



# Investigating the Transition of Traditional Media to New Media in China

An Interactive Qualifying Project  
submitted to the Faculty of  
WORCESTER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree of Bachelor of Science

By:

Jeffrey Compere, Patrick Devine, William Stanley, Haojun Yan

Advisors:

Prof. Jianyu Liang, Prof. Huili Zheng

Sponsor:

Prof. Dongsong Luo

Date:

5 July 2022

This report represents the work of one or more WPI undergraduate students submitted to the faculty as evidence of completion of a degree requirement. WPI routinely publishes these reports on the web without editorial or peer review. For more information about the project's program at WPI, see <http://www.wpi.edu/Academics/Projects>.

## **Abstract**

New media is dominating traditional media because of advancements in digital technology. Using interviews with journalists and surveys from the public, this project sought to investigate the transformation of traditional media to new media in China, as well as the impact of the transformation on both the news industry and the audience. Our findings reveal that, while new media enabled unprecedented levels of communication and social interaction, traditional media still has its advantages in terms of news credibility.

## Acknowledgments

In fulfilling this work, we have had the benefits of precious help in a lot of ways.

First and foremost, we would like to extend our sincere gratitude to Prof. Jianyu Liang and Prof. Huili Zheng for their invaluable advice and support throughout our project. Their comments and feedback on our project presentation and write-up of this paper were constructive. Additionally, their guidance constantly motivated us and assisted us in maintaining our enthusiasm for the project even when we became disoriented or encountered difficulties. Without them, we would not have been able to get this far and complete our project.

Then, we would like to give our deepest thanks to our sponsor, Prof. Dongsong Luo from Nanjing University of Science and Technology (NUST). He provided us with a clear definition of the project's background and helped us to finalize our project's goal at the early stage of ID 2050, which built a solid foundation for the later execution of the project. He also consistently offered us timely assistance throughout ID 2050 and IQP, including some relevant literature sources and his own opinions on some crucial questions that we were perplexed about. These suggestions helped us continue to advance with our project. We sincerely appreciated his generosity and assistance throughout the project.

Next, we also would like to express our gratitude to our wonderful collaborators from the Beijing University of Chemical Technology (BUCT). These partners are Xiying Cai, Honghui He, Yi Liu, and Xinyue Yu. They dedicated a lot of their valuable after-school time to working on our project. In addition, they offered us valuable writing advice and assisted us in revising and disseminating the survey. We were truly grateful for their kindness and cooperation.

Furthermore, we would like to give our gratitude to all five interviewees who took part in our interviews and all 319 respondents who filled out our online survey. Without the interview and survey data, we cannot comprehend the transition from traditional media to new media in China from various perspectives.

Finally, we would like to express our gratitude to Yifan Gu for sharing his academic writing advice with us throughout the course of this study and Yihong Xu (junior student of WPI major in both IMGD and CS) for teaching us how to manage large amounts of data in Excel and how to create beautiful statical charts. Yifan recently received his Bachelor of Science degree from WPI. We wish him all the best as he pursues a Ph.D. in physics at Boston College. Yihong most recently received a Rockstar Games internship. We hope he has a wonderful experience during his entire internship.

# Table of Contents

<b>Abstract</b> .....	I
<b>Acknowledgments</b> .....	II
<b>List of Figures</b> .....	VII
<b>Authorship</b> .....	IX
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction</b> .....	1
<b>Chapter 2: Literature Review</b> .....	2
<b>2.1 Definition of New Media</b> .....	2
<b>2.2 Difference Between New Media and Traditional Media</b> .....	4
<b>2.3 Development of New Media in China</b> .....	5
<b>2.4 Transition to New Media Era</b> .....	7
<b>2.5 Opportunities of Traditional Media</b> .....	10
<b>Chapter 3: Methodology</b> .....	12
<b>3.1 Introduction</b> .....	12
<b>3.2 Method 1: Paper Interview</b> .....	12
<b>3.3 Method 2: Survey</b> .....	13

<b>Chapter 4: Finding</b> .....	15
<b>4.1 Interview Data Analysis</b> .....	15
<b>4.1.1 The Challenge of New Media to Traditional Media</b> .....	15
<b>4.1.2 The Process of the Transition</b> .....	17
<b>4.1.3 Pros. and Cons. of the Transition</b> .....	24
<b>4.1.3.1 Advantages of the Transition</b> .....	24
<b>4.1.3.2 Disadvantages of the Transition</b> .....	27
<b>4.2 Survey Data Analysis</b> .....	30
<b>4.2.1 Demography Distribution</b> .....	30
<b>4.2.2 New Media User Experience</b> .....	32
<b>4.2.3 General Public’s Perceptions of the Transition</b> .....	38
<b>4.2.4 Open-Ended Question Analysis</b> .....	42
<b>Chapter 5: Recommendation</b> .....	46
<b>5.1 Recommendations for Media Industry</b> .....	46
<b>5.1.1 Focus on Developing Social Media Accounts</b> .....	46
<b>5.1.2 Cultivate Specialized Workers</b> .....	49
<b>5.1.3 Improve the Quality of the Content</b> .....	50

<b>5.2 Recommendations for Researchers .....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Chapter 6: Conclusion .....</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Reference .....</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Appendix A: Interview Transcript 1.....</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>Appendix B: Interview Transcript 2.....</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>Appendix C: Interview Transcript 3.....</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>Appendix D: Interview Transcript 4.....</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>Appendix E: Interview Transcript 5.....</b>	<b>74</b>
<b>Appendix F: Survey Questions .....</b>	<b>80</b>

## List of Figures

<b>Figure 1: Weibo Homepage.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Figure 2: Screenshots of WeChat .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Figure 3: Global Times Newspaper.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Figure 4: Statistics of Total YouTube Subscribers for Global Times.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Figure 5: Popular We-Media Platforms in China .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Figure 6: E-newspapers of Yan Zhao Metropolis Daily .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Figure 7: E-newspapers of Guangzhou Daily.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Figure 8: CGTN News Websites .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Figure 9: Global Times News Websites .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Figure 10: Official Channels of CCTV News on We-media Platforms.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Figure 11: Interaction Buttons of Bilibili.....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Figure 12: New Media Client of People’s Daily .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Figure 13: Phase Diagram of the Transformation.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Figure 14: Statistics of Total YouTube Subscribers for CGTN .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Figure 15: Statistics of Total YouTube Video Views for CGTN .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Figure 16: Survey Participants’ Age Distribution .....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Figure 17: Survey Participants’ Geographical Demography .....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Figure 18: Participants’ News Source Preference .....</b>	<b>32</b>



<b>Figure 19: Participant’s News Form Preference.....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Figure 20: Participants’ Average Time Spent on New Media .....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Figure 21: Survey Participants' Content Selection Preference .....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Figure 22: Survey Participants' Interaction Frequency Preference .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Figure 23: Participants’ Usage of Traditional Media.....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Figure 24: Participants' Trust Level in New Media Content .....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Figure 25: Survey Participants’ Opinions on Advantages of New Media .....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Figure 26: Survey Participants’ Opinions on Advantages of Traditional Media .....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Figure 27: Survey Participants’ Demographics for the Open-Ended Question Responses .....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Figure 28: Survey Participants’ Demographics for the Open-Ended Question (Valid Responses).....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Figure 29: Survey Participants’ Comments on the Development of New Media .....</b>	<b>44</b>

## Authorship

Section	Primary Author	Primary Editor
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction</b>	Jeffrey & Patrick & William	Haojun & Jeffrey & William
<b>Chapter 2: Literature Review</b>		
2.1	Haojun	Haojun & Jeffrey & William
2.2	Patrick	Patrick & Jeffrey
2.3	Jeffrey	Jeffrey & William
2.4	Haojun	Patrick & Haojun & Jeffrey
2.5	William	William
<b>Chapter 3: Methodology</b>		
3.1	Haojun	Haojun & Jeffrey
3.2	Patrick	Haojun & Jeffrey
3.3	William & Haojun	Haojun & Jeffrey
<b>Chapter 4: Finding</b>		
4.1.1	Haojun	Jeffrey
4.1.2	Haojun	Jeffrey
4.1.3.1	Haojun	Haojun
4.1.3.2	Haojun	Haojun
4.2.1	Haojun	Jeffrey
4.2.2	Haojun	Jeffrey
4.2.3	Haojun	Jeffrey & Patrick
4.2.4	Patrick	Haojun & Patrick

<b>Chapter 5: Recommendation</b>		
5.1.1	Patrick	Haojun & Patrick
5.1.2	Haojun	Haojun & Patrick
5.1.3	William	Haojun & Patrick
5.2	Jeffrey	Haojun & Patrick
<b>Chapter 6: Conclusion</b>	Haojun	Haojun & Patrick

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

Traditional media such as newspapers and television have been employed as the medium to distribute information for a long time. However, with the extraordinary progression of Internet technology, online media tools like social media platforms and news clients are also exploited to disseminate news, which opens the door for information to be rapidly distributed to a larger audience and enables the general public to share their thoughts.

However, the employment of online tools to distribute news can open a channel for the spread of false information. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the spreading of misinformation through online media platforms noticeably impacted our society. According to Sai Krishna Gudi, the spread of misinformation diminished the credibility of the news and hence led to vaccine hesitancy and the spreading of conspiracy theories (Gudi et al., 2022). However, authenticity in news dissemination is just one concern of the transition from traditional media to new media. There are still other aspects regarding the transition worthy of paramount significance to investigate such as how it benefits or disturbs our life.

The primary goal of our project is to investigate the phases of the transition of traditional media to new media and understand its benefits, drawbacks, and impacts on the audience in China. With this goal in mind, the remainder of the paper is structured as follows: the background chapter provides a general picture of the media industry in China; the methodology chapter determines two objectives of our project and how they were accomplished through interviews and a survey; the finding chapter exhibits and analyzes the results and data collected from interview and questionnaire; the recommendation chapter provides a set of recommendations to two key stakeholders of this project (media companies and researchers); the conclusion chapter brings a concise summary to the entire paper.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### 2.1 Definition of New Media

China has made great progress in internet technology development in the past decade. With the development of Internet technology in China, many Chinese traditional media platforms experienced their transition to the so-called “new media” platforms. However, there is no explicit definition of the new media, and scholars have different points of view on it.

A popular perspective states that the definition of new media constantly varies with time (Kuang, 2012). Literally speaking, "new" and "old/traditional" are opposite of each other. When the television and the radio were invented, the media employing these two new technologies to disseminate its news can be considered as the new media. As information digitization technology develops, the media forms that appear after the invention of paper media, broadcast, and television can be treated as new media (Li, 2016). For instance, We-media, such as Bilibili, Weibo, Douyin, and WeChat public accounts, can be regarded as a form of new media (Li, 2016).

Strictly speaking, if the form of the media currently relies on information digitization, it can be defined as new media (Liao, 2008). Two major characteristics of new media are digitization and interactivity (Guo, 2021; Li, 2016). Digitization means that all content published on new media platforms is distributed via the Internet. One scholar argues that new media should allow the general public to access the news anytime and anywhere and it can disseminate information on a large scale (Li, 2016). In this regard, as long as people have a digital device with an internet connection, they can quickly access news anytime and anywhere. Interactivity means that not only can users of new media platforms receive information from others, but they also can output their

own opinions. For instance, on the CCTV news client, users can leave comments after reading and watching the content. Additionally, other users can view these comments while seeing the same news. In a nutshell, both the media and users can become producers and disseminators of their ideas and opinions, which is another essential feature of new media.

To summarize, new media shares lots of characteristics with traditional media (Li, 2016). However, with the development of Internet technologies, new media has gradually distinguished itself from traditional media and become a unique media form in the new era of information digitization.

**The remainder of this page is intentionally left blank.**

## 2.2 Difference Between New Media and Traditional Media

With the development of new technologies, new media formats and platforms have been introduced globally, and one example of this can be seen in China. New media has primarily come to replace traditional media, at least in terms of the number of users. Recent studies have revealed that more users consistently use these new media platforms to obtain news updates with internet users making up the majority, while only 6.8% chose to use traditional media in 2020 (Fang, 2022).

As a growing number of Chinese people treat new media as their primary news outlet, it becomes increasingly important to determine what sets new media apart from traditional Chinese media. In order to analyze these differences, it is important to look back at the history of traditional media in China. The current form of traditional Chinese media began when economic reforms in the 1980s led to the commercialization of Chinese media (Zhao, 2000). Even though there were multiple newspaper organizations and they had to compete with one another, such as *People's Daily* and *China Daily*, these news outlets were and are still controlled by the government and are part of the centralized media network (Zhao, 2000). This method of having competitive news sources under the supervision of the government extends beyond newspapers to other forms of media, such as broadcast and television, allowing for a more direct control of news production and dissemination. In order to remain competitive in the shifting media landscape, traditional media began to shift not only to a more internet-based delivery of their news but also changed how they covered newsworthy events.

With the transition to new media, consumer voices now had to be considered when producing content. Due to this increased interactivity in new media, consumers' opinions can be heard and shape what is considered "newsworthy" (Luo, 2014). Furthermore, in the internet age,

people have almost unlimited access to information – and news sources must now keep up with the demand of the people to remain competitive. This means that news updates must be more constant and provide broader coverage of topics of interest to the public, as new media must keep up with the speed and spread of the internet (Chadwick & Howard, 2009).

Although traditional Chinese media is different from new media, technological advancements are constantly changing how they affect Chinese society and how they disseminate information. The following subsection will shed light on how new media was created, and what led to its rise in popularity over traditional Chinese media.

### **2.3 Development of New Media in China**

New media has had rapid development in China over the last decade. For instance, the Sina Corporation launched a microblogging website called Sina Weibo in 2009(Figure 1). Through either its website or mobile app, users can share, disseminate, and receive information in various forms, including text, pictures, and videos. Sina Weibo has become one of the biggest social media in China, with over 248 million daily users (Thomala, 2021). Another widely used social medial platform is WeChat (Figure 2). As a Chinese instant messaging, social media, and mobile payment app released by Tencent in 2011, WeChat has become an integral part of Chinese people's daily life, with an active user base of 1.2 billion people across the world (Thomala, 2022).

**The remainder of this page is intentionally left blank.**



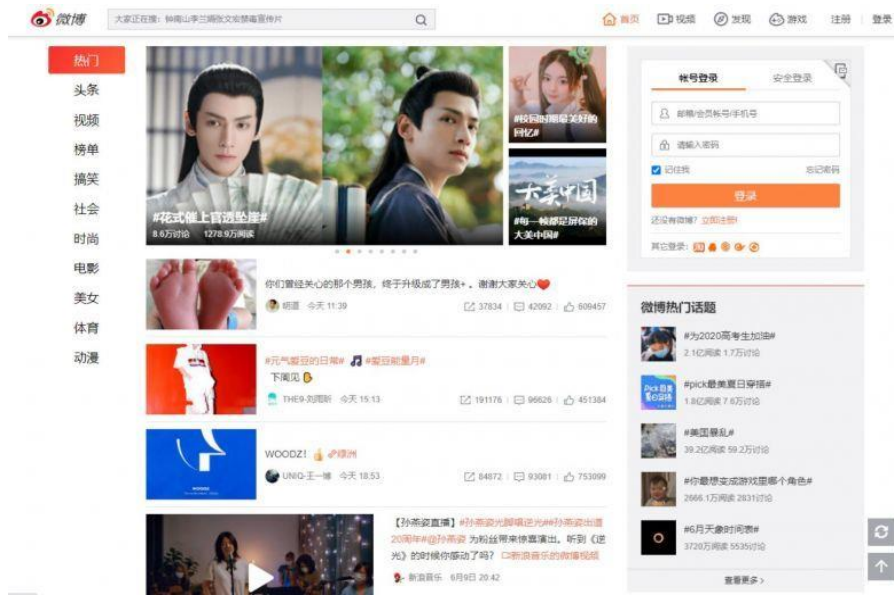
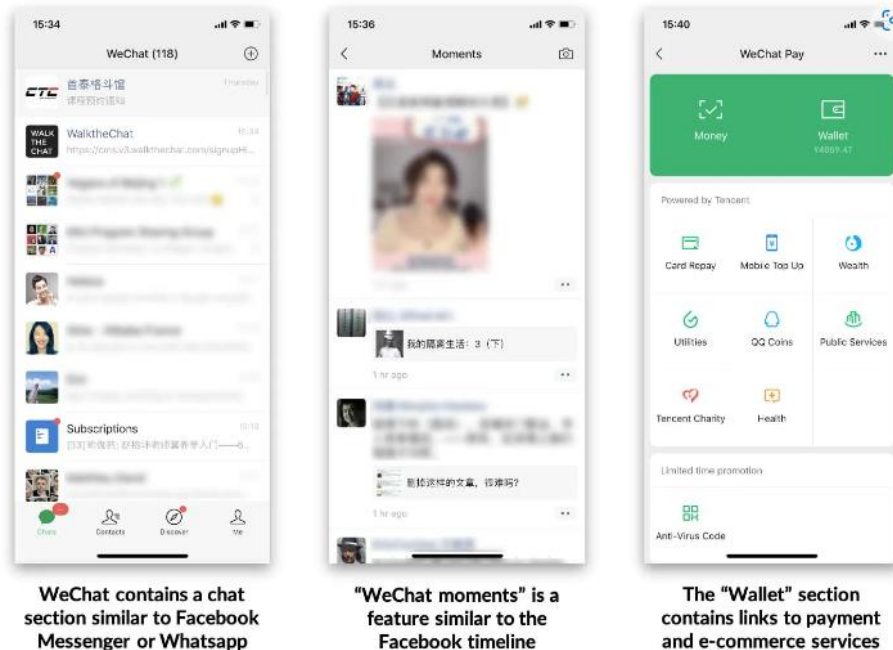


Figure 1: Weibo Homepage

(Source: <https://www.thestar.com.my/aseanplus/aseanplus-news/2020/06/11/china-punishes-weibo-for-interfering-with-communication>, Retrieved on 4/5/22)



WeChat contains a chat section similar to Facebook Messenger or Whatsapp

"WeChat moments" is a feature similar to the Facebook timeline

The "Wallet" section contains links to payment and e-commerce services

Figure 2: Screenshots of WeChat

(Source: <https://www.shopify.com/blog/sell-on-wechat>, Retrieved on 6/27/22)

The Chinese government has invested massively in access to the internet. This has caused a growth in internet users. Internet access in China has risen from 298 million in 2008 to over a billion in 2021. Mobile internet users have reached over 897 million as of March 2020 in China according to the China Internet Network Information Center (Tang et al., 2021). The massive growth of mobile internet users in the past decades has made it possible for new media to grow. The next step China has been undergoing is its development of 5G technology. The implementation of 5G will allow for faster speeds and more extensive data transfers (Liu et al., 2017).

