



Reflection and Countermeasures on the Practice of Slow Journalism

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Abstract. At present, the whole society generally pursues high efficiency, so that the pace of modern people's life is getting faster and faster, and the pressure of life is getting bigger and bigger, so there is a type of news that pursues "slow" in the news industry - slow journalism, which has many successful cases abroad, but it is tardy for this kind of news to develop in China. Based on the analysis of the practice of slow journalism in Chongqing Evening News, this paper reveals the shortcomings of its core values, column positioning and business methods, and puts forward suggestions and prospects from three aspects: news concept, team building and community operation, so as to promote the development and growth of slow journalism in China.

Keywords: Slow journalism; Investigative Reporting; Niche Community.

1 Introduction

In industrial society, efficiency has become an important goal of social production. This concept is reflected in the field of journalism, which attaches importance to the timeliness of news, but in practice, timeliness and depth are often not taken into account. In the context of information overload on the Internet, the audience's demand for time-sensitive news has basically been satisfied, so the concept of slow journalism has begun to rise and become popular in Europe and the United States. Due to the special industry environment in China, slow journalism has not become a trend in China, and this article will discuss the development of slow journalism in China and the reasons for its tardy development to develop based on the reflection on the practice of slow journalism in Chongqing Evening News.

2 Literature Review

There is no uniform definition of slow journalism. Susan Greenberg (2007) states that slow journalism "takes the time to uncover facts, focuses on stories that others ignore, and disseminates it to the highest standards", and proposes that slow journalism includes non-fiction such as prose and reportage. [1] Lin Wei (2017) discussed slow journalism from three aspects: stylistic standards, carrier standards, and value standards,

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and defined slow journalism as: "through the multi-party investigation of news events, completely and profoundly reveal their causes, results, trends and impacts, and arouse the audience's reflection and sympathy through storytelling". The scholar also pointed out that the common business models of slow journalism organizations include subscription fees, membership systems, rewards, fundraising, and headhunting functions to obtain intermediary fees.[2] Guo Yi believes that slow journalism is essentially a nostalgia and reintroduction of "traditional aesthetic tastes" such as literary journalism, investigative reporting, immersive reporting, new journalism, and ethnographic journalism.[3]

Regarding the characteristics of slow journalism, Liu Zixiong and Chen Liming (2018) believe that literary, non-fiction, quality-oriented, storytelling, transparency, and cooperation are the core values of slow journalism. It can be seen that non-fiction, in-depth reporting, and investigative reporting all have a slight connotation of slow journalism. The scholar also proposed five financial models for slow media: 1. Crowdfunding model; 2. Subscription model; 3. Talent brokerage model; Fourth, the reader's donation model; Fifth, the limited advertising model is basically the same as the business model summarized by Lin Wei.[4] Similarly, Meghan Le Mazzulier argues that slow journalism is not new, it has existed for a long time, from Montaigne's three collections of essays in the early days, to later investigative reporting, long-form narrative reporting, new journalism, book-length reporting, literary journalism, narrative reporting, and creative non-fiction reporting.[5]

At present, the research on "slow journalism" in China is still in the stage of concept introduction and introduction, and the practical cases based on it are all from abroad. Therefore, this paper will discuss and analyze the development of slow journalism in China based on the practice of the "slow journalism" column of Chongqing Evening News.

3 Introduction to the "Slow Journalism" Column of Chongqing Evening News

In December 2016, the "Slow journalism" APP of "Chongqing Evening News" was officially launched in the media center of Chongqing Daily Newspaper Group. Chen Bing, editor-in-chief of Chongqing Evening News, said that the newly launched client named "slow journalism" has two meanings: one refers to slow work and meticulous work, and to do news with the heart of a craftsman; The second is to make "news that people read from beginning to end". This not only shows that he advocates the writing form of slow journalism, but also clarifies the development concept of "slow and refined".[6] In May 2017, the number of downloads of the "Slow journalism" app reached 1.72 million.[7] However, at present, the APP has ceased operation, and the relevant business has been transferred to the "Upstream News" APP (a mobile news client built by Chongqing Daily Newspaper Group), but the slow journalism column in the "Upstream News" APP has stopped updating on April 19, 2022. In addition, the Chongqing Evening News also created the #slownews# topic on Weibo, but it stopped updating on October 8, 2021.

