The Analysis of Increasing China Network Media's International Communication Impact

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Abstract

Network media's Peer to Peer technology leads directly to the dissemination ideas "decentralized" and "disembedding mechanism", which provides a more open and free information service platform for all countries' cultural soft power transmission. At present, in the global Internet information pattern, China has initially established its own sound channels and formed "6 + 3" foreign broadcast pattern. However, due to the short development time of foreign news sites, and the publicity strategy of Chinese style, which makes the credibility and influence of the external medium limited, this paper proposes to balance the proportion of domestic and international news, to establish the objective news discourse system, to make it close to an international audience of language and cultural characteristics as well as to strengthen international cooperation, in order to improve the English news sites' capabilities of external communication.

Key words: China network media; External communication; Soft power; Impact

INTRODUCTION

The latest statistics of ITU (International telecommunication Union) show that, by the end of 2010, the global Internet users has exceeded 2 billion, and the current global population is over 6.8 billion, which means almost one person in every three is an Internet user.[1] By the end of 2011, the number of China's Internet users has exceeded 500 million and reached 513 million,[2] which means that in Chinese society, the Internet has become the major information communication media.

Network media's Peer to Peer technology makes any information between nodes can realize the interchange, which provides a more open and free information service platform for the global communication. When the information technology has gradually become the key way of integrating the world, technology and the additional cultural soft power may also become the more hidden, non-political ruling means. As Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye consider, the information does not flow in a vacuum but in the political space that has been occupied by the conventional force.[3] In order to keep the original advantage, many states or nations will extend its efforts in the information network media discourse, "the national network will become part of the emerging global network".[4]

Currently, the "CNN", "Time Warner", "America Online" in United States communicate as the representative of the ideology of "soft power" in a variety of language forms in the network media, which makes France, Germany and other western countries are trying to appeal to maintain the purity of their own culture. Search engine giant Google's increasingly powerful development also makes many countries' political, academic and industrial areas worry: whether or not the strong information pattern will pose a threat to the cultural and ideological security.

1. THE EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION STATUS QUO OF CHINA'S INTERNET MEDIA

With the rapid development of China's comprehensive national strength and China's network media in recent years, the various countries also pay more and more attention to the cultural influence on China.

In many countries, some major media such as the British "Financial Times", American "The Wall Street Journal", British Reuters, Voice of America (VOA), British the National Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Radio Free Asia, Radio Australia, Deutsche Welle, France International Radio, radio Canada and other broadcasting stations all offer the Chinese language websites that mostly show a relatively strong political overtones. Facing the influx of outside information, China is also actively developing the country's foreign broadcasting industry, increasing the proportion of the amount of information of the network media, issuing China's own independent voice.

When network media gradually began to spread in China since 1995, China has actively used this information platform to develop the external communication activities. According to the China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC), by the end of October 31, 2011, the global gTLD[5] domain name registration total to 127,711,797. By the end of October 26, 2011, the number of IPv4 addresses in Mainland China is about 332 million, ranking second in the world.

On the whole, China has established its own sound channels in the global Internet information pattern. China's mainstream news websites mostly rely on the traditional news media and have a wealth of information resources and brand, it also gradually expand its international influence in the foreign network communication. At present, our news sites have formed a "6 + 3" foreign broadcast pattern, that is, the big six central web international channels and three local foreign news sites. The six central news websites are China Daily, People's Daily, Xinhua, China Radio International network media, China Network and CCTV international channel network media. The three local English websites are "Qianlong.com" in Beijing, Eastday net in Shanghai and The Southern Network in Guangdong. These news sites create multilingual web version, to introduce China's political, economic, social, cultural conditions and other aspects to the world timely and comprehensively, and to state China's stands of points on important internal and external issues, which makes China's mainstream voice penetrate to a wider range more reasonably. The external communication system of network media in China has initially established and begun to take shape.

2. ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEMS OF CHINA'S NETWORK MEDIA EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

In China, after more than 10 years' development, the foreign news websites are playing more and more important role in the external communication. However, due to the short development time and the propaganda strategy of Chinese style, which makes the credibility and influence of the external website to be limited. There are some problems need to be solved.

This paper, mainly based on the case study of China Daily website, analyzes the main problems in the external communication. China Daily website, relying on "China Daily", China's first and only national daily newspaper in English, is the largest English web portal. To a certain extent, the development of China Daily website reflects the current level and status about China's external network communication.