The influence of new media is widespread with its ability to communicate information instantaneously to a large audience. While sometimes this can lead to the spread of disinformation, new media has also been used for important issues, such as food security in China. In 2012 there was a post uploaded by a CCTV host on a microblog detailing potentially harmful chemicals found in kid's jelly snacks (Peng et al., 2015). The post caused widespread discussion of food security on the internet. Although the post was later taken down, the China Dairy Association later made an announcement claiming that the production of these jelly snacks followed strict rules and regulations (Peng et al., 2015). This instance shows the evolution of how new media has the potential to disseminate vital information about ongoing crises, including food security.

## **2.4 Transition to New Media Era**

The number of Internet users in China has increased significantly over the past five years. The 48th Statistical Report on China's Internet Development showed that the proportion of Chinese netizens who access the Internet via mobile phones has reached 99.6% (CNNIC, 2022). The report further stated that China has built the world's largest 5G network, involving a total

number of 961,500 5G base stations and 365 million 5G terminal connections. Therefore, China is currently experiencing a dramatic boost in wireless information and communication technologies.

Consequently, the Chinese news industry is experiencing a revolution. The transition from traditional media to new media era has changed the landscape of mass communication in China. The wider bandwidth and low-cost software have given rise to the growth of new media. In addition, with easy-to-use Web publishing tools, always-on connections, and increasingly powerful mobile devices, people have become active in creating and disseminating their own news and information on new media platforms (Bowman & Willis, 2003). As a result, the diversity of the content of social media platforms is broader than that of traditional media. In summary, new media platforms could easily fulfill audiences' demands of receiving news and information from diverse sources, making them competitive with traditional media platforms (Bowman & Willis, 2003).

A particularly relevant case study on the transition from traditional media to new media is that of Global Times. Global Times began as a subdivision of the People's Daily and was founded in 1993. As Figure 3 shows, initially, Global Times disseminated news through newspapers. Its targeted audiences were mainly those who can read Chinese because the content of the newspaper was written in Chinese. However, as it transformed from traditional media to new media, it started to globalize to expand its international influence. First, it created an official website in English. Additionally, Global Times issued official channels on different media platforms such as Twitter and YouTube. The statistical survey reveals that there is a total increase of about 20,000 followers on YouTube from May 2021 to July 2022 (Figure 4). To summarize, Global Times's influence on the global market is steadily increasing due to the employment of new media.



**Figure 3: Global Times Newspaper**

(Source: <https://newspaper.99dengbao.com/113>, Retrieved on 5/24/22)



**Figure 4: Statistics of Total YouTube Subscribers for Global Times**

(May 2019 - July 2022)

(Source: <https://socialblade.com/youtube/c/globaltimes/monthly/>, Retrieved on 7/5/22)

## 2.5 Opportunities of Traditional Media

New media posed many challenges to traditional media. However, traditional media still has advantages over newer forms. New media struggles to contain rumors because of user participation. New media must censor while traditional media has the power to smother rumors using fact-checked truth. One study pointed out that rumors pop up during times of crisis or dramatic social changes. The more exciting and emotional the rumor may be, the wider it may influence (Liang & Yang, 2015). The circulation of misinformation results in increasingly inaccurate information. This inaccurate information leads to public confusion. When there is a lack of reliable information, it will lead to black holes which are the reason for the dissemination of rumors (Liang & Yang, 2015).

The spread of rumors and other unsavory content has become a big problem that the Chinese government addressed directly. In late 2018 the Cyberspace Administration of China (CAC) stepped in to require New Media companies to self-examine and “fully assume responsibilities in generating healthy content for users.” The internet investigations aimed to crack down on “vulgarity, pornography, clickbait, rumor-mongering, illicit marketing, content theft, illegal advertisements, and other behaviors that disrupt cyber safety and violate the law” (Yun, 2018). It was incredibly important for the CAC that all New Media platforms tightened down on what content was on the platform to keep users from moving to the least regulated platform.

Traditional media expects the truthful presentation of news. With that comes a rigorous expectation of ethics and fact-checking (Liang & Yang, 2015). It also requires being “strict with the authenticity and objectivity of news sources” and ensuring a “correct understanding of the facts strengthen the information disclosure transparency” which means that any media presented must

be to clarify the truth and build trust with the audience rather than to try to stir panic or emotional reactions (Liang & Yang, 2015). Traditional media has found an opening in the rumor-heavy new media era by transitioning from traditional platforms to these new online platforms. To put it simply, traditional media has joined in becoming New Media. This is similar to how news channels and late-night shows in the U.S. can be found on YouTube among other social media platforms. For example, CCTV (China Central Television), a Chinese state-owned broadcaster, has a TikTok account where they can communicate news with a younger and more modern audience. CCTV also has a Bilibili channel with 8.53 million subscribers. This is a strong parallel to American news companies like MSNBC which maintain over 4 million subscribers on YouTube. CCTV can fill a void within new media technology by maintaining a strong relationship with its audience that was developed using traditional media. Bilibili and TikTok have just become modern avenues to present news as TV was the modernization of media from the newspaper.

**The remainder of the page is intentionally left blank.**

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The goal of this project aimed to reveal the process of the transition from traditional media to new media, as well as its impacts on both the media industry and audiences in China. Based on our findings and research, our team made practical recommendations to both the media industry looking to expand their influence as new media and researchers interested in this topic. To accomplish this goal, our group adopted the following objectives:

- Investigate the transition from journalists' perspectives.
- Research the influences of the transition on different generations in China.

This chapter will further discuss how the goal was achieved through these objectives by utilizing paper interviews and an online survey.

### **3.2 Method 1: Paper Interview**

It is of paramount significance to understand how traditional media transforms into new media in China from a professional perspective. Hence, it is essential to conduct interviews with journalists who worked in the Chinese media industry and have already experienced such a transition. Due to the pandemic, the language barrier, and the fact that our team members and interviewees were in different time zones and geographical locations, the in-person interviews could not be conducted. However, it was still possible to conduct interviews on paper. To conduct these interviews, it was necessary to first prepare interview questions that would provide us with

the desired information without inconveniencing the participants. These questions were provided to our interviewees in both Chinese and English. They focused on:

- 1.) phases of transition;
- 2.) the reason behind the transition;
- 3.) difficulties encountered in the transition;
- 4.) pros. and cons. of both traditional and new media;
- 5.) their perceptions of the transition.

A disclosure statement was also written in both Chinese and English to comply with the requirements of the IRB as well as to assure the participants that this study was academic. Through these interviews, it was possible to get a professional perspective from people who had first-hand experience with the transition of media. The information provided gave us insight into the process of transitioning from traditional media to new media, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of the transition of media which illustrated some interesting facts that had not been considered beforehand.

### **3.3 Method 2: Survey**

In addition to professional perspectives, our team also used online survey to gauge the general public's perceptions of the transition. A list of survey questions was first prepared during ID 2050. Once these questions were finalized, they were translated into Chinese and were assembled into a survey using Wenjuanxing (Survey Star in English). The web-based questionnaire was then disseminated via WeChat. The online survey focuses on:

- 1.) age and location of survey respondents;
- 2.) their news source and media form preferences;



- 3.) their habits of receiving news;
- 4.) their habit of using interactive functions on new media platforms;
- 5.) their perceptions of traditional and new media.

The survey is made up of ten multiple choice questions (MCQs) and an open-ended question. Hence, two different strategies were adopted to analyze the survey data. The analysis of the responses to these MCQs was primarily based on the statistical comparison among participants in different age groups, i.e., the construction of bar charts and pie charts in Excel based on the collected data. For the open-ended question, pie charts were adopted to summarize the age demographics of those participants who responded to the open-ended question and those who provided invalidated responses. After classifying these responses based on their similarity (keywords), a bar chart was used to rank the responses from the most to the least frequent.

**The remainder of the page is intentionally left blank.**

## **Chapter 4: Finding**

### **4.1 Interview Data Analysis**

Five professional journalists were interviewed to investigate the transition from traditional media to new media in China. Based on the data from these interviews, this section summarizes and analyzes the process of the transition and the rationale behind it, its impacts on both journalists and audiences, and the advantages/disadvantages of the transition.

#### **4.1.1 The Challenge of New Media to Traditional Media**

As stated in section 2.1, which briefly introduces the definition of new media, the transformation of new media is closely related to the advancement of technology. The explosion of the internet in the 1990s increased the range of media choices, thus diminishing the newspaper's dominance as the source of news. Two of the interviewees (Appendix A and C) also admitted that the popularity of mobile devices, especially mobile devices such as smartphones, is a fundamental reason for the transformation occurring in China. One Shanghai-based journalist with extensive experience in the media industry stressed that a key function of the smart device is to enable users to get firsthand access to the most up-to-date information. Consequently, traditional print media is challenged by some media forms employing smart devices.

Recently, the rise of We-media platforms is also one of the crucial reasons for the transformation. Figure 5 below shows the popular We-media platforms in China. Bilibili was founded as an ACG (animation, comics, games) website. As it started to commercialize, it evolved into a social media platform that integrated content on a range of topics. Weibo and Douyin are

the Chinese equivalents of Twitter and TikTok, respectively. One interviewee (Appendix C) pointed out that the rise of We-media interrupted traditional media's monopoly on information dissemination. On We-media platforms, non-professional users can create and share their content with other users, making the content diverse and plentiful. In addition, the ways of presenting information on We-media platforms are no longer constrained to text. The information can be distributed through other forms, such as pictures and videos, which gradually change how audiences view the content. Nowadays, most of the public are used to making a quick read (browsing/skimming through the content) to get the information and do not prefer to read long articles in newspapers (Zeng, 2007). As a result, most of the public gradually ignores traditional paper media.



(a)

(b)

(c)

**Figure 5: Popular We-Media Platforms in China**

**(a). Bilibili (b). Weibo (c). Douyin**

Overall, traditional media gradually lost competitiveness and had to transform into new media to survive due to the development of Chinese Internet technology and the emergence of various new media forms.

#### **4.1.2 The Process of the Transition**

Based on our interviews, this section covers four specific phases of transformation from traditional media to new media in China.

In the past, most media companies were only able to issue traditional newspapers and periodicals on a regional basis. For instance, the primary distribution location of Yan Zhao Metropolis Daily is in Hubei province, China. Therefore, many traditional media companies (especially paper media businesses) could not expand their market influences due to geographical constraints. To deal with geographical constraints, some traditional media companies began to issue electronic newspapers on the Internet. Figure 6 and Figure 7 show the e-newspapers of Yan Zhao Metropolis Daily (a newspaper based in Shijiazhuang, the provincial capital of Hebei) and of Guangzhou Daily (a newspaper based in Guangzhou). These e-newspapers are essentially electronic replicas of their physical newspapers with the same layout and content. As a result, the local paper media can attract more audiences on a national basis. Issuing e-newspapers is the transformation's first phase, which created a solid foundation for future phases.

**The remainder of this page is intentionally left blank.**



Figure 6: E-newspapers of Yan Zhao Metropolis Daily

(Source: [https://yzdsb.hebnews.cn/pc/paper/layout/202205/29/node\\_01.html](https://yzdsb.hebnews.cn/pc/paper/layout/202205/29/node_01.html), Retrieved on 5/28/22)



Figure 7: E-newspapers of Guangzhou Daily

*(Source: [https://gzdaily.dayoo.com/pc/html/2022-06/26/node\\_1.htm?v=1](https://gzdaily.dayoo.com/pc/html/2022-06/26/node_1.htm?v=1), Retrieved on 6/25/22)*

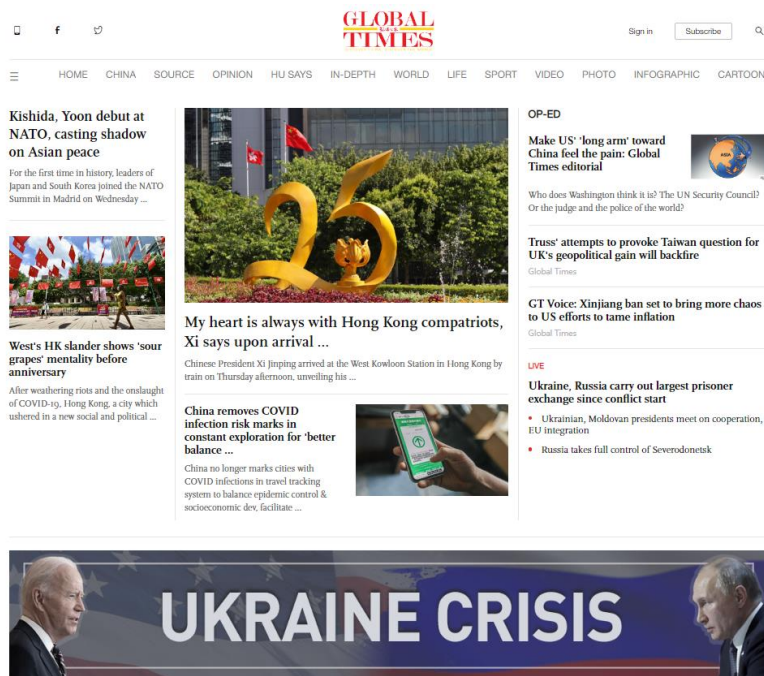
Having news websites is the second stage of the transformation in which traditional media can further enlarge the number of its audience. One drawback of the newspaper/e-newspaper is that the choices of content were limited because of the media form. Additionally, it is hard for a newspaper/e-newspaper to report the latest news on a timely basis. Hence, traditional media began establishing news websites to increase its competitiveness. In this case, journalists could publish news on the website immediately whenever there is breaking news, which ensured that more content is produced in a shorter time. Furthermore, the digital transformation allowed traditional media to greatly expand its scope of reach. For example, Global Times and CGTN, have created their official English websites. These websites provide China's latest news in English so that people around the world can stay informed about what is happening in China (Figures 8 & 9).

