big data, blockchain, etc., to enhance the production efficiency and dissemination effect of news content. At the same time, media organizations should also strengthen the integration and development with other industries, such as cooperation with e-commerce platforms and social platforms, to achieve resource sharing and complementary advantages and to expand the business scope and profit model of media organizations.

5 Conclusion

Through the careful analysis of news app users, the transformation of news consumers' behavioral patterns in the new media environment and how to promote these transformations on the media transformation path are explored. The news consumer's role, as the main body of news consumption, is an actor with flesh and blood, thoughts and values, which not only reveals the preferences, habits, and needs of news consumers in the new media era but also further analyzes the socio-psychological and technological driving factors behind these behavioral patterns. News consumers in the new media environment show more diversified, personalized, instantaneous, and interactive behavioral characteristics. They are no longer satisfied with the traditional one-way communication mode but are eager to participate, interact, and express themselves. At the same time, with the continuous progress of technology, news consumers have put forward higher requirements for access to news content, presentation forms, and interactive experiences. In the face of this change, media organizations must actively adjust their strategies to achieve transformation and upgrading. On the one hand, the media needs to strengthen the interaction and communication with users, deeply understand their needs and preferences, and provide more accurate and personalized news services. On the other hand, the media also need to constantly innovate the form and content of news reports and utilize new technological means to enhance the news dissemination effect and user experience. The news consumer behavior pattern and media transformation path in the new media environment is a complex and profound topic. Through the research in this paper, we hope to provide some useful references and inspirations for media organizations to help them better adapt to the changes in the new media environment and realize transformation, upgrading, and sustainable development.

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