2.1 Chinese Foreign Information Websites Holding Lower Position in the International Ranking

This part will analyze and evaluate the influence of external communication of the China Daily website, according to the traffic information detection data about China Daily website made by Alexa (www.alexa.com), a professional English website which releases ranks of websites in the world. Alexa provides billions of web links, as well as the rank and the related data statistics for each site. Currently, Alexa is a website with the largest number of URL and the most detailed information about websites ranking.
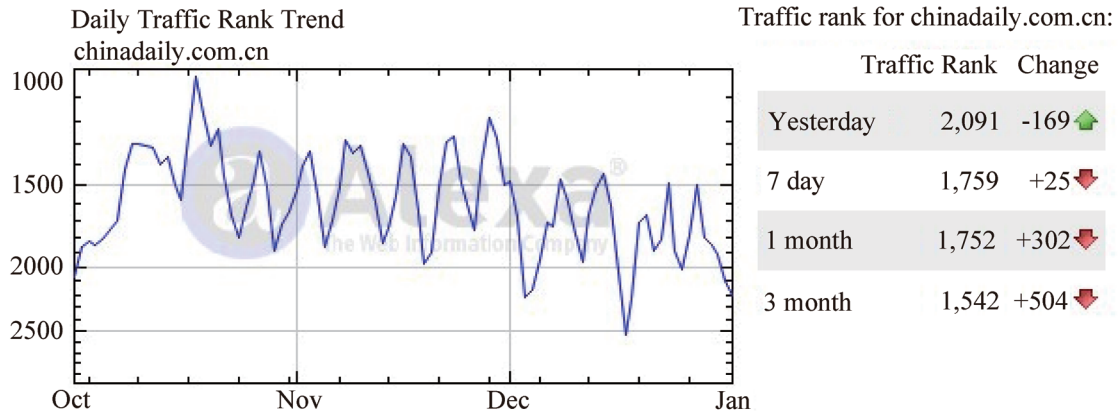
Figure 1
Traffic Rank for Chinadaily.com.cn
Source: Retrieved from http://alexa.chinaz.com/Index.asp?domain=nytimes.com

Table 1
The Ranking Table for Four Domestic and Foreign English News Website

	The day ranking	Traffic rank trend	Week average ranking	Traffic rank trend	Month average ranking	Traffic rank trend	Three months average ranking	Traffic rank trend
english.chinadaily.com.cn	2261	447 ⬇	1819	106 ⬇	1729	266 ⬇	1542	510 ⬇
english.xinhuanet.com	225	22 ⬇	198	16 ⬆	212	8 ⬆	215	58 ⬇
english.peopledaily.com.cn	14172	763 ⬇	12029	1438 ⬇	10157	1829 ⬆	11656	3285 ⬆
nytimes.com	101	5 ⬆	100	0	100	6 ⬇	95	5 ⬇

(This table is drawn according to the website ranking in the world provided by Alexar).
Source: Retrieved from http://alexa.chinaz.com/Index.asp?domain=nytimes.com

Alexa released the visited traffic for Chinadaily.com.cn in the previous one week, one month and three months before these data were released in January 2011. Through the detection and statistical analysis about the visited traffic, Alexa provides the traffic rank for China Daily website in the world as follows:

International website ranking shows the reputation and influence of a website, as well as the competition level in the same industry. The better the ranking is, the greater global influence of the website will be.

It can be seen from Figure 1, the rank for chinadaily.com.cn fluctuated among 110 and 2500 for three months, and the fluctuation is relatively larger. In addition, the site's ranking began to drop and the visited traffic continued to decline since December.

The ranking comparison in Table 1 also shows that the average ranking of chinadaily.com.cn is the 1542nd within the three months, and the world ranking shows a downward trend. While the domestic other similar websites, for example, people.com.cn ranks 11656, and xinhua.com.cn ranks 215. At the same time, nytimes.com, also a newspaper affiliated website, ranks 95. The ranking explains: Generally speaking, the world influence of China's foreign news site is weak in external communication; the website popularity still has much space to develop; comparing to the influence of the external communication of domestic major English news site, chinadaily.com.cn only behinds Xinhua.com.cn.. Moreover, the ability of external communication and its international popularity still have been in the leading position in china.