**The remainder of this page is intentionally left blank.**



**Figure 8: CGTN News Websites**

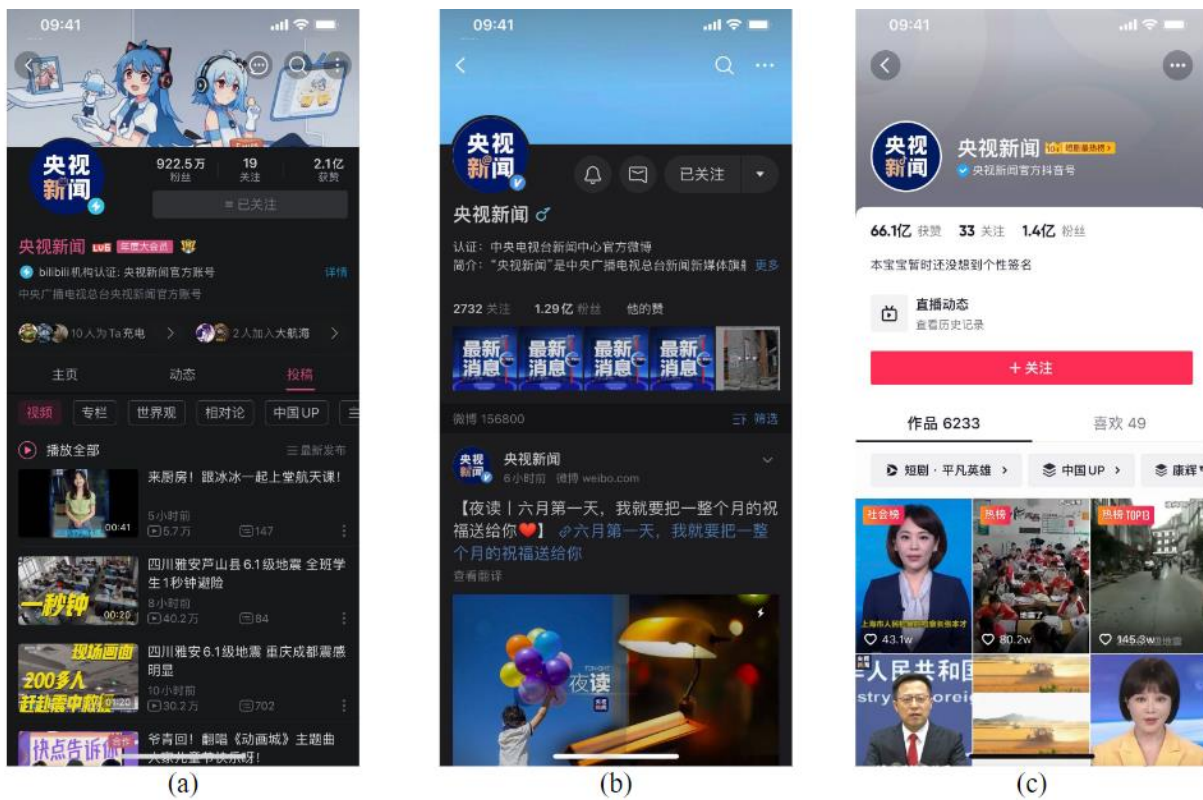
(Source: <https://www.cgtn.com/>, Retrieved on 5/28/22)



**Figure 9: Global Times News Websites**

(Source: <https://www.cgtn.com/>, Retrieved on 6/29/22)

With the growth and development of social media platforms, the third stage of the transformation came. In this phase, media companies started creating official accounts on popular social media platforms. As shown in Figure 10, CCTV News has established official channels on Bilibili, Weibo, and Douyin. Meanwhile, it has amassed a large number of subscribers on these platforms, ranging from 9 million to 140 million.



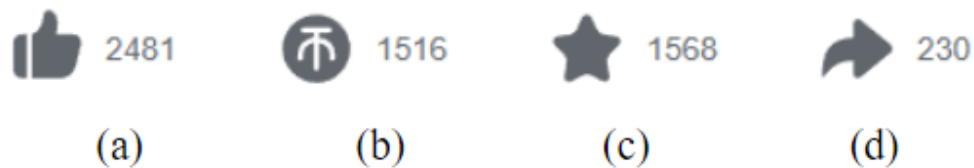
**Figure 10: Official Channels of CCTV News on We-media Platforms**

**(a). Bilibili (b). Weibo (c). Douyin**

Taking into account the increasing number of audiences in this stage and the fact that these audiences might have different reading habits, traditional media made certain adjustments to the methods of presenting the information. For example, short videos and short texts are also used to



present the content in parallel with lengthy articles on these platforms. Moreover, a significant feature of social media platforms, i.e., interactivity, can also help traditional media develop on these platforms. Moreover, most social media platforms have developed interaction functions such as like, comment, and forward for users to interact with other users or content creators (Figure 11). For instance, audiences can forward their favorite content to other users, contributing to information dissemination. Meanwhile, users' comments can allow the traditional media organization to improve its newsfeed mechanism.



**Figure 11: *Interaction Buttons of Bilibili***

**(a). The “Like” Button**

**(b). The “Coin” Button (provide coins to content creators)**

**(c). The “Favorite” Button (store favorite content into a specific list)**

**(d). The “Forward” Button**

*(Source:*

*[https://www.bilibili.com/video/BV11h411k72c/?vd\\_source=3991deaba43c5a25ebd98446c718aa1f](https://www.bilibili.com/video/BV11h411k72c/?vd_source=3991deaba43c5a25ebd98446c718aa1f), Retrieved on 6/14/22)*

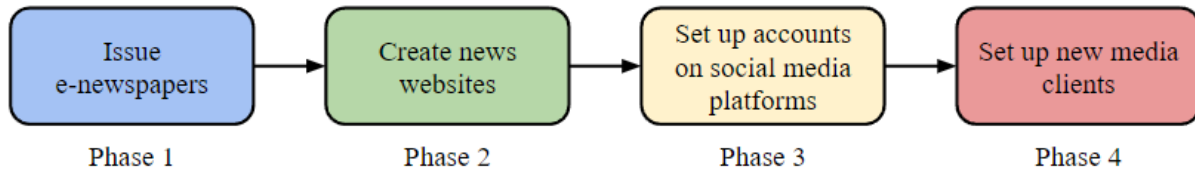
In the last stage of the transformation, a traditional media company creates its news client, that is, its mobile news app. For instance, People’s Daily has established its mobile news app that integrated all the content (Figure 12).



**Figure 12: New Media Client of People’s Daily**

To summarize, traditional media experienced four stages during the transition. Figure 13 below depicts these phases in accordance with the timeline of the media industry's development

process. Overall, these four states took place in the last two decades with far-reaching impacts on both the news industry and the audience discussed in the next section.



**Figure 13: Phase Diagram of the Transformation**

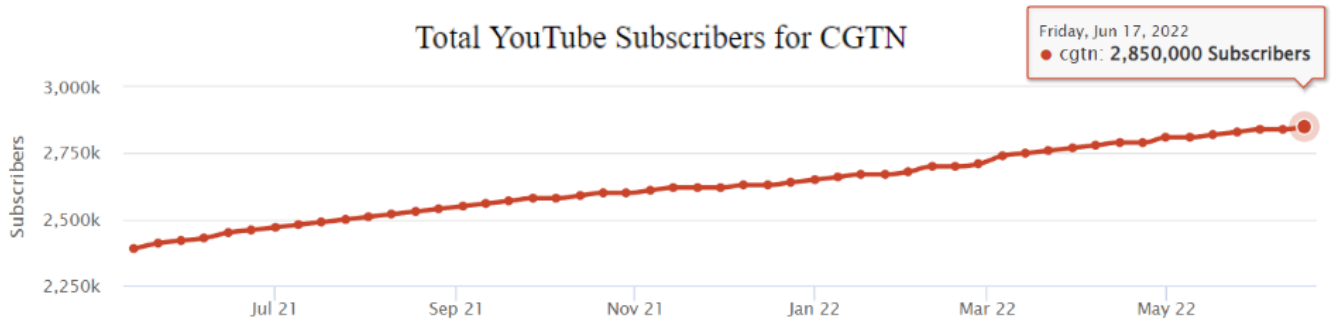
### **4.1.3 Pros. and Cons. of the Transition**

To gain a deeper understanding of the benefits and drawbacks of the transition, two questions in the interview transcript asked interviewees about their own perceptions of both traditional media and new media individually. This section presents and analyzes their responses based on several main themes.

#### **4.1.3.1 Advantages of the Transition**

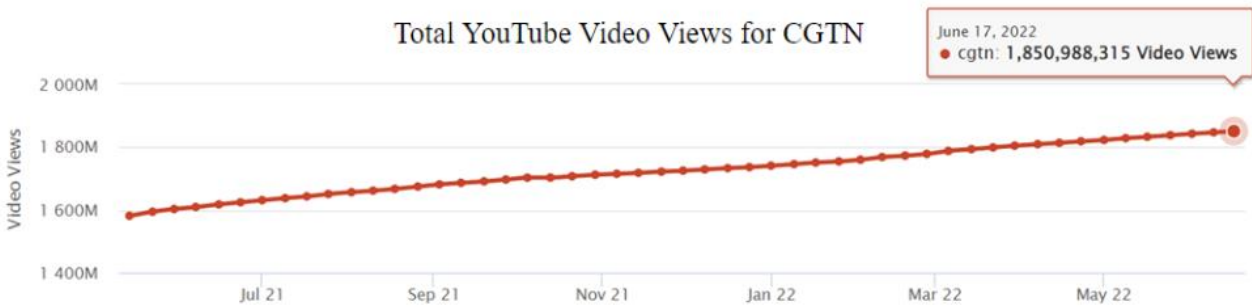
The media industry can take the advantage of the transition by attracting more audiences to expand their market. According to our interview (Appendix A), an issue of several million newspapers in the past was only able to attract around five million viewers. However, a single piece of breaking news can be read and viewed by tens of millions or hundreds of millions of people via the Internet nowadays. Moreover, the distribution of new media content is no longer limited by geographical barriers (Appendix E), and hence people all over the world can access the content. As shown in Figure 14, the official CGTN YouTube channel has 2.85 million subscribers now and has gained roughly 500,000 followers since last year. In addition, its videos have 18

billion views in total (Figure 15). Overall, the transition made the media industry a lot easier to distribute news to a larger audience and expand its global markets.



**Figure 14: Statistics of Total YouTube Subscribers for CGTN**  
(May 2021 – Jun 2022)

(Source: <https://socialblade.com/youtube/c/cgtn/monthly>, Retrieved on 6/14/22)



**Figure 15: Statistics of Total YouTube Video Views for CGTN**  
(May 14, 2021 - Jun 17, 2022)

(Source: <https://socialblade.com/youtube/c/cgtn/monthly>, Retrieved on 6/14/22)

The transition allowed the media industry to provide massive content covering broader topics. Based on the interview (Appendix D), a newspaper might not have enough room for massive content. However, it will not be a problem for new media since the Internet can store a sea of data. Furthermore, according to our sponsor, the transition into new media allowed the media industry to use algorithms to identify audience preferences and deliver content that caters to their tastes (personal communication between one of our team members and the sponsor). In the past, the main topics of traditional media content were political and economic issues. By contrast, new media covers more daily topics such as entertainment and sports. Therefore, new media content can cover a wider range of topics than traditional media.

The media industry can disseminate news in a timely manner with various methods after the transition. According to one of the interviewees (Appendix A), the media industry requires journalists to update news on time after the transition; that is, journalists must write and publish a piece of breaking news on various platforms right after they learn about it. Meanwhile, new media journalism involves the use of multimedia tools, like video, audio, and graphics to tell a news story. One interviewee (Appendix C) said that he sometimes needs to use multiple forms to report the news such as inserting short videos into the articles published on the WeChat official account. Another interviewee (Appendix D) said that not only do journalists need to learn how to write news articles after the transition, but they should also be familiar with shooting images and editing videos. Overall, new media content is no longer limited to a single text, instead, it combines text, graphs, and video, which attracts audiences who prefer to gain information through images and videos.

Lastly, the transition provides a platform for people to interact with one another. In the past, the viewers were passive recipients of news information. However, the interactivity of new

media allows people to express their own thoughts and interact with other viewers. For instance, people can comment, push the like button, and forward the content to others. As one of the interviewees mentioned (Appendix D), only the society's elites had the right to speak their own ideas on media in the past. Nowadays, such a right is now shared by all members of society, thanks to new media technology.

#### **4.1.3.2 Disadvantages of the Transition**

The news credibility of new media cannot be guaranteed. According to one of the interviewees (Appendix C), most of the new media content was published without further polishing or being reviewed to maximize the efficiency of reporting news. Consequently, typos in articles and even inaccurate reports can be frequently found on new media platforms. Besides, since the new media content is distributed via the Internet, it can be retracted at any time. On the contrary, the traditional paper media industry cannot take back all newspapers to fix content. As a result, new media journalists are not as rigorous as traditional media journalists while writing news articles since they do not need to pay for their mistakes. Furthermore, new media is inclined to use sensational headlines to attract more audiences and increase its influence. The employment of a sensational headline to attract more audiences is known as clickbait. However, most of the new media content cannot align with the headline. On the other hand, one of the interviewees (Appendix B) claimed that most of the new media content does not objectively depict the news. Instead, they are more likely to intentionally include some extreme or even ridiculous points of view to attract more audiences. Employing such a manner, a media company might attract abundant audiences shortly. However, it might exert a significant negative impact on the credibility of the media industry in the long run. In a nutshell, the transition caused the media industry to produce less reliable news than it did in the past. The credibility of new media has been further

weakened because of the wide spread of online fake news and rumors. As a social phenomenon, rumors existed in any society. But as mentioned before, one of the advantages of new media is its ability to attract a wider audience. As a result, once a rumor circulates on new media, particularly on social media platforms, it has the potential to spread quickly and widely (Luo & Hu, 2020). In addition, because the interactivity of new media such as forwarding allows the audience to spread the news, it is inevitable that more rumors will be generated in the process of news dissemination, making rumors spread on a much vaster scale (Luo & Hu, 2020). Moreover, both government-controlled media and commercial media will intentionally spread sensational rumors that cater to the audience's curiosity to increase audience traffic (Guo, 2020).

Furthermore, the new media content tends to be shallow, this is especially the case with social media. The print media industry used to publish newspapers or periodicals on a regular schedule such as once a day. It gives journalists enough time to draft, revise, and publish in-depth news articles. However, one fundamental principle of the new media industry is to deliver the news in a timely manner. In order to maximize the news reporting efficiency, most of the new media platforms simply report the news without providing analysis or specific points of view. In other words, most of the new media content is shallow because spending too much time on revision and editing cannot provide audiences with the latest information. Besides, unlike traditional media content relying on lengthy articles, most new media content is composed of short texts or videos. Consequently, the new media content is lacking in depth since the short text and video are not sufficient for detailed and lengthy content.

Ultimately, the user loyalty of the media industry decreases after the transformation. As mentioned before, traditional media can provide in-depth and unique content, which can attract a large number of loyal audiences. When talking about user loyalty of traditional media, one of the

interviewees (Appendix C) who works for Laodong Daily said that one reader complained that the newspaper company did not send him newspapers for a long time and requested the company to deliver to him all the missed newspapers. Thus, it is clear that traditional media still enjoys high levels of user loyalty. Moreover, since most of the new media content merely reports the news, there are no significant differences in most new media reports on the same topic. People can always access the latest news no matter what content they want to view. Hence, the user loyalty of the new media industry is not as high as the traditional media industry due to the lack of original content.