4 The Analysis of the Reasons why the "Slow Journalism" Column of "Chongqing Evening News" is Unsustainable

4.1 Failure to Fully Practice the Core Value of Slow Journalism

In the "Slow journalism" column, there are two main sections: "Slow journalism Investigation" and "Slow journalism People". In the survey section, there is a topic "20 yuan for one or two spring buds?" Reporter investigation: the market supply is sufficient, the price of the supermarket is actually very beneficial", "'Big Cow Demo' Niulanba accidentally became popular garbage disposal, parking is difficult... The town government has responded to the measures", "Behind the popularity of physical training classes: some parents are 'crazy', some parents are eager to try, and some people are questioning", etc. These topics are very different from the concept of slow journalism long-form narrative and investigative reporting, and the topics are mediocre, still sketches, and they are not "slow" at all. In the character section, there are topics such as "Chongqing Sisters Won the Runner-up of the "Chinese Poetry Conference" and Are Studying for a PhD at Peking University", "Using Data to Help 'Chang'e' Go to the Moon Chongqing Female General He Jingjiang Starts the Seventh Lunar Exploration Mission", "Tracking the Innocence of the 'Rowing Boy' for 3 Days Police Zou Xinghua: Don't Ignore the Strange Silence Don't Be Stingy with Small Cases", etc. These topics are not so much slow journalism as typical reports, without making new ideas, and the characters do not have enough storytelling to attract audiences.

Li Jing pointed out that a good journalist can choose the right topic and reveal the phenomena and hot issues of public concern with solid investigations, typical cases, and unique discussions.[8] Slow journalism should be news that has a slower pace of reporting, a longer investment time, and more emphasis on investigating the truth clearly, and with depth and thought. However, most of the current slow journalism events are characterized by investigative reporting, and they do not have a slow pace and depth.

4.2 The Content is Confusing, AND THE Positioning OF THE Column is not Clear

Judging from the content it publishes, the content of the "slow journalism" column is huge, and even many topics that do not belong to slow journalism are also published in the column, and the column positioning is very confusing, and the "branding" and "high-quality" are insufficient. For example, in the "Upstream News" APP, a video recommending Chongqing's special food "Sauerkraut Hoof Flower Small Hot Pot is Just Right for Two People to Eat" and an H5 work "2022 International Day of Forests · H5 Exploring the Forest and Unlocking Chongqing's Green Code" is labeled as slow journalism. Even some articles that reprinted Xinhua News Agency's press releases were classified as slow journalism. After 2022, "Upstream News" did not continue to produce slow journalism works, but it still maintained the column, so some articles were randomly selected and labeled as slow journalism, in fact, the "Slow

journalism" column has existed in name only, and finally stopped updating on April 19, 2022.

Slow journalism is not without an audience, but it should maintain the consistency of the style of the column, and should not publish works that are not part of the slow journalism in the column in order to keep it updated. If the content is large and inconsistent, it will not only fail to attract new readers, but will also lead to the loss of core readers. Less and fine, better than more and miscellaneous.

4.3 The Business Mode is Outdated and Lacks a Foundation for Survival

Differences between Chinese and Western communication systems and policies. On the one hand, the profit way of slow journalism works is still dominated by traditional advertising revenue, and a new profit model has been developed. On the other hand, Chinese readers have not yet developed the habit of paying for content, and the idea of free is still prevalent, but advertising does not conform to the values of slow journalism, so "slow media" does not have the basis for survival. Business models such as membership, reader donations, crowdfunding, and talent brokerage mentioned above cannot be implemented. But the cost of slow journalism is quite high, and an article can go through months or even years of research, ideation, and revision, and this model is unsustainable without a steady source of income. Zhang Guowei believes that slow journalism should survive without the intervention of capital and advertisers.[9]