2.2 Global Internet Users Having a Lower Access to Chinese Foreign Information Website

Alexa did a statistical analysis about global Internet users' daily access number for the chinadaily.com.cn, as the diagram below:
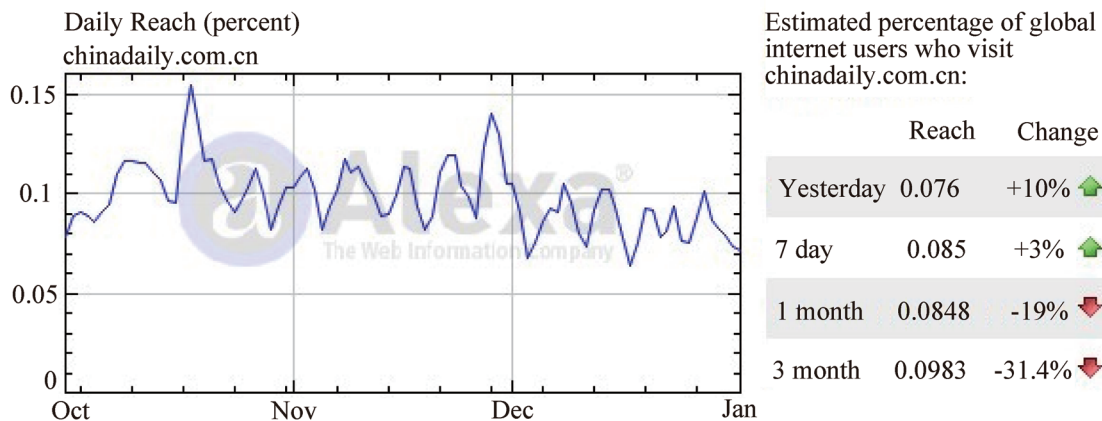
Daily Reach (percent)
chinadaily.com.cn

Estimated percentage of global internet users who visit chinadaily.com.cn:

	Reach	Change
Yesterday	0.076	+10% ⬆
7 day	0.085	+3% ⬆
1 month	0.0848	-19% ⬇
3 month	0.0983	-31.4% ⬇

Figure 2
Estimated Percentage of Global Internet Users Who Visit Chinadaily.com.cn
Source: Retrieved from http://www.alexa.com/siteinfo/chinadaily.com.cn#

Figure 2 reflects the daily visit of the Internet users. We can know from the figure that global Internet users' daily access to chinadaily.com.cn fluctuates between 6% and 15% within three months before January 2011, and the average access is about 9.3%. It is obvious that there is a close relationship between Internet users' daily traffic and the global ranking of website. For example, In December, the global ranking of chinadaily.com.cn began to drop, the amount of global Internet users' daily access began to drop too.

Table 2
Access Ratio Analysis on Chinadaily.com.cn in the Various Parts of the World

According to the ranking of website estimate IP & PV, the datas for refererce maybe have a margin of error				
Daily average access of IP (average of a week)			Daily average access of PV (average of a week)	
≈ 486,000			≈ 1,166,400	
The ranking of website; Statistics of China Daily; Country/Region Ranking; Access ratio				
Country/region name	Country/region code	Country/region ranking	Access ratio of website	Page views ratio
China	CN	286	73.3%	75.5%
America	US	5,025	10.4%	6.7%
India	IN	12,816	1.2%	1.9%
Japan	JP	7,778	1.7%	1.6%
Korea	KR	2,557	2.0%	1.2%
Hong Kong	HK	838	1.3%	1.0%
England	GB	6,974	0.8%	1.0%
Australia	AU	3,139	0.7%	0.8%
Germany	DE	13,952	0.7%	0.7%
Italy	IT	9,220	0.6%	0.7%
Canada	CA	6,629	0.5%	0.6%
Singapore	SG	1,626	0.4%	0.6%
0	0	……	6.2%	7.6%

Source: Retrieved from http://alexa.chinaz.com/Index.asp?domain=chinadaily.com.cn

Table 2 shows the proportion of the world Internet user's access to the English version of China Daily. It is easy to see from the table that Chinese Internet users are the main users of China Daily English website and followed by American and Indian internet users. In addition, Korea, Japan and other neighbors of China also have some users to access the website. However, Europe and Oceania countries accessing to China Daily website is extremely limited. This table also shows that the external communication of China Daily website is inadequate in brand effect and deficient in

the influence of international spread, which will affect the news discourse in the world as well.

2.3 English News Websites in China Having Strong Political Orientation in International Communication

The politicization of English news websites in international communication performs in the two aspects.

For example, the pieces of news released by China Daily on Chinese government policies and other domestic news are far more than that of international news. Table 3 randomly selected the statistics of the number of literal news on chinadaily.com.cn from 2011-12-29 and 2012-1-2. (Table 3)

Table 3
The Quantity Comparative Analysis Between Domestic News and International News on the Chinadaily.com. cn

news \ Date	Domestic news (piece)	International news (piece)
2011-12-29	203	25
2012-1-2	194	15

From Table 3, we can clearly see that the quantity of domestic news is far more than that of the international news. The news report has only met the requirement that "promoting China to the world", but ignored the words "letting China understand the world". The real integrated English news platform should balance the proportion of domestic and international news, and provide global information.