**The remainder of this page is intentionally left blank.**

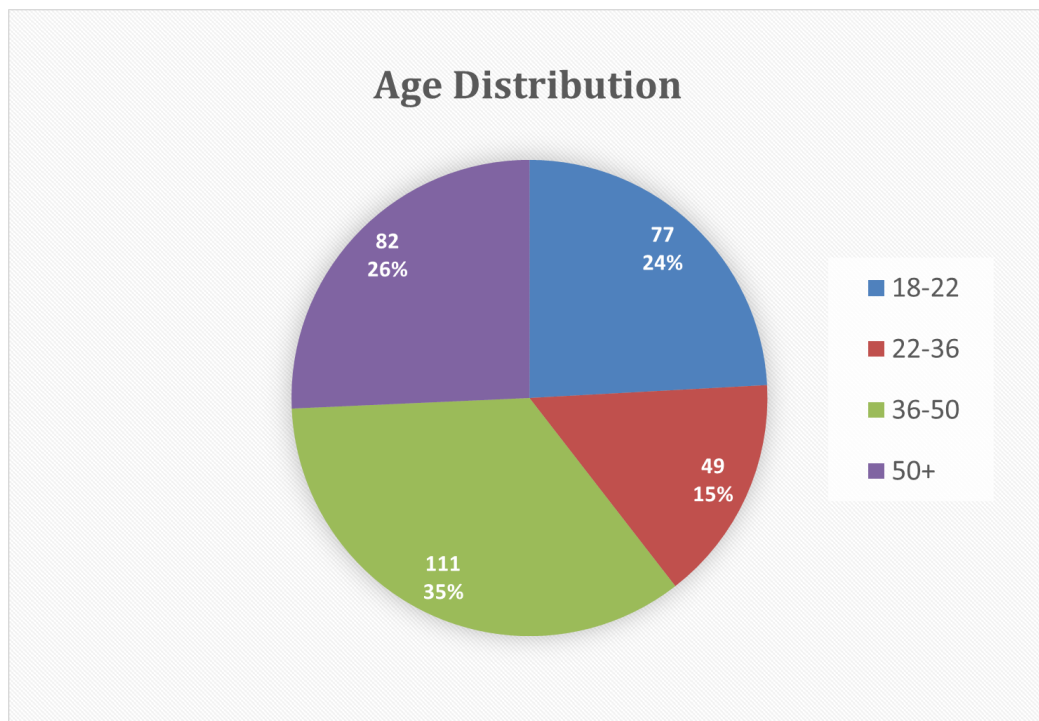


## 4.2 Survey Data Analysis

In order to investigate the impacts of the transition on different generations in China, an online survey was conducted with 319 respondents ranging in age from 18 to 50+ years old in China. The survey includes ten multiple-choice questions and one open-ended question that focuses on participants' ages, experience with new media, and personal perspectives on the transition. This chapter presents and analyzes these results based on our collected data.

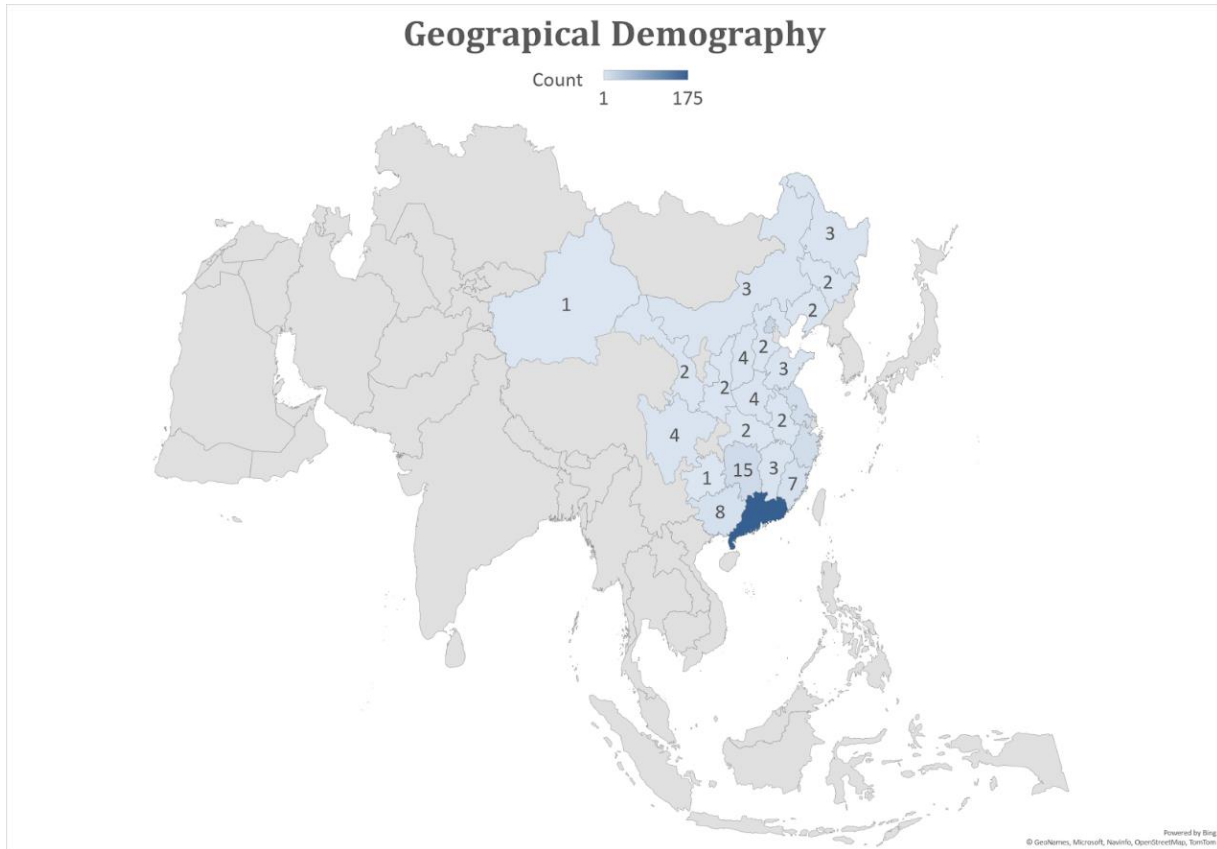
### 4.2.1 Demography Distribution

This section summarizes the age and geographical demographics of the survey respondents.



**Figure 16: Survey Participants' Age Distribution**

Figure 16 represents the age demography of our survey takers. Out of 319 responses, 24% of the respondents were between the ages of 18 to 22. 15% of the respondents were between the ages of 22 to 36. 35% of the respondents were between the ages of 36 to 50. 26% of the respondents were above 50 years old.



**Figure 17: Survey Participants' Geographical Demography**

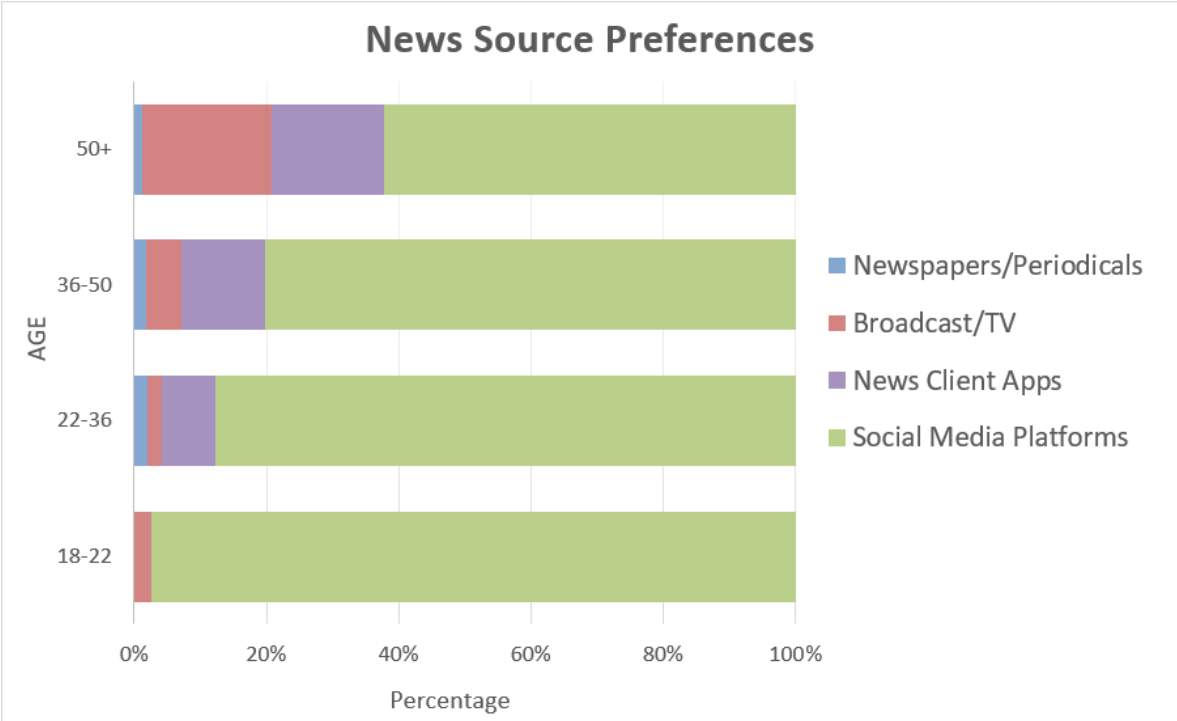
Figure 17 represents the geographical distribution of our survey respondents. According to the map, even though survey participants are not evenly distributed geographically, they covered most of the provinces and cities in China. Abundant responses were from Guangdong Province, accounting for 175 of the 319 total responses. Most of the participants might have received their

surveys from our team member’s relatives in Guangdong, which could explain why they were also from Guangdong.

To recap, the uneven age and geographical distribution of our survey takers can somehow affect the accuracy and precision of our results.

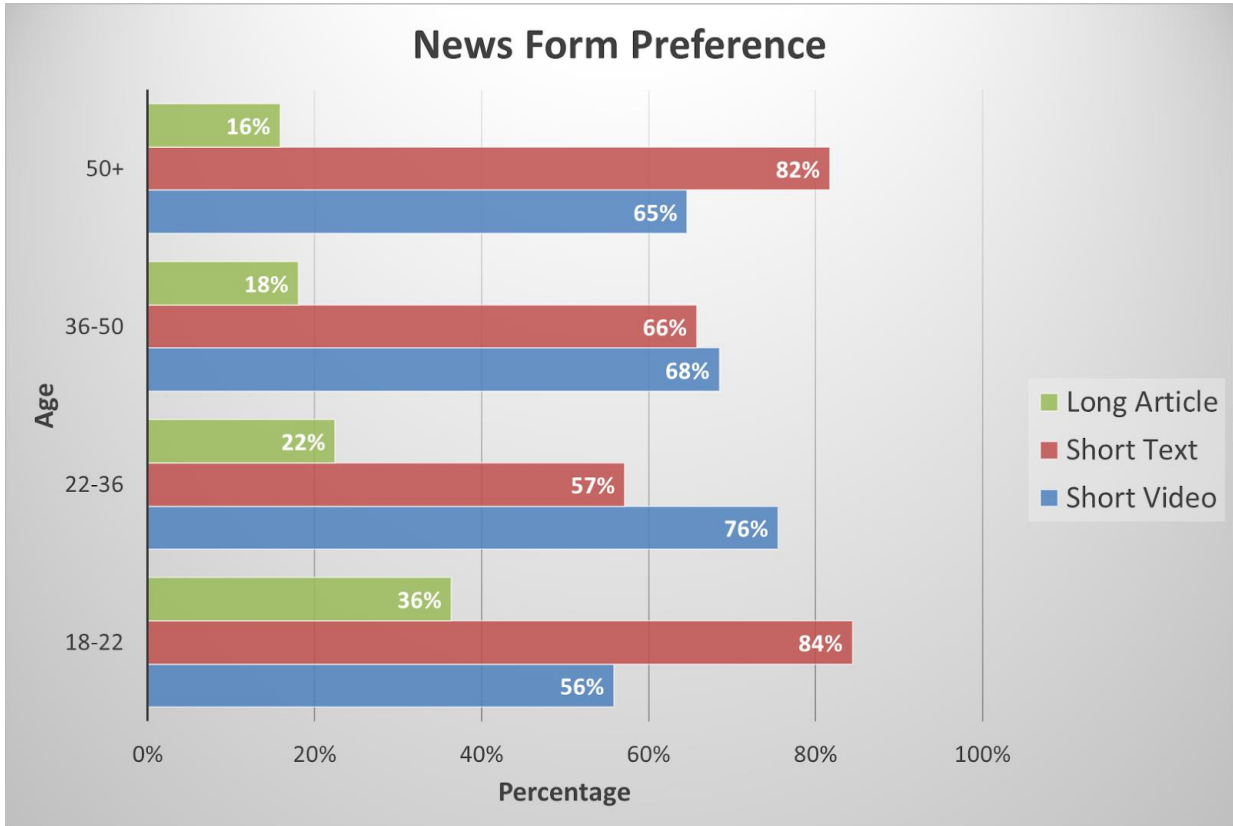
### 4.2.2 New Media User Experience

People's experiences with new media from a variety of perspectives were learned by conducting surveys with over 300 people in China. The results of the study give a general picture of their habits and preferences when using new media to get information. This section summarizes and analyzes the findings.



**Figure 18: Participants’ News Source Preference**

Figure 18 shows the news source preferences of participants based on different age groups. Social media platforms such as Weibo, WeChat, and Douyin are the primary news sources for the respondents, regardless of their age group. Such a result is mind-blowing because it was assumed that there should still be many senior citizens (50+) using traditional media to get information based on literature reviews and our findings from interviews with journalists. The fact that respondents over the age of 50 can still complete our online survey implies that they have become accustomed to receiving information via smart devices in their daily lives. Although our findings from interviewing journalists suggest that having new media clients is supposed to be the last stage of the transition, the bar chart reveals that not many participants use new media clients to obtain information. According to the discussion with our sponsor, most new media clients could only provide a limited amount of content. For instance, the new media client of People's Daily (Figure 12) only provides content created by People's Daily. Thus, if people want to access news from various news sources via new media clients, they need to download many apps. Due to the limited storage capacity of smart devices, most people are unwilling to download plenty of apps just to access news. On the other hand, a single social media platform can integrate the official channels of various media companies. Hence, it is no surprise that most of our participants prefer to access information from social media platforms. In general, traditional media is gradually being replaced by new media.

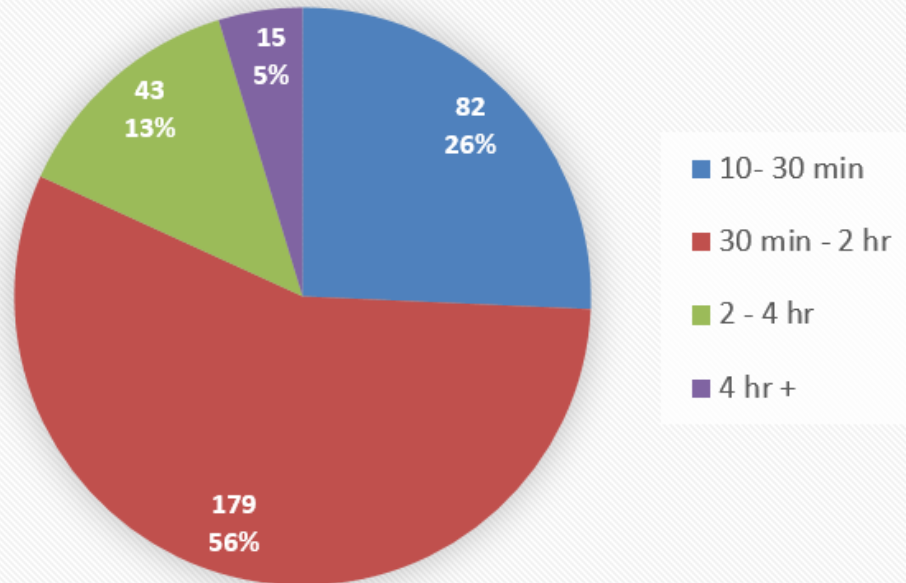


**Figure 19: Participant’s News Form Preference**

Figure 19 depicts the news form preference of participants. Since the multiple-choice question regarding news source experience allows our participants to choose more than one answer, it is no surprise that the sum of percentages for each age group is more than 100%. The participants in the 18-22 (36%) age group and those in the 22-36 age group (22%) were more likely to gain information by reading long articles. At least half of the respondents in each age group claimed that they get information from short videos and short texts. More than 80% of our survey participants in the age groups of 18-22 and 50+ received the news in the form of short texts.

