

## Original Paper

# The “Crisis” and “Opportunity” of the Hosts in the New Media Environment

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### Abstract

*Along with the continuous progress of science and technology, in recent years, the improvement and optimization of the structure of the media and the rapid development of the network are promoting continuous changes in the media environment. New media has penetrated into people's daily life and become an integral part of the whole social environment. As an indispensable component of the media industry, the host industry is facing challenges from many aspects in the new media environment, which requires the announcers and hosts to give full play to their subjective initiative, finding the “opportunity” in the “crisis”, keeping up with the pace of the times, embracing the emerging media, and grasping the needs of the audience, to produce high-quality content, so as to transform “crisis” into “opportunity”.*

### Keywords

*New Media, Host, “Crisis” and “Opportunity”*

### 1. Introduction

Only a short while ago, the “host” was a brilliant and enviable profession. However, under the background of the rapid development of the national economy, the rapid progress of cutting-edge science and technology, and the shift of the people from material pursuit to spiritual pursuit, new media emerged with electronic information technology as the medium, digital and network technology as support, Internet and satellite as channels, and computers, mobile phones, digital television and so on as the terminal. The birth of new media provides society and the people with more channels to obtain information, but at the same time, traditional media are faced with the dilemma of declining audience rating, diversion of audience and substantial decline in advertising revenue. Therefore, the development of traditional media hosts has been greatly challenged.

## 2. The “Crisis” of the Hosts in the New Media Environment

### 2.1 *The Challenges Brought by AI*

The progress of science and technology has affected the development of the media industry, and even the important elements of the media. AI can not only preliminarily screen and edit the video material of the programs, but also can replace the hosts who communicate face to face with the audience and are good at interpersonal communication. On November 7, 2018, AI synthetic anchor, who kept the expressions and lip movements in a natural and consistent manner when hosting the program through the techniques of speech synthesis, lip synthesis, expression synthesis and deep learning, made its debut at the Fifth World Internet Congress, mixing the spurious with the genuine.

The emergence of AI synthetic anchor brings great challenges to the host industry. Compared with the traditional hosts, AI synthetic anchor has multiple advantages: it can work 24 hours a day according to the program command, real-time online, that is, it can not only achieve the timely dissemination of news, to the maximum extent to meet the characteristics of the timeliness of news, but also can work all the time; it can operate according to the pre-set program, and because the program is made up of fixed codes, the possibility of errors such as phonetic errors and stutters in the broadcasting work is very low. Through the input of the program, AI synthetic anchor has the ability to broadcast in multiple languages and can change freely. For example, during the two sessions, AI synthetic anchor transmitted Chinese voices to the world in English, Japanese and Korean, showing the image of China.

### 2.2 *The Challenges Brought by Crossover Hosts*

At the Spring Festival Gala in 2020, actress Tong Liya stepped onto the stage of the performance party with the largest scale and the highest specification in China, the Spring Festival Gala, as a host. This special host immediately caused a heated discussion on the Internet, one of the reasons was that she did not have any hosting experience, and she was not a host, so we call her a crossover host.

The characteristics of the crossover hosts are that, firstly, the host may not have a professional background, but he or she has unique views in a certain field, which is suitable for the style of the program, so the programme group invites him or her to be a host; secondly, he or she has a certain degree of famousness, which can produce a brand effect for the program. Nowadays, such crossover hosts are not uncommon in radio and television programs. For instance, Gao Xiaosong eventually transformed from a musician, songwriter, producer, and director into a talk show host, and dancer Jinxing founded “Jinxing Show”, and the veteran actor Zhang Guoguo has been invited to host “National Treasure”. More and more talents from other industries have begun to “rob crossover” and seize the job opportunities of the hosts.

### 2.3 *The Challenges Brought by the Network Hosts*

Network hosts, who are usually average people with grassroots characteristics, are produced with the progress of science and technology. Due to the popularity of mobile phones and the continuous updating and optimization of software functions, the threshold for video production has been greatly reduced. Individuals can shoot, edit and make short videos through a variety of mobile phone software.