3. ENHANCING THE SPREADING INFLUENCE OF THE FOREIGN NEWS WEBSITE

3.1 Balancing the Proportion of Domestic and International Information, Weakening the Official Orientation

Domestic media is inclined to construct the government framework under the leadership of the Communist Party when reporting news, while western media emphasizes the conflict, contradiction and disharmony and has constructed a conflicting report framework. In order to make western media have a clearer understanding of China and an objective, real image of China, China should adjust the framework of foreign report, change its traditional political communication by adjusting news discourse system and balancing the way of report. China should change the way of mainly positive reporting into the balanced way of reporting when reporting China-related news. Balance means fair, and reporters should consider the points of view from all sides. Reporters should allowed different views even wrong views as

long as they are permitted by laws so as to maintain the objectivity of the media. Only adhering to the principle of objective, fair, true and comprehensive reports, can we underline our objective and fair coverage, demonstrate a real image of developing China and form a good pattern of external communication.

3.2 Establishing an Objective Information Discourse System

LI Liangrong has pointed out that "Excessive use of political slogans and political terms in the report will distort the nature of the news. The using of journalistic language, words expressing, style, vocabulary in Chinese media, especially in the political area, philosophical area, ideological area, international relations and some other major areas, is more and more seriously out of joint with the reality of China and the strategic direction of its development". Chinese media always directly applies the leader's speech to the reporting, or uses a large number of plain statements. For example, reports on the names of leaders show a pale and weak language, without convincing, so it is difficult to obtain a good result of communication.

Therefore, in reporting more attention should be paid to the language, the use of the words, while the implication of the political propaganda should be avoided. Considering the communication effect, "in order to increasingly meet the psychology of foreign audiences, we should try to reduce the mechanical application of the stylized slogans and old-fashioned symbols, use a more tactful and natural way to show our values, and remove the obvious imprint of bureaucratic system". It can lead audience to an ideal acceptable effect, and it is more conducive to establish a good image of China in the field of external communication.

3.3 Closing to the Thinking Habits of Audience, Adapting to the Language Requirements of the Audience

The translators holding the work of translating the news into foreign languages need to strengthen the study of the audience's psychological and thinking habits. As a carrier of information dissemination, Language symbols have great influence on audience' acceptance mentality.

Some scholars in the related academic circles analyzed some relevant journals and Government reports and summarized that the image of China is often described as a peace-loving country, victim of foreign aggression, socialist country, bastion of revolution, anti-hegemonic force, developing country, major power, international cooperator, autonomous actor. However, these words are not well known to foreign audience. One reason is that foreign audiences can not get a better understanding from the blunt Chinese to English, such as "revolutionary bastion". Even if some of the audience can understand but cannot accept because of cultural and ideological differences.

3.4 Strengthening the Corporation Among International Media

In the international community, the cooperation among network media has been very popular. For instance, in 2007 the corporation between AFP and Google, a world famous website, allowed that Google can use the news pictures from AFP in its news or other services. Meanwhile, AFP signed license agreements with other international-influenced comprehensive web portals, such as Yahoo and Facebook. NBC also cooperates with Microsoft, the Wall Street Journal and Dow Jones, aiming at strengthening its power in Europe, Asia and United States. CNN has the website "All Politics", jointly run with Time, broadcasting political news of United States.

It is important for foreign news websites in China to enhance the international corporation for it not only can make up for the disadvantages on news source, credibility and international influence, and international discourse power, but also can obtain better environment in striving for international information discourse power.

Therefore, based on the belief of "self-reliable", Chinese media should learn from the mature report system and the advanced transmission technology of western media. Chinese media should actively communicate, strive for the cooperation, and strengthen business contacts with them. Currently, some achievements have obtained: AOL allies with Lenovo; CCTV-9 cooperates with America famous Adel-pia cable company and CNN broadcasts China's English programs for 24 hours; In 2010, Nielsen Company successfully cooperated with Xinhua News Agency to provide overseas market audience rating service for Global Television Channel of TV Website of China, and to introduce the global-leading latest research technologies and results for Xinhua News Agency. Through this kind of cooperation, the professional skills and international information broadcasting ability can be gradually improved, and the international transmission influence of Chinese network media can be greatly enhanced.

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