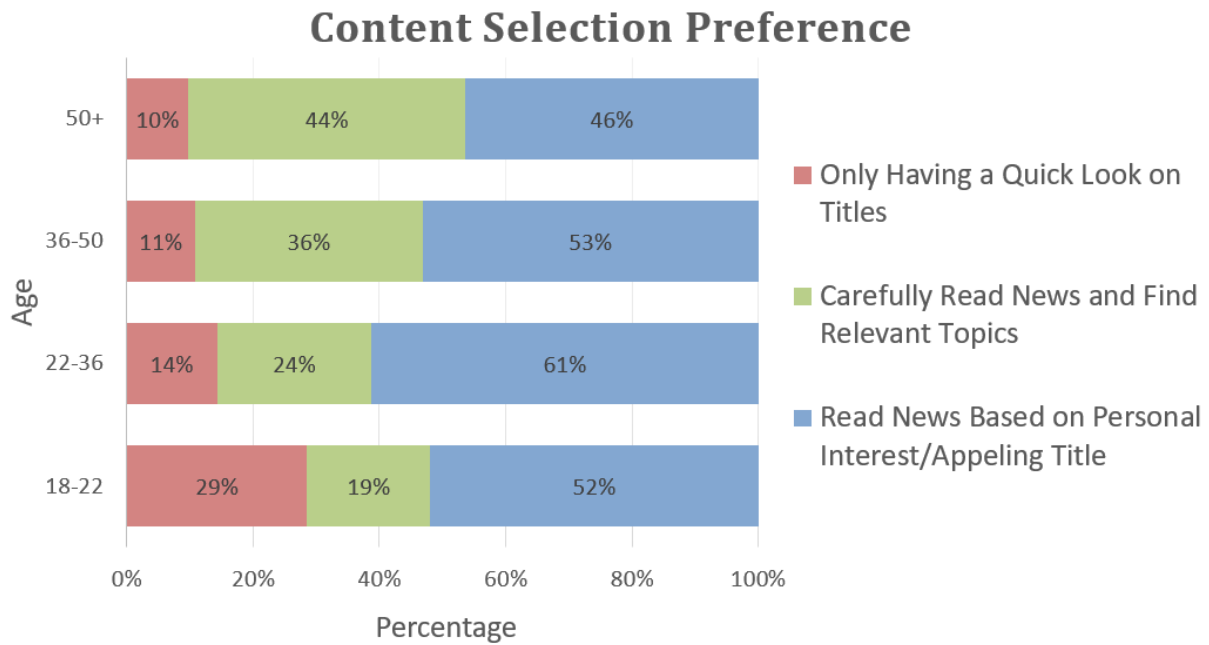
Overall, our survey shows that short videos and texts are primary sources for people of different ages to receive news nowadays. Additionally, long articles become less popular for people to get information as they age.

## Average Time Spent on New Media



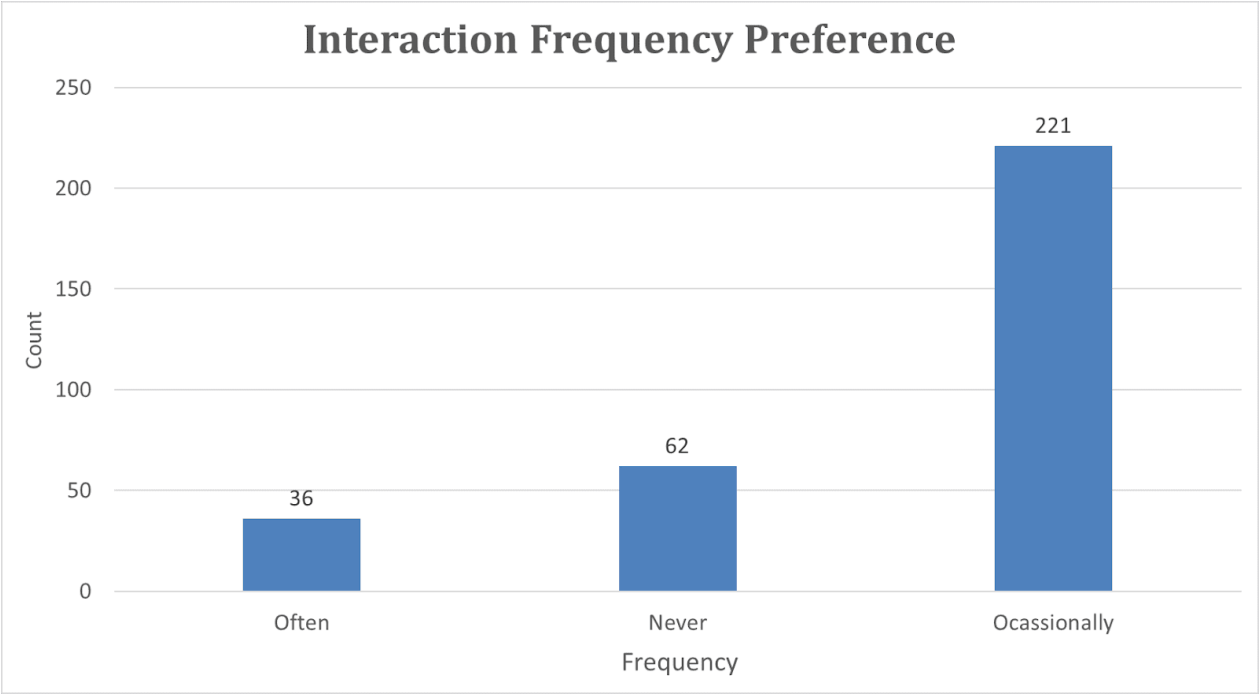
**Figure 20: Participants' Average Time Spent on New Media**

The average amount of time spent on new media by participants is depicted in Figure 20. More than half of the respondents (56%) spent 30 minutes to 2 hours per day on new media. Only 5% of those who responded to the survey spent more than 4 hours on new media. In a nutshell, 95% of participants spent less than 4 hours per day accessing news via new media platforms.



**Figure 21: Survey Participants' Content Selection Preference**

Figure 21 shows the content selection preference of our survey respondents. Approximately half of our participants in each age group said they read the news that is either interesting to them or has appealing headlines. In addition, the bar chart shows that people are less willing to skim through titles and prefer to read the news carefully and then find relevant topics as they age.



**Figure 22: Survey Participants' Interaction Frequency Preference**

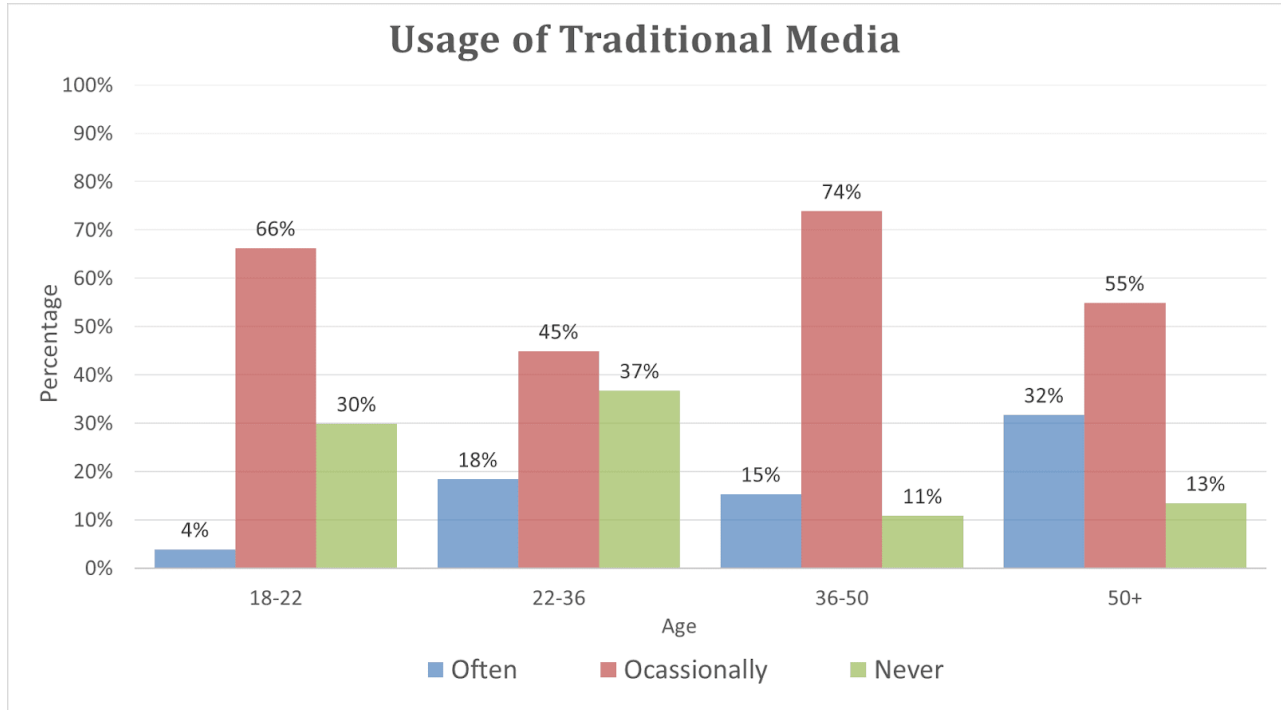
Figure 22 illustrates the interaction frequency preference of our survey participants. 221 out of 319 (69.3%) respondents said they sometimes forward or hit the thumbs-up button for their favorite content on new media platforms. 36 out of 319 (11.3%) participants claimed that they frequently use the interaction functions when browsing new media content. 62 out of 319 (19.4%) held that they only get news from new media platforms and do not do any interactions.

Our survey data reveals that nearly 90% of respondents have tried new media interaction functions. These findings correlate with our expectations based on literature reviews and interviews with professional journalists that interactivity, which brings people together, is one of the most notable features of new media.



### 4.2.3 General Public’s Perceptions of the Transition

This section presents and analyzes the survey data of our respondents’ perceptions regarding the transition.

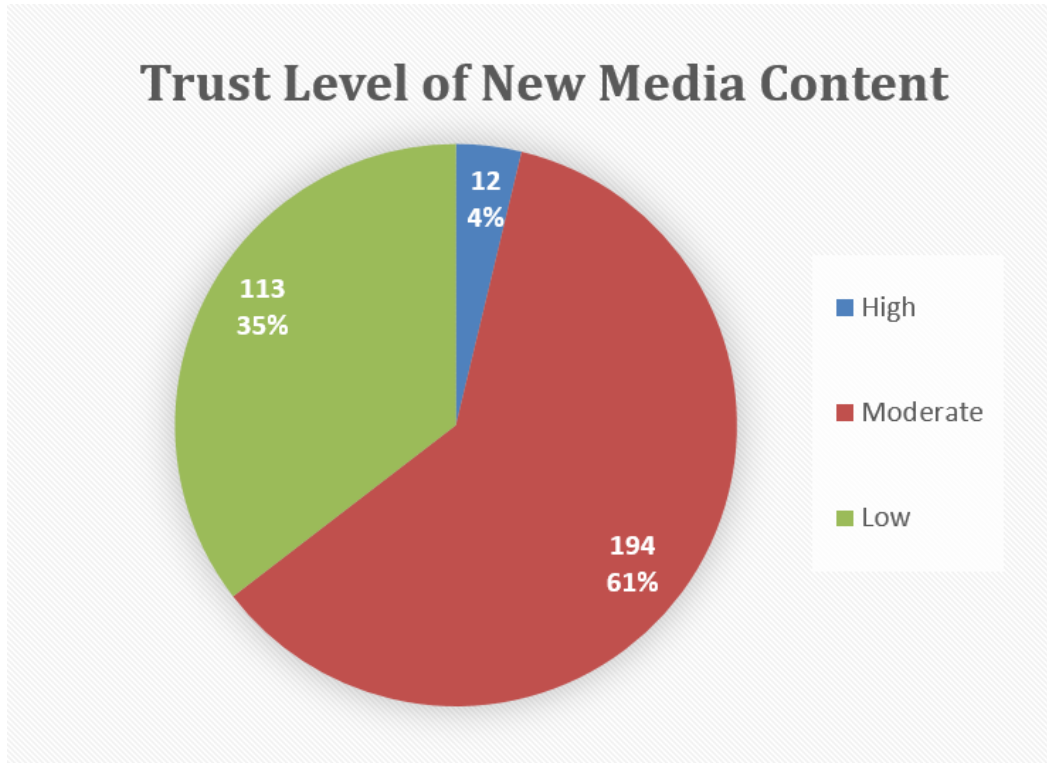


**Figure 23: Participants’ Usage of Traditional Media**

Figure 23 presents the participants’ usage of traditional media. The majority of our survey respondents in each age group claimed that they still occasionally get information from traditional media. For the age groups 18-20 and 22-36, the number of participants who said they never use traditional media is higher than those who stated that they use it frequently. However, this appears to be the opposite among respondents aged 36-50 and 50+.

The survey data reveals that over 80% of middle-aged and senior respondents still rely on traditional media for information. This finding is consistent with our interviews with journalists

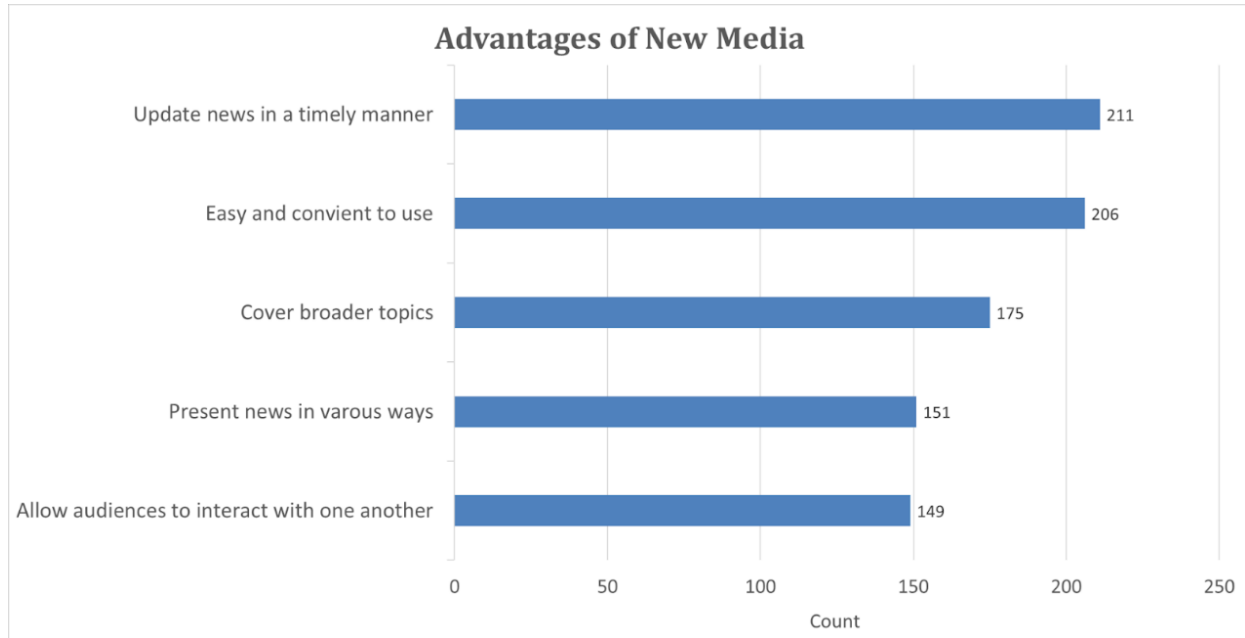
who stated that some middle-aged and senior citizens still stick to using traditional media to access news. Furthermore, the data shows that over 60% of young respondents aged 18-36 used new media to obtain information but also accessed news from traditional media. Traditional media, in a nutshell, still has a market among various generations in China.



**Figure 24: Participants' Trust Level in New Media Content**

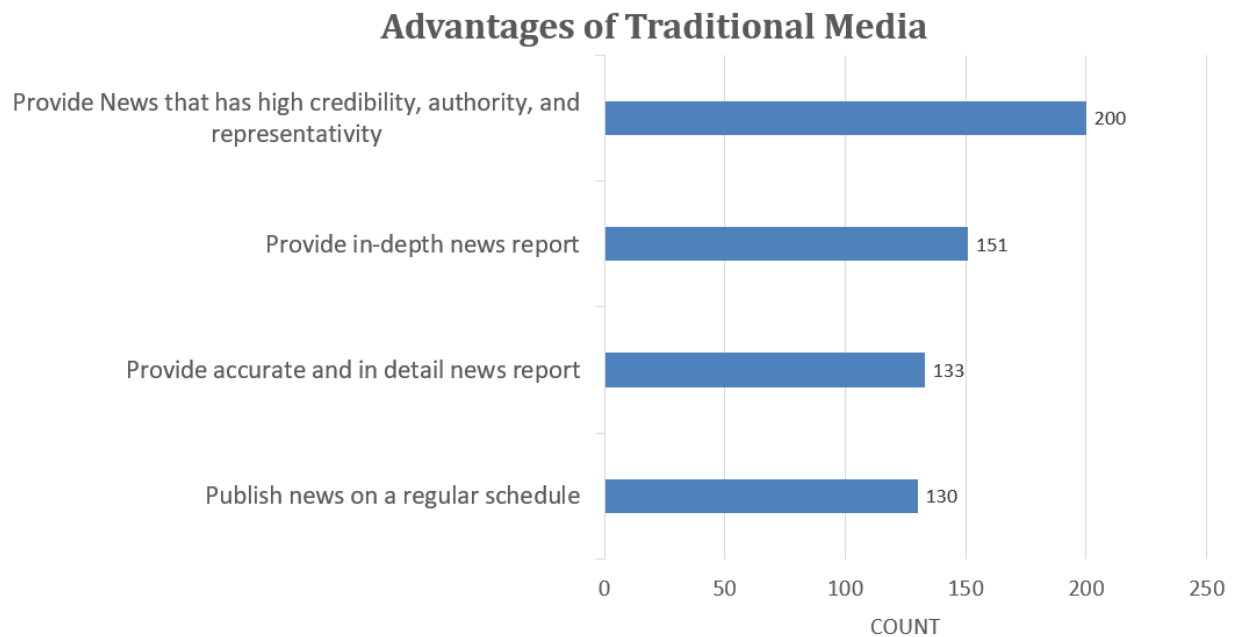
Figure 24 depicts the participants' trust level in new media content. According to the pie chart, 194 out of 319 (61%) respondents were concerned about the credibility of new media content. 113 (35%) of the 319 participants were skeptical of the credibility of new media content. Only 4% of those who responded to the survey said they are confident that new media content is highly reliable. According to our interviews, new media content is frequently published without being polished or rigorously reviewed, resulting in typos in news articles and even inaccurate news

reports. As a result, it is no surprise that a majority of our survey respondents, regardless of age group, were doubtful of new media content.



