

# The Role Transformation of News Editors in the New Media Era

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**ABSTRACT.** *Under the new media environment, the communication environment of the news media has changed greatly, and the public opinion environment has become complicated. The change of communication environment has led to the reshaping of the traditional role of “gatekeeper” of news editors. Through literature research and case analysis, this paper expounds the deep reasons why news editors turn from gatekeepers to guiders.*

**KEY WORD:** *New media, news editor, gatekeeper, guide*

## 1. Introduction

In the traditional news communication activities, from the initial screening, modification, processing and edition of news articles to a high-quality news product for readers, all of them can not do without a series of work of the “gatekeeper” news editors. However, in the new media environment, the amount of information is increasing; the content of communication is becoming more and more complex, and the object of communication is becoming more and more free. In this communication environment, news editors can no longer control the last door of information dissemination like traditional editors. Therefore, the role of “gatekeeper” of traditional news editors no longer meets the requirements of communication. The audience and the media need more news editors with the role of “guide”.

## 2. Information explosion needs “guide”

The new media technology is based on the design concept of equality, sharing and openness, and the user-centered design idea reduces the threshold for users to enter the media. In theory, everyone can become the producer and disseminator of information, bringing a great wealth of information. According to a survey released by the United States Inktomi Corporation, more than one billion web pages on the Internet are indexable pages, and the website can release all kinds of information 24 hours a day. It is conceivable that the amount of information brought about by freedom of information is hard to estimate. However, this “information explosion”

caused by the phenomenon of information flooding has brought a series of problems to the audience.

First of all, in the information flooding environment, the audience will be at a loss in the face of massive information. It is difficult to timely and accurately choose the information they need most, and their information selection behavior will be lost in the “information explosion” environment. Secondly, the audience in modern society, living and working at a high speed, have little time to pay for news media, and have limited time and energy for receiving and processing information. In the face of surging information, they have no time to make choices and decisions. The survey of 10 multinational companies in the world can better illustrate the trouble that information explosion brings to people. The survey shows that their employees have to face thousands of information every day, and the processing of information is beyond the ability of employees, which not only reduces the work efficiency of employees, but also is not conducive to the improvement of corporate efficiency.

In order to solve the series of problems caused by the “information explosion”, the traditional “gatekeeper” role of news editors seems inadequate. News editors, as “gatekeepers”, have been unable to stop the various troubles brought by the information overflow to the audience. Therefore, under the environment of “information explosion”, it is necessary to change the traditional news editor from “gatekeeper” to “guide”. When helping the audience to solve the problem of information explosion, news editors with professional media literacy can quickly and accurately identify and capture valuable information in massive information, and guide the audience to choose the real high-quality information in the shortest time.

### **3. Audience transformation needs “guide”**

In the new media era, with the characteristics of new media, such as initiative, interaction and openness, the audience has undergone transformation, and the audience has begun to differentiate, showing more and more personalized characteristics. The individuation of the audience is mainly reflected in two aspects: one is that the audience receives information as an individual; the other is the difference of the audience in obtaining information and enjoying media services.

Traditional mass media is point-to-face communication; the disseminator is in the central position, and the personality of the receiver is limited. Influenced by the openness and inclusiveness of new media, the audience can choose what type and content of information to accept and what media channels to obtain information according to their own interests and hobbies. Moreover, our economy, social life and culture are more diversified, which also accelerates the personalized trend of the audience. The trend of audience personalization leads to the increasing independence of the audience, followed by the ability of individuals to release information and actively seek information. These changes weaken the role of news editors as gatekeepers. News editors have to transform to “guiders”, producing personalized information and guiding them to participate in news communication activities.

As a “guide”, news editors can dig out the information of the audience's real needs according to their basic hobbies and put forward corresponding services. For example, in today’s, which is a portal website, editors use new media technology to guide audiences to seek personalized information according to their basic information and visit records. When the audience clicks on a news information, the editor uses the hyperlink technology to present the relevant information to the audience. The audience can easily obtain the relevant information they like, and can also guide the audience to obtain more relevant personalized information through the hyperlink technology.

#### **4. Public opinion imbalance needs “guide”**

At present, new media technology has constructed a virtual world. In this world, the identity of the communicator is hidden, and the public opinions published by them tend to be “grey” under the condition of anonymity, which makes the development of public opinion fall into an unbalanced state.

First of all, public opinion in the new media environment is prone to “one-sided”, emotional and irrational. The openness and participation of new media technology make anyone have the opportunity to voice their opinions on social hot spots and form their own understanding and views, regardless of social status, rich and poor. However, some understanding and views of the audience’s are relatively simple and direct. Compared with the views of mainstream media, they are neither profound nor comprehensive and prone to “one-sided” situation, with strong group follow blindly. And most of these public opinions are related to negative social problems, which easily lead the audience to extreme negative emotions, resulting in the audience’s paranoid opinions “highly concentrated”. People’s negative emotions towards social disappointment are high, but the society lacks positive comments to guide and sort out. The society is in urgent need of “guide” type news editors to make positive comments, guide people to pay attention to the positive and sunny side of society, prevent public opinion from “one-sided”, or give timely feedback to the negative impact caused by “one-sided” public opinion, and guide the audience to express positive views on solving problems.

In the new media environment, news editors are prone to “one-sided” and inclined to “irrational” or violent emotions, when dealing with the situation of public opinion. Like Dayu’s flood control, we should focus on the diversion, straighten out the audience’s emotions, and guide the healthy development of public opinion, to do a good job in guiding public opinion.

#### **5. Social benefit needs “guide”**

Under the media environment, on the one hand, news media operate independently and realize profit is the basis of its survival and development; on the other hand, as a social public tool, news media must put social benefits in the first place. As a special cause, journalism and communication undertaking shoulders the

responsibility of restricting, educating and guiding the public, and has an important impact on the construction of social culture. Therefore, the media should pay more attention to its social responsibility while obtaining economic benefits.

## 6. Conclusion

Nowadays, with the increasingly fierce competition in the media industry, many journalists produce news with “sensational effect” that is not true to the reality to attract people’s attention in order to obtain economic benefits. Or in order to cater to the low-level taste of some audiences, they make many vulgar and vulgarized news, which pollutes the social atmosphere. At the same time, in the new media environment, many rubbish information, such as pornography, violence and falsehood, pollutes the information environment, disturbs people’s sight, and hinders the audience to quickly find useful information, which has become a new public hazard in news communication activities. Therefore, in order to undertake the social responsibility of the news media and create a good social atmosphere, news editors should take the dissemination of positive energy as the first task, guide the news communication activities in line with the social benefits, and be the “guide” of the social benefits of the media.

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