5 Future Prospects for the Development of Slow Journalism

The future is bright, but the road is tortuous. Slow journalism will certainly be able to thrive in China. Based on the above analysis of the slow journalism practice of Chongqing Evening News, this paper puts forward the following suggestions:

5.1 Change the Concept of Journalism and Cultivate "Slow" Thinking

Slow journalism producers should consciously change the original concept of hard news gathering and writing, and infiltrate the core values of slow journalism cooperation, investigation, and community into their news works. The fundamental reason why the "slow journalism" app of "Chongqing Evening News" is unsustainable is that the news concept is stagnant, and there is no new concept to guide the practice of slow journalism, and the content produced gives people a sense of staleness. Whether it is a "slow journalism investigative" report or a "slow journalism person" report, it should be in-depth and story-based, should not choose painless topics such as "market vegetable prices" and "difficult parking in scenic spots", but should choose those events that people care about but do not know; Nor should the character report be written as a celebration of his achievements, but should highlight the story behind the character and portray the character in the story. Wu Caiwen believes that slow journalism production should reshape the authority and credibility of professional news, return to the public value and service awareness of news, build a diversified communication pattern that

complements fast and slow, and complete the professional return of news production.[10]

5.2 Set Up a Small but Fine Team to Produce High-quality News

Slow journalism products require journalists to have strong planning and writing skills, and it may take months or even years to complete a manuscript, so it is unrealistic to maintain a large team of journalists. Therefore, the team of journalists should also take the route of small and fine, recruit more creative, energetic, and journalistic ideals, and seek high-quality products with high-quality teams.

Advanced foreign experience shows that successful slow journalism brands are either operated by small teams or collaborated by multiple small teams to carry out large-scale investigative reporting. Wei Xiaofang believes that slow journalism emphasizes the high quality of news works, the refinement of news production, and the long-term and sustainable nature of news consumption, so slow journalism production is easy to fall into the dilemma of high cost and low return.[11] Combined with the current media market environment, it is more efficient to carry out content creation in the form of small teams. Actions in the form of small teams can be more timely and efficient in topic selection planning, on-site interviews, problem feedback and other links.

5.3 Advocate Audience Participation and Establish Niche Communities

The successful experience of foreign countries shows that compared with hard news, slow journalism belongs to "Dessert accompaniment", and it must be a niche hobby. Therefore, the slow journalism community must be made into a niche community, but the "slow journalism" APP did not make the right choice, both wanted to grasp the slow journalism and wanted to grasp the fast news, and set up three sections: "slow journalism", "fast world" and "fast Chongqing", and did not realize the connotation of "niche community", which ultimately led to the failure of both fast and slow. Zhao Ying believes that the 5G era should give full play to the role of the public in the production of slow journalism, and the public production and professional media complement each other, so that slow news can gain more attention from niche communities.[12] In addition, this article argues that there is no need to rush to launch a news client, you can try to rely on social media platforms for community operation first, and wait for the community to stabilize before considering moving to your own client.

6 Conclusions

Overall, the practice of slow journalism is still slowly evolving. There is never a shortage of readers for high-quality news works, and problems in practice will be solved in practice. In the context of an accelerated society, the existence of slow journalism has a rational and readership base. The development of slow journalism is a reflection of readers' demand for in-depth reading and high-quality journalism. On the surface, slow

journalism is news with a slower time, but in essence, it is high-quality news and professional news.

Based on the analysis of the practice of slow journalism in Chongqing Evening News, this paper finds three shortcomings: it fails to practice the core value of slow journalism; The content is confusing, and the column positioning is not clear; The business mode is outdated and lacks a foundation for survival. Starting from the problem, this paper puts forward three suggestions: change the concept of journalism and cultivate "slow" thinking; Build a small but lean team to produce high-quality news; Advocate audience engagement and build niche communities. In fact, in terms of the current domestic audience literacy and other general environment, slow journalism still has a long way to go if it wants to succeed. In addition to the efforts of the media, the audience's news-consuming habits should also change.

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