**Figure 25: Survey Participants' Opinions on Advantages of New Media**

To gain a deeper understanding of Chinese citizens' perceptions of the transition, respondents were asked to share their ideas about the advantages of new media. Figure 25 shows the results. More than 60% of them believed that new media has two main advantages: it can provide timely news and is simple to use. Furthermore, nearly half of them, i.e., 151 out of 319 responses (47%) and 175 out of 319 responses (55%), stated that new media could satisfy their diverse tastes because it covers broader topics than traditional media and presents content in various ways. In addition, 149 of them (47%) claimed that new media allows them to interact with one another. All in all, the primary reason for the public to use new media is to have easy and timely access to the latest news.

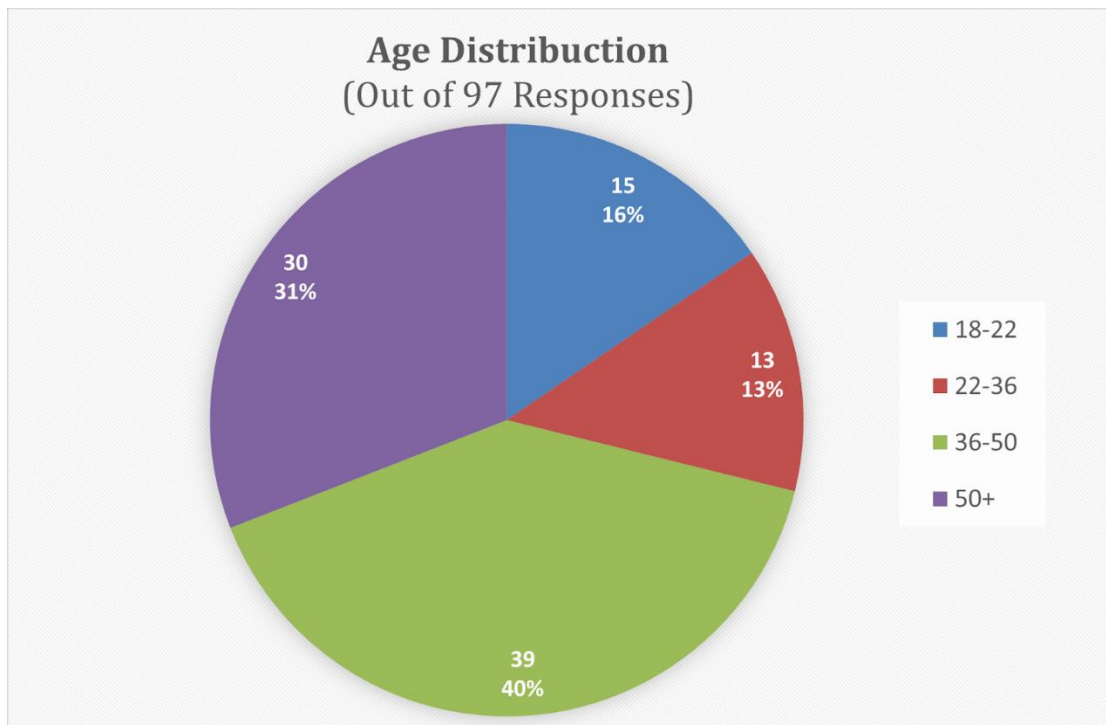


**Figure 26: Survey Participants’ Opinions on Advantages of Traditional Media**

Survey participants were also asked to share their perceptions about the advantages of traditional media. As shown in Figure 26, they believed that traditional media still has four unique advantages. Most of them admitted that news provided by traditional media has high credibility, in contrast with their attitude towards the credibility of new media. 130 of them stated that traditional media news reports are detailed and published on a regular schedule. In addition, around 150 of them believed that traditional media content is more in-depth than new media content, which aligns with our findings from interviews that the new media content is shallow and informal due to its short publish time. To summarize, these results suggest that people believe that traditional media content is more accurate, in-depth, and detailed, which explains why people still rely on traditional media to access news in China.

#### 4.2.4 Open-Ended Question Analysis

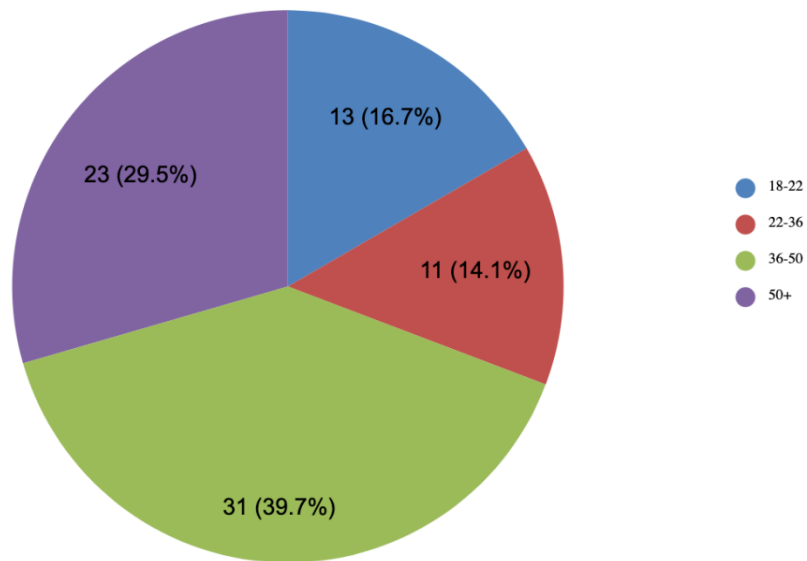
This section illustrates the common themes found in the responses to the final open-ended question of the survey, which asked participants to provide additional comments on the development of new media.



**Figure 27: Survey Participants' Demographics for the Open-Ended Question Responses**

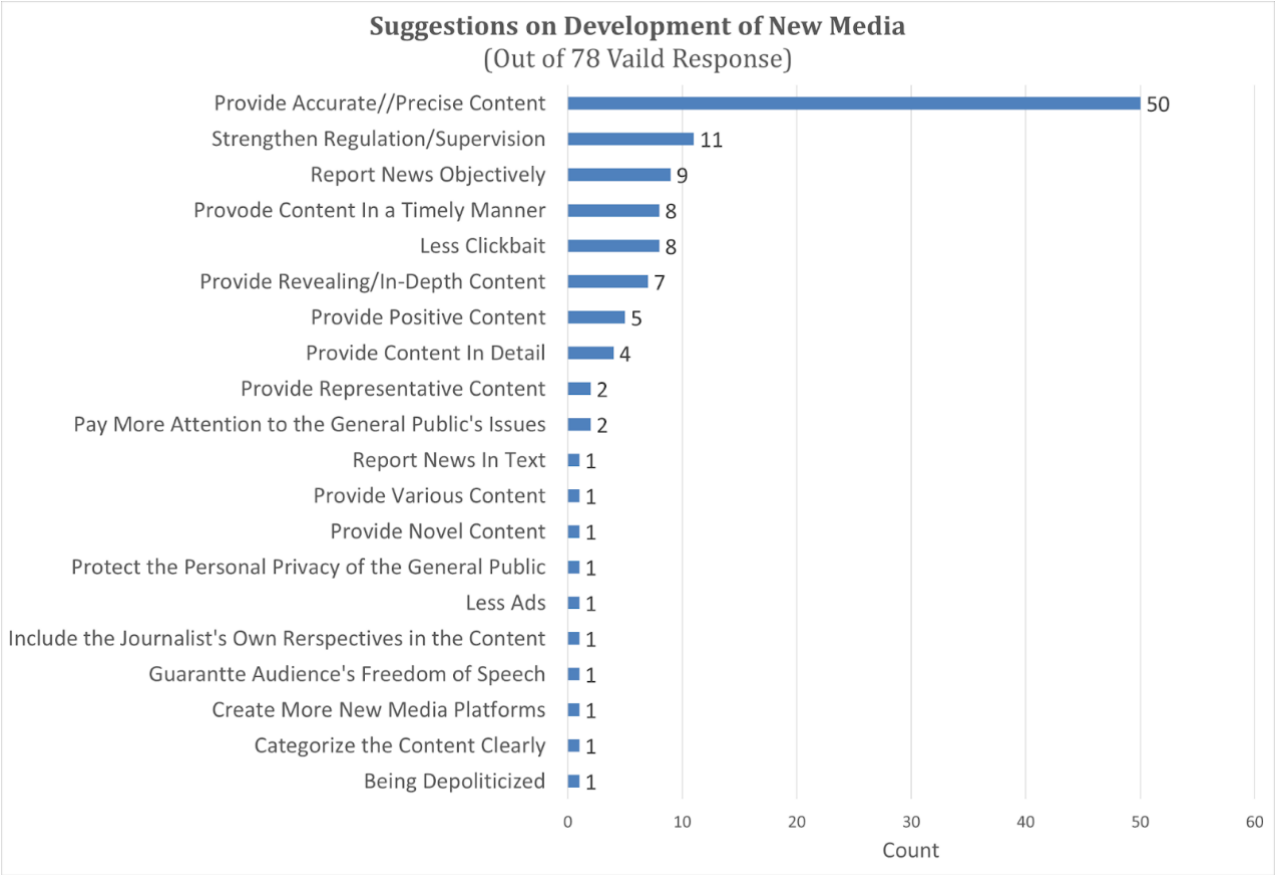
Before discussing the results of the open-ended question responses, the age demographic of the respondents was analyzed. As shown in Figure 27, of the 97 responses to the open-ended question, 39 of them were between the ages of 36-50, 30 of them were in the 50+ age group, 15 of them were in the 18-22 age group, and 13 of them were in the 22-36 age group. This indicates that most of those who responded to the open-ended question were middle-aged and older.

**Age Distribution  
(Out of 78 Valid Responses)**



**Figure 28: Survey Participants' Demographics for the Open-Ended Question (Valid Responses)**

To conduct a more insightful analysis of these open-ended responses, the invalidated (vague or incomplete) responses were first manually filtered out. As shown in Figure 28, 78 of the original 97 responses remained after sorting through the responses. Of the valid responses, thirty-one were in the 36-50 age group; twenty-three were in the 50+ age group; thirteen were in the 28-22 age group, and eleven were in the 22-36 age group. Overall, there were slightly fewer responses from the older age ranges after removing the invalid responses.



**Figure 29: Survey Participants’ Comments on the Development of New Media**

After categorizing the responses based on their contents, some common themes and keywords could be identified. As shown in Figure 29, the most common theme among the suggestions (50 out of the 78 valid responses) is for new media to provide accurate and precise information. This was expected based on literature reviews and our data findings discussed in the previous sections. According to our findings from journalists’ interviews, new media frequently publishes inaccurate content or intentionally spreads rumors to maximize news reporting efficiency and pursue clickbait. This finding is also in line with the responses to the survey question regarding the trust level in new media (Figure 24). Thus, it is not surprising that most of the participants hoped that the authenticity of new media content could be guaranteed in the future.

The second most common theme in responses, with a total of 43, is for new media to enhance the quality and reliability of the content. Among these responses, eleven suggested that there should be more supervision over new media. Additionally, nine of them suggested that news coverage should be more objective, and eight mentioned that new media should deliver on a timely basis. Another eight of them asked for more detailed content and less attention-grabbing headlines. Finally, seven of them stated that new media should offer more in-depth content. The remaining themes in the responses were less common and more personalized, with most of them implying that new media should improve content delivery, diversity, as well as the user experience.

**The remainder of this page is intentionally left blank.**



## **Chapter 5: Recommendation**

This chapter presents a set of recommendations aimed to provide a reference to those media companies involved in or preparing for the transition and to those researchers who are interested in this topic. All these recommendations are based on our findings.

### **5.1 Recommendations for Media Industry**

In this section, our recommendations emphasize helping media companies better regulate their business and improve the quality of their content. These recommendations are based on the Finding chapter.

#### **5.1.1 Focus on Developing Social Media Accounts**

As mentioned before, traditional media in China experienced four stages during the transition to new media, which are:

- Phase 1: Issue e-newspapers and creates a solid foundation for the future phases.
- Phase 2: Establish news websites to increase competitiveness.
- Phase 3: Create official accounts on various popular social media platforms.
- Phase 4: Develop new media clients that integrate all the content.

As mentioned in the last paragraph of section 4.1.2 (The Process of the Transition), these phases are sorted according to the timeline for the media industry's development. Today, a media company, however, can concentrate its development efforts on any of these stages. In our survey, most participants did not use new media clients to access the information. Instead, they preferred to gain information via media companies' official social media accounts. Hence, if a media

company is currently experiencing the transition, it should focus on developing its official social media accounts. The advantages of social media platforms and the drawbacks of other news mediums were analyzed to support our recommendations.

**Social Media Platform.** User data is one of the essential building blocks of the Internet. Social media platforms can use algorithms to analyze keywords and provide a database of users' content preferences by detecting what they like to read. The social media platform database can assist media companies in responding to the demand for content among their targeted audience. In addition, the interactive functions of social media platforms (like, comment, and forward) aid media companies in increasing their influence. To be more specific, when users forward their favorite content to other users, they unintentionally help the spread of information. To recapitulate, using social media platforms allows most media companies, particularly small and medium-sized ones, to distribute their content to a larger audience.

**E-newsletters.** E-newspaper is the electronic version of the traditional newspaper. Hence, its content is still lengthy articles. However, as shown in the survey responses (section 4.2.2), most of our participants, regardless of age, prefer short videos and texts to receive news. As a result, publishing an e-newspaper is not a wise decision, as it goes against the majority of Chinese people's reading habits. In addition, a newspaper's influence and reputation highly rely on propaganda. For instance, People's Daily is a well-known state-owned news enterprise in China due to the government's intense propaganda. However, some local newspapers, such as Yan Zhao Metropolis Daily, do not have enough resources to carry out the necessary promotion. Therefore, media companies (especially those small or middle-sized companies) that are currently experiencing the transition should not put too much effort into publishing e-newspapers.

**News Website.** Much like the e-newspaper, most of the content on the news website is still lengthy articles. As a result, it continues to go against the reading habits of most Chinese citizens. Furthermore, compared to social media platforms, the news website is less user-friendly. Unlike social media platforms, news websites do not actively push the news to users. People must still retrieve content on their own. As a result, media companies must aggressively promote news websites in order to increase their influence and reputation, which requires significant amounts of time, money, and effort.

**News Client.** According to our survey responses (section 4.2.2), most participants do not use news clients to obtain information. In a discussion with our sponsor, a single news client could only provide a limited amount of content. Thus, if people want to access news from various media companies, they need to download a large number of news client apps. Due to the limited storage capacity of smart devices, most people are unwilling to download countless apps just to access news. Overall, the news client market is extremely competitive. It will be difficult for a new media client to stand out from a pool of rivals in the market if the reputation of the media company itself is not strong enough.

All in all, developing social media accounts is considered to be the most convenient and pragmatic strategy for most media companies to expand their market share in a competitive market.

## 5.1.2 Cultivate Specialized Workers

According to the discussion with our sponsor, the transition of the media industry requires a massive number of experts. Therefore, media companies should cultivate specialized workers who are knowledgeable in a variety of fields as listed below.

**The ability to collect and analyze the data.** An important component of the Internet is user data. Therefore, a media company can become more competitive by having professionals who can push content to the audience based on gathering user data and examining their preferences.

**The ability to create content in various forms.** According to our research, one of the key features of new media is its ability to present content in different fashions, including articles, images, and videos. For instance, the media industry used to only need editors proficient in writing news articles. After the transition, however, editors had to learn to write content in a way that appeals to its intended audience. As mentioned in Section 4.1.3.1 (the section which summarizes the advantages of the transition), some of the interviewees also pointed out that they needed to learn new skills, such as video editing, after the media transition.

**The ability to interact and communicate with audiences.** Interacting and communicating with audiences, which is the unique characteristic of new media, can help media companies quickly and precisely learn about the demand of their audiences. Hence, it is crucial for new media industry staff to learn how to interact and communicate with their audience.

### 5.1.3 Improve the Quality of the Content

Even though new media can present information in various ways, the primary concern of the audience is the quality of the content, not how it is presented. Hence, three feasible and practical plans for the media industry were provided to improve the quality of its content in order to attract and retain a larger audience.

**Strengthen the censorship mechanism.** According to our survey results, 61% of our survey respondents were highly concerned about the credibility of new media content, and 25% of them were skeptical of new media content's authenticity. Of 78 validated open-ended question responses, 50 of them suggested new media companies should provide more accurate and reliable content. In other words, most of the survey participants are not satisfied with the credibility of the new media content. To enhance the authenticity and credibility of the content, the new media industry needs to improve the censorship mechanism to remove some common mistakes such as typos from the published content. Meanwhile, a strict censorship mechanism can put a stop to the propagation of false information and even rumors. In short, the media industry should at least ensure the credibility and authenticity of its content, even though the primary goal of the new media industry is to report the latest information as much as possible to its audience on a regular basis.

**Make sure that the content aligns with the headlines.** Nowadays, the media industry frequently exaggerates news report headlines to reach a larger audience (usually in the short term). However, most of the time, the content does not correspond to its headline, which undermines the credibility of a media company and reduces users' loyalty in the long run. Therefore, media companies should align the content with the headlines to maintain a reputation of high credibility.

## 5.2 Recommendations for Researchers

Due to various limitations, some better approaches could not be conducted during our study. Here are some suggestions for scholars in this field to better conduct their research.

**Conduct face-to-face semi-structured interviews with journalists.** The paper interview was chosen to conduct during our study since there was a language barrier between our team members and professional journalists in China. However, a significant drawback of the paper interview is that it is unable for interviewers to ask follow-up questions when they are confused by the responses. In addition, it is time-consuming to collect data using paper interviews since interviewers cannot get timely responses from the interviewees, especially in different time zones. Therefore, researchers should conduct face-to-face semi-structured interviews with journalists if allowed, so that they can follow up questions if they become perplexed or inspired by the responses given by journalists during interviews.

**Conduct in-person surveys and utilize focus groups.** Due to the travel restriction of the pandemic, we were only able to conduct the online questionnaires. Thus, people who do not or rarely use smart devices in their daily lives (especially some senior citizens) were not covered in our survey, which potentially brought biases to the collection and analysis of the survey data. In addition, in the process of the survey question design, researchers should consider asking more questions regarding participants' background information such as their career and education level, which can provide scholars with more unique insights into the data analysis. Overall, researchers should conduct an in-person survey, if possible, to avoid the biases mentioned above. For open-ended questions, in order to reduce invalidated responses, researchers can even organize groups of people who share certain characteristics to attend focus groups - an informal type of interview that

has people talk together about a particular topic in a relaxing atmosphere - to know their true feedback.

**The remainder of this page is intentionally left blank.**

## **Chapter 6: Conclusion**

Through the course of our study, the reason behind the transition of the transition from traditional media to new media in China was explored and its phases, benefits, drawbacks, and impacts on the Chinese audience were identified. Based on the literature review and the collected data, a set of pragmatic recommendations were provided to two key stakeholders of our project (the media companies involved in or preparing for the transition and the researchers interested in this topic). In the transition, media companies should concentrate on developing their social media accounts, fostering skilled workers specialized in various technical and business fields, and improving the credibility of the content. For future studies, researchers should employ better research techniques to gather more valuable data. Overall, our study can provide a reference for both stakeholders.



## Reference

- Bowman, S., & Willis, C. (2003). We Media: How audiences are shaping the future of news and information. 66. [https://www.hypergene.net/wemedia/download/we\\_media.pdf](https://www.hypergene.net/wemedia/download/we_media.pdf)
- CNNIC. (2022). The 48th statistical report on China's Internet development. Retrieved from <https://www.cnnic.com.cn/IDR/ReportDownloads/202111/P020211119394556095096.pdf>
- Chadwick, A., & Howard, P. N. (Eds.). (2009). Routledge handbook of Internet politics. Routledge. Retrieved from [https://edisciplinas.usp.br/pluginfile.php/5148334/mod\\_resource/content/1/Andrew%20Chadwick%20-%20Routledge%20Handbook%20of%20Internet%20Politics-Routledge%20%282008%29.pdf](https://edisciplinas.usp.br/pluginfile.php/5148334/mod_resource/content/1/Andrew%20Chadwick%20-%20Routledge%20Handbook%20of%20Internet%20Politics-Routledge%20%282008%29.pdf)
- Fang, K. (2022). What is Zimeiti? The commercial logic of content provision on China's social media platforms. *Chinese Journal of Communication*, 15(1), 75–94. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17544750.2021.2016877>
- Guo, H. (2021). The development and application of new media technology in news communication industry. *The International Journal of Electrical Engineering & Education*, 002072092199659. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020720921996593>
- Guo, L. (2020). China's "Fake News" Problem: Exploring the Spread of Online Rumors in the Government-Controlled News Media. *Digital Journalism*, 8(8), 992–1010. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2020.1766986>

- Gudi, S. K., George, S. M., & Jose, J. (2022). Influence of social media on the public perspectives of the safety of COVID-19 vaccines. *Expert Review of Vaccines*, 1-3.
- Kuang, W. (2012). What exactly is new media. *News and Writing*, 07, 24–27. [in Chinese]  
<https://www.cnki.net/kcms/detail/detail.aspx?dbcode=CJFD&dbname=CJFD2012&filename=XWXZ201207012&v=MjgxNDVMRzRIOVBNcUk5RVpUUtESDg0dII0VDZqNTRPM3pxcUJ0R0ZyQ1VSN2lmWStkcUZ5amxWYjdKUFRyVGQ=>
- Luo, Y. (2014). The Internet and Agenda Setting in China: The Influence of Online Public Opinion on Media Coverage and Government Policy. *International Journal of Communication*, 8(1), 24. <https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/2257>
- Luo, D., & Hu, Y. (2020). Contextualization and Mediatization of Rumor Spread: The Discourse Fight of Public Crisis. *Press Circles*, 06, 20-27. [in Chinese]  
<https://doi.org/10.15897/j.cnki.cn51-1046/g2.2020.06.001>
- Liao, X. (2008). What is new media? *Modern Communication (Journal of Communication University of China)*, 5, 121 – 125. [in Chinese]  
<http://www.cqvip.com/qk/84461a/2008005/28634160.html>
- Li, X. (2016). The definition of new media and research on forms of its news dissemination. *New Media Research*, 2(13), 7-10+16. [in Chinese]  
<https://doi.org/10.16604/j.cnki.issn2096-0360.2016.13.004>
- Li, W. (2016). The comparative research between We-media and new media. *West China Broadcasting TV*, 05, 31. [in Chinese]  
<https://kns.cnki.net/kcms/detail/detail.aspx?dbcode=CJFD&dbname=CJFDLAST2016&fi>

lename=XBGS201605018&uniplatform=NZKPT&v=VPgUiEgJrwJYAfML16DVBmEg  
MUSXkagiMBRWpSIJcQjLP-jjqayOoAML9uPDXKaA

Liu, Q., Shi, X., Wang, X., & Li, J. (2017). 5G Development in China: From Policy Strategy to User-Oriented Architecture. *Mobile Information Systems, 2017*, e2358618.  
<https://doi.org/10.1155/2017/2358618>

Liang, J., & Yang, M. (2015). On Spreading and Controlling of Online Rumors in We-media Era. *Asian Culture and History, 7*(2), p42. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ach.v7n2p42>

Peng, Y., Li, J., Xia, H., Qi, S., & Li, J. (2015). The effects of food safety issues released by we media on consumers' awareness and purchasing behavior: A case study in China. *Food Policy, 51*, 44–52. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodpol.2014.12.010>

Thomala, L. (2021). *China: DAU of Sina Weibo 2021*. Statista. Retrieved from  
<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1058070/china-sina-weibo-dau/>

Thomala, L. (2022). *WeChat: active users worldwide*. Statista. Retrieved from  
<https://www.statista.com/statistics/255778/number-of-active-wechat-messenger-accounts/>

Tang, L., Omar, S. Z., Bolong, J., & Mohd Zawawi, J. W. (2021). Social Media Use Among Young People in China: A Systematic Literature Review. *SAGE Open, 11*(2), 215824402110164. <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440211016421>

Zhao, Y. (2000). From Commercialization to Conglomeration: The Transformation of the Chinese Press Within the Orbit of the Party State. *Journal of Communication, 50*(2), 3–26. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2000.tb02839.x>

Zeng, K. (2007). The Reading in the Internet Age - A Review of "Internet Reading" *University Library Work, 02*, 23-28 [in Chinese]

[https://kns.cnki.net/kcms/detail/detail.aspx?dbcode=CJFD&dbname=CJFD2007&filename=GXTG200702006&uniplatform=NZKPT&v=7esA5KbhAW13ISVLwgjvJ\\_jXdmyIhAZiWk8ZYazg30Y5NhMZ\\_8wLgaJyjwYYSWvt](https://kns.cnki.net/kcms/detail/detail.aspx?dbcode=CJFD&dbname=CJFD2007&filename=GXTG200702006&uniplatform=NZKPT&v=7esA5KbhAW13ISVLwgjvJ_jXdmyIhAZiWk8ZYazg30Y5NhMZ_8wLgaJyjwYYSWvt)

# **Appendix A: Interview Transcript 1**

**Date of Interview: 05/27/22**

[Begin Transcripts]

- 1. What media companies are you affiliated with? Could you explain your professional trajectory/career experience a little bit?**

I am affiliated with Yan Zhao Metropolis Daily. After graduating from university in 1995, I joined the newly founded Yan Zhao Metropolis Daily and have been working there since then.

- 2. Have you ever utilized “New Media” (CCTV clinics, Global Times clinics, official channels of the media companies on different platforms, etc.) to disseminate news in your career?**

Yes, I have such an experience.

- 3. Have you experienced the transition from traditional media companies to new media companies? If so, how has the transformation changed the way you write or present information? Also, what are your feelings and thoughts regarding the transition?**

Yes. I have experienced the transition. After the transformation, I needed to present the news on a more timely basis, publish more articles, and also use live streaming to broadcast the news. I think the transition represents the progress of society. The public can access the information more easily. The content itself is more diverse and plentiful. However, the transition is also a challenge for both the traditional paper media itself and its employment of people.

**4. What are those aspects that led to the transition?**

First of all, the public was gradually familiar with online media and mobile media and used them to obtain information in the past few years. In addition, paper media was ignored as new media developed.

**5. What are the challenges that occurred during the transition?**

Firstly, some of the traditional media company's employees cannot understand the concept of new media. Secondly, some companies do not have sufficient funds to execute the transition process. Thirdly, there is no technical team to support the transition. Lastly, the aging of staff is also one of the challenges of the transition.

**6. In what way do you believe people currently consume media? Do people still gain information mainly from traditional media, such as newspapers, radio, and television? Or if they have already shifted their focus from the traditional media to the new media, such as the mobile apps of different news companies, or their official channels on different media platforms like Bilibili, DouYin, and WeChat Public Accounts?**

The public mostly uses the mobile clients of different media companies to gain information. In addition, they will read the news published by the official accounts of media companies on third-party platforms such as TouTiao, Weibo, and WeChat. Some of the elders still read the newspapers.

**7. Could you explain the phases of the transformation that you experienced based on your career experience?**

Phase one: The traditional media company starts to publish e-version newspapers. Phase two: The traditional media company sets up its own website. Phase three: The traditional media company sets up its official accounts on third-party platforms such as Weibo and WeChat. Phase four: The traditional media company establishes its news client and builds a media matrix that integrates multiple channels.

**8. Do you feel your job responsibilities have changed with the transition to new media?**

Yes, my job responsibilities experienced a huge change.

**9. Do you think is there a reform of targeted audiences after the traditional media transformed into new media?**

The new media has the ability to cover more audiences. In the past, an issue of several million newspapers was only able to attract around five million audiences. Nowadays, one single piece of breaking news can be read and viewed by tens of millions or hundreds of millions of people via the Internet.

**10. Could you mention some benefits that only new media has but traditional media does not?**

It is more mobile, socialized, video-based, and more attractive to audiences compared to traditional media.

**11. Are there any advantages traditional media have vis-à-vis new media? If there are, what are they?**

The traditional paper media could provide a more comfortable reading experience. The amount of content published via paper media is limited, but it is relatively high-quality.

**12. What else would you like to talk about on the topic of the transition?**

It is difficult for paper media to transform. The key difficulty is how to find a new profit model that can replace the old one, which is earning advertising revenue based on the huge circulation. As the traditional paper media transformed into the new media, it built the media matrix that integrated multiple channels. In addition, it developed a business model that combined three different elements, which are news dissemination, government services, and business services. Consequently, most traditional paper media companies have successfully transformed into new media companies.

[End Transcripts]



## **Appendix B: Interview Transcript 2**

**Date of Interview: 05/27/22**

[Begin Transcripts]

- 1. What media companies are you affiliated with? Could you explain your professional trajectory/career experience a little bit?**

I have been working for Laodong Daily in Shanghai since I graduated from my university.

- 2. Have you ever utilized “New Media” (CCTV clinics, Global Times clinics, official channels of the media companies on different platforms, etc.) to disseminate news in your career?**

Yes, I have such an experience.

- 3. Have you experienced the transition from traditional media companies to new media companies? If so, how has the transformation changed the way you write or present information? Also, what are your feelings and thoughts regarding the transition?**

We (Laodong Daily) have transformed from traditional media to new media for two years. We need to update news in a timely manner; instead of taking some extra time to review and polish the content, we are asked to finish writing and then publishing the news as soon as possible. In this case, efficiency matters more than quality. I prefer the traditional media more. I like to devote myself to taking more time to write in-depth content. However, it is no longer necessary to do so.

- 4. What are those aspects that led to the transition?**

There are several factors giving rise to such a transformation:

1. Smart devices such as mobile phones become increasingly popular nowadays.
2. The general public gets used to making a quick read (browsing/skimming through the content) to get the information.
3. The constant development of new media makes the traditional media feel necessary to make changes in order to catch up with the trend nowadays.

**5. What are those aspects that led to the transition?**

To be honest, many traditional media workers are not used to the way of writing and reporting news using new media because traditional media and new media do not share the same thinking and writing patterns. In addition, maximizing the viewer size is not their priority and main concern. What happens nowadays is those people who report news using new media but at the same time still stick to the way of reporting news using traditional media not only lose their advantages as a traditional media worker but also the passion a young new media worker is supposed to have.

**6. In what way do you believe people currently consume media? Do people still gain information mainly from traditional media, such as newspapers, radio, and television? Or if they have already shifted their focus from the traditional media to the new media, such as the mobile apps of different news companies, or their official channels on different media platforms like Bilibili, DouYin, and WeChat Public Accounts?**

A majority of audiences who use new media as their information source like to watch We-media articles. The more ridiculous and extreme its content is, the more popular the article is. Notice that it always takes less than no time for scary rumors to spread out in society. The general public likes to follow the traditional media accounts on the new media platforms to get first-hand information

regarding the truth and the policies relevant to serious public events such as the large-scale quarantine in Shanghai due to the pandemic starting in April this year. In addition, people who frequently pay attention to government policies or whose jobs and careers have a direct correlation with the media industry are more likely to watch the news from traditional media on new media platforms.

**7. Could you explain the phases of the transformation that you experienced based on your career experience?**

**Phase 1:** Only the news that has already been published in the newspapers can be published again on a variety of websites and online platforms.

**Phase 2:** Each media company creates its own new media client to directly publish its traditional media articles.

**Phase 3:** Have the news published by new media first. Then select some new media articles and publish them in the newspapers.

**Phase 4:** Issue more articles by new media (put an emphasis on new media). Have more events and interactions with the audiences.

**8. Do you feel your job responsibilities have changed with the transition to new media?**

There are no big changes in job duties. However, only the work pace is different.

**9. Do you think is there a reform of targeted audiences after the traditional media transformed into new media?**

No big difference. Most of them are old/original audiences. There will be some new subscribers. However, it will be hard for them to be permanent audiences.

**10. Could you mention some benefits that only new media has but traditional media does not?**

The quantity and speed of issuing articles, interactions with the audiences, and checking reading status.

**11. Are there any advantages traditional media have vis-à-vis new media? If there are, what are they?**

Credibility. There exists a very low possibility for the general public to doubt whether traditional media lies to them.

**12. What else would you like to talk about on the topic of the transition?**

None.

[End Transcripts]

## **Appendix C: Interview Transcript 3**

**Date of Interview: 05/27/22**

[Begin Transcripts]

- 1. What media companies are you affiliated with? Could you explain your professional trajectory/career experience a little bit?**

I am currently affiliated with the Integrated Media Center located in Minhang District, Shanghai. I have worked in Laodong Daily for seven years (since I graduated from my university). Then I worked in a travel agency for six years. After resigning from the agency and taking a half year off, I joined the company that I currently work for.

- 2. Have you ever utilized “New Media” (CCTV clinics, Global Times clinics, official channels of the media companies on different platforms, etc.) to disseminate news in your career?**

No, I did not have such an experience.

- 3. Have you experienced the transition from traditional media companies to new media companies? If so, how has the transformation changed the way you write or present information? Also, what are your feelings and thoughts regarding the transition?**

Yes, I have experienced the transition. I did not have a hard time during the transition. The new media company requires journalists to write articles that are simple to comprehend and does not need to use peculiarly ornate and metaphorical language. Since I have worked for a traditional media company, I feel that writing a new media article is easier because there is no need to think hard about wording. However, I do not like new media. Although the transition from traditional

media to new media makes it easier for me to write news articles, I still dislike new media. The news articles that are published on social media platforms are shallow and primarily focus on illustrating the news itself. The word choices of the articles are also informal (oral).

**4. What are those aspects that led to the transition?**

The main factor that gives rise to such a transition is the frequent update of smart devices. First, the new smart device seeks greater functionality. One of its functions is to help users to access the latest information at the first hand. As a result, the update of smart devices forces traditional media to transform to keep up with the trend. In addition, the new smart device interrupts the monopoly of traditional media on information dissemination. Even non-professionals can use smart devices to distribute the news, which causes large-scale competition in news dissemination.

**5. What are the challenges that occurred during the transition?**

**Disclaimer:** The interviewee could not understand and answer this question since it is stated in a confusing way.

**6. In what way do you believe people currently consume media? Do people still gain information mainly from traditional media, such as newspapers, radio, and television? Or if they have already shifted their focus from the traditional media to the new media, such as the mobile apps of different news companies, or their official channels on different media platforms like Bilibili, DouYin, and WeChat Public Accounts?**

Based on my observation, a lot of people use social media platforms on smartphones such as WeChat and Weibo to receive news. But there are still people who employ traditional media

(newspapers, TV, and broadcast) to receive news. For instance, once we received feedback from one of our readers saying that he did not receive our newspapers several times and hoped we could resend these newspapers to him. There were also our audiences calling us to reflect that they could not watch the news on TV due to the bad signal. However, those audiences who provide us feedback so far are senior citizens.

**7. Could you explain the phases of the transformation that you experienced based on your career experience?**

Sorry, I can only share my own experience since this is such a broad topic. When I was working for Laodong Daily, there was a shift in my job responsibilities (from collecting and editing news for newspapers to transferring news from our newspapers on our website) after Laodong Daily has its own website. Additionally, we would present news from other media companies on our website based on the preference of Laodong Daily. When I was working in the Minhang Integrated Media Center, my job was to collect and edit news for both newspaper and its official WeChat public account. We would issue our newspaper once a week and publish news on our official WeChat public account three times a day. When I was writing a WeChat news report, I sometimes would use short videos along with the text. In general, those tasks were quite easy if you had some basic knowledge of video editing.

**8. Do you feel your job responsibilities have changed with the transition to new media?**

No, I am still responsible for collecting and editing news.

**9. Do you think is there a reform of targeted audiences after the traditional media transformed into new media?**

Of course. Each new media company has its own targeted audience group. At the same time, a new media company will also adjust itself (for example, using internet catchwords that its targeted audiences like to use) to cater to its audiences.

**10. Could you mention some benefits that only new media has but traditional media does not?**

The most outstanding advantage is the ability to retract news reports at any time. Traditional media workers are rigorous since not only a mistake in the newspaper cannot be retracted, but it also will cause tremendous (bad) influences and consequences. However, new media workers can retract news at any time. As a result, one can often find typos and inaccurate statements in news reports by new media. Efficiency is new media's main concern. The ability to retract news reports at any time allows new media journalists to publish news more efficiently and effectively and no longer be responsible for mistakes in their news reports.

**11. Are there any advantages traditional media have vis-à-vis new media? If there are, what are they?**

There is. Traditional media still devotes itself to reporting and investigating news in depth, which is considered to be a spiritual comfort in an era in which people are often not willing to take their time to develop a deep feeling and understanding of things and events surrounding them.

**12. What else would you like to talk about on the topic of the transition?**

No, thanks.



## **Appendix D: Interview Transcript 4**

**Date of Interview: 05/30/22**

[Begin Transcripts]

- 1. What media companies are you affiliated with? Could you explain your professional trajectory/career experience a little bit?**

I am working for Laodong Daily right now. It is my first time having a full-time job. I used to have a couple of internships in both traditional and new media.

- 2. Have you ever utilized “New Media” (CCTV clinics, Global Times clinics, official channels of the media companies on different platforms, etc.) to disseminate news in your career?**

Yes.

- 3. Have you experienced the transition from traditional media companies to new media companies? If so, how has the transformation changed the way you write or present information? Also, what are your feelings and thoughts regarding the transition?**

Yes. The news report takes on a variety of new forms after the transition. News reporting is no longer only a single text, but a combination of text and graph. Video and audio are also used in news reporting. There is a workspace for new media reporters anywhere there is Wi-Fi. A new media reporter should be sensitive enough to pay attention to both first-hand and breaking news on a regular basis. To recap, the transition has repercussions on the vocabulary used to report news, the way people think when they produce a report, and so on.

**4. What are those aspects that led to the transition?**

1. The transition is encouraged by the government.
2. Producing as much content as possible in a timely manner becomes the primary goal for most media companies.
3. New media becomes the main medium for advertisement.

**5. What are the challenges that occurred during the transition?**

1. In terms of news orientation and editing, the thinking patterns are outdated.
2. For editing, there is always a sufficient number of experienced and skilled workers. However, experienced and competent workers in business management and technique are always in short supply in new media.
3. Low profitability.

**6. In what way do you believe people currently consume media? Do people still gain information mainly from traditional media, such as newspapers, radio, and television? Or if they have already shifted their focus from the traditional media to the new media, such as the mobile apps of different news companies, or their official channels on different media platforms like Bilibili, DouYin, and WeChat Public Accounts?**

People usually get news from new media sources such as news websites, news clients, official WeChat public accounts, and social media platforms like Douyin.

**7. Could you explain the phases of the transformation that you experienced based on your career experience?**

**Phase 1:** Improve existing traditional media professions (professional jobs) to create a solid foundation for the shift to new media.

**Phase 2:** Have more professions during the transition to improve the profit of news dissemination, advertisement, and so forth.

**Phase 3:** Completely transformed into new media. Have a steady increase in revenue.

**8. Do you feel your job responsibilities have changed with the transition to new media?**

Yes. Not only should news reporters be able to write stories after the transition, but they should also be able to shoot images and edit material. To summarize, a news report must be professional in all aspects of its production.

**9. Do you think is there a reform of targeted audiences after the traditional media transformed into new media?**

1. The transition blurs the line between the news recipient and the news reporter. A news recipient might also be a news distributor.
2. On the new media platform, the audience tends to discover and recognize their own identities. They begin to communicate with others on new media platforms using these identities.
3. Only the society's elites used to have the right to speak. With the progress of new media, the right to speak is now shared by all members of society.

**10. Could you mention some benefits that only new media has but traditional media does not?**

1. News is constantly updated and disseminated on a timely basis.
2. New media has the ability to deliver far more content than traditional media.
3. New media can deliver a greater variety of content than traditional media.
4. Thanks to new media. News dissemination is no longer limited to professional news reporters.
5. Globalized. New media can receive news from all over the world/distribute news to all over the world.
6. The audience for new media is greater than for new media.
7. New media can provide a forum for the general population to share their opinions and ideas.
8. New media's interactivity has the potential to attract a larger audience.

**11. Are there any advantages traditional media have vis-à-vis new media? If there are, what are they?**

Yes. Traditional media has a proven track record of creating high-quality content. In addition, it is more professional in its operation and distribution of news than new media.

**12. What else would you like to talk about on the topic of the transition?**

None.

[End Transcripts]

## **Appendix E: Interview Transcript 5**

**Date of Interview: 05/31/22**

[Begin Transcripts]

- 1. What media companies are you affiliated with? Could you explain your professional trajectory/career experience a little bit?**

I used to work for Southern Metropolis Daily as a journalist. Then I worked for NetEase. NetEase is an Internet company whose primary business is online games, but it also has a significant media division. It's a shift in my job responsibilities from working with newspapers to working on the news website. Later, I established my own company which is unrelated to the media. However, I also created my own We-media channel.

- 2. Have you ever utilized “New Media” (CCTV clinics, Global Times clinics, official channels of the media companies on different platforms, etc.) to disseminate news in your career?**

Yes, I have frequently used new media in my career. After I left the media industry and created my own company, I used new media to promote most of my company's business. Nowadays, there are a lot of new media channels covering various topics which allow our advertisement to reach out to different groups of people. Almost all businesses need to be aware of new media and use it to promote themselves (e.g., advertising on new media platforms).

**3. Have you experienced the transition from traditional media companies to new media companies? If so, how has the transformation changed the way you write or present information? Also, what are your feelings and thoughts regarding the transition?**

My writing techniques and news reporting concepts were traditional when I worked for newspapers. For example, the rule of thumb for reporting news using traditional media is to "never include authors' perspectives and intentions in news reports." However, after I created my own accounts on the We-media platforms, I mostly expressed my own ideas. Speaking my own voice could also attract lots of audiences. Although I graduated as a journalist, I can get used to such a change. However, I am still confused by a variety of issues (especially since I feel that media theory and ethics are far behind media practice and application).

**4. What are those aspects that led to the transition?**

With the extraordinary progression of Internet technology, how news is disseminated changes constantly. Nowadays, it is not difficult to obtain information (especially since short video is popular right now). However, it is still hard to determine the credibility of the information.

**5. What are the challenges that occurred during the transition?**

The transition mainly relies on people who work in the traditional media industry. It is difficult for a traditional media company to transform unless its employees learn about the latest news report knowledge (concepts) and walk out of their comfort zone to try more different ways of presenting news.

- 6. In what way do you believe people currently consume media? Do people still gain information mainly from traditional media, such as newspapers, radio, and television? Or if they have already shifted their focus from the traditional media to the new media, such as the mobile apps of different news companies, or their official channels on different media platforms like Bilibili, DouYin, and WeChat Public Accounts?**

Nowadays, many traditional media companies set up accounts on different new media platforms. Some of them even create media matrices that connect all their accounts. However, the value of traditional media has become gradually vanished from the general public. Traditional media is frequently thought of as a means of obtaining accurate information, though not in a timely manner. After all, the ability of a single media organization to disseminate information is far behind that of all netizens on new media platforms.

- 7. Could you explain the phases of the transformation that you experienced based on your career experience?**

Around 2000, traditional media companies provided free content on websites as a way to expand their influence. A few years later, the websites need to pay traditional media companies for their content.

Following that, traditional media companies created their own online platforms.

Nowadays, traditional media develops into so-called convergence media which presents content in various forms (text, video, etc.).

**8. Do you feel your job responsibilities have changed with the transition to new media?**

When I worked in the traditional media industry, I was a journalist. My job responsibility was to interview people and write news articles.

When I worked on the news website, my job was to hold online discussions such that everyone can discuss a certain topic. People can directly express their thoughts and opinions via the Internet. In comparison to my previous news job, setting up discussion topics became an important part of my job. Rather than disseminating my viewpoints, the goal of my work was to have more people in the discussion.

Right now, a part of my job is to manage accounts on We-media platforms (write articles and set up discussion topics by myself). In the past, I was trained to avoid expressing my thoughts in news articles. However, on We-media platforms, audiences expect to see a live person express his/her points of view, not just speak for the sake of a media organization. Therefore, my own thoughts weigh more when writing We-media articles.

**9. Do you think is there a reform of targeted audiences after the traditional media transformed into new media?**

Traditional media can be divided into national media and local media. In addition, there are lots of traditional media companies that only cover one specified topic, such as sports and finance.

The distinction based on content can also be employed in new media as well. However, since new media content is distributed via the Internet, there are no geographical restrictions on its distribution.



In addition, since new media platforms are able to store an infinite amount of content data that covers all kinds of topics, audiences can be classified in a more precise way based on their preferences using algorithms.

**10. Could you mention some benefits that only new media has but traditional media does not?**

The amount of content on new media platforms is enormous. These platforms also allow users to interact with one another. These are the two unique benefits of new media.

**11. Are there any advantages traditional media have vis-à-vis new media? If there are, what are they?**

A traditional media company usually employs a professional and experienced journalist team that can deliver news reports rigorously.

However, no media company in China distributes news solely through traditional media nowadays. Most of the traditional media (paper media or TV media) companies have utilized new media as a means of disseminating information.

**12. What else would you like to talk about on the topic of the transition?**

I was a bit confused and messed around between new media itself and the means of using new media to report news when I was answering previous questions. By that, I mean the official People Daily WeChat public account is a new media, but WeChat public account itself serves as a means of using new media to report the news. For People Daily, there are no big differences between traditional media and new media. However, having an official public account (especially several

accounts), as a means of using new media to report news, is considered to be more meaningful than new media itself.

[End Transcripts]

## **Appendix F: Survey Questions**

### **1. Age Group**

- A. 18 - 22 years old
- B. 23 - 35 years old
- C. 36 - 50 years old
- D. Above 50 years old

### **2. How do you receive news in your daily life?**

- A. Newspaper or Periodicals
- B. Broadcast or Television
- C. Social Media Platforms (Douyin, Weibo, WeChat, etc.)
- D. News Clients (CCTV App, etc.)

### **3. In which form do you like news to be presented? (Can choose more than one answer)**

- A. Short video
- B. Short text
- C. Long article

### **4. How long do you spend your time on new media every day?**

- A. 10 - 30 min
- B. 30 min - 2 h
- C. 2 - 4 h
- D. Above 4 h

**5. How do you select what to read when you are given a lot of news topics?**

- A. Read the news based on personal preference or that has an appealing title
- B. Just have a general idea of the news by viewing in titles
- C. Read the news carefully and then follow a series of news that has a similar topic

**6. Will you like (hit the thumb-up button) and forward the news after watching it on the new media?**

- A. Often like and forward the news
- B. Never like and forward the news
- C. Occasionally like and forward the news

**7. Do you still use traditional media (newspapers, magazines, TV & radio) to read the news?**

- A. Often use traditional media
- B. Occasionally use traditional media
- C. Never use traditional media

**8. What is your thought on the authenticity of news published on new media platforms?**

- A. The news is trustful
- B. The news is moderately trustful
- C. The news is not too trustful

**9. In what ways do you think new media challenges traditional media? (Can choose more than one answer)**

- A. News can be updated in a timely manner
- B. New media is easy and convenient to use
- C. New media has various ways to present news
- D. Broader topics can be covered
- E. New media allows its audiences to interact with one another

**10. Compared to new media, what are the advantages of traditional media? (Can choose more than one answer)**

- A. The news report is accurate and in detail
- B. The news has high credibility, authority, and representativity
- C. The news report is in depth
- D. It has a regular schedule to publish news

**11. Do you have any other thoughts and comments on the development of new media?**  
**(Open-ended Question)**