In this era when everyone has a “microphone” and everyone can “voice”, the boundary of the host has become more and more blurred. In the past, the host meant that he or she had a platform and the opportunity to become a star in public attention, but now the host has already stepped down from the altar, and is no longer a superior “opinion leader” in a sense. In the era when there was no Internet, TV was the only entertainment for people, and TV programs were the only choice for the audience, but now almost no one can focus all their attention on TV. They are attracted by the richness and speed of Internet information, and vote through their own click and watching, to fulfill their favorite hosts, it can be said that the phenomenon of pan-host is becoming more and more intense.

#### *2.4 The Challenges Brought by the Change of Audience*

With the advent of the new media era, it is not just the communicators (the producers of the content) who have been changed, but the recipients (the recipients of the content) have undergone earth-shaking changes, too. In the early stage of the development of radio and television in China, due to the relatively limited production and communication channels, the hosts were relatively fixed and the audience was relatively fixed, too, such as Zhao Zhongxiang and Ni Ping, who was the idol in the eyes of women and the lover in the eyes of men respectively. Nowadays, however, with the diversification of production content and communication channels, the audience has the right to choose, and the scope of choice is constantly expanding. The audience, who needs the host to bring emotional satisfaction, information supply, ideological inspiration and communication like friends, is no longer satisfied with the host’s “announcer” function. Especially in the network era, the broadcasting platform is constantly expanding, and all kinds of programs emerge one after another, which results in the continuous segmentation and change of the audience group. In addition, with the passage of time, the audience with strong “stickiness” has gradually lost, so how to attract the ever-changing audience and transform this group into a fixed audience with strong “stickiness” is another major challenge for the hosts.

### **3. The “Opportunity” in the New Media Environment**

#### *3.1 Have a Broader Professional Platform*

The more new media platforms are, the larger the stage that belongs to the hosts will be, which means the hosts can make full use of these platforms to upload their works or share the details of their life, that is, to get closer to the audience, letting more people know them and expanding their audience. For example, Wang Jianning, a host of Suzhou Radio and TV Station, often updates her life on Weibo: showing off her talents in front of the camera, or sharing interesting stories in life, etc., and interacts closely with netizens on Weibo. In this way, Wang Jianning’s followers are more willing to watch programs hosted or participated by her, forming a virtuous circle.

From a higher dimension, the host represents the image of his or her media, and by narrowing the distance between the host and the audience, it is more conducive to the realization of the broken wall between “communication” and “reception”. For example, “Xinwen Lianbo”, or “News Broadcast” promoted “Anchors Talk About News” on the official account of Wechat. Once this new form was

launched, the response was enthusiastic, and everyone thought that the previously superior “News Broadcast” is now becoming more and more approachable. The reason is that “News Broadcast” cleverly opens up a new media platform, allowing the host to let go of his or her work in the studio, interpret today’s news in a kind and telling tone, attracting more audiences on the new platform, and at the same time, feeding back to the “News Broadcast” program itself.

### *3.2 Promote Audience Interaction More Deeply*

The application of new media seems to impact the traditional media, but the new media technology really shortens the gap between the media and the audience. From a macro point of view, Weibo, Wechat, text messages and official account messages have all set up a platform for interaction between the audience and the media, making it easier for the audience to better communicate with the media. The key content emphasized in the new media era is “interaction”. On the one hand, interaction can enhance the audience’s “sense of participation” and enhance the audience’s “stickiness”. On the other hand, interaction can also help the host better understand the preferences of the audience, to provide viewers with more high-quality program content. The media industry has always advocated “station-network linkage”, which in fact is not only limited to delivering high-quality TV programs through the advantages of the Internet, but more importantly, is integrated into the process of hosting the program. For example, while the program is recorded, a large screen is specially placed to show the real-time comments and interaction of Weibo netizens, which not only satisfies the audience’s sense of participation, enriches the connotation of the program, but also allows other viewers to see clearly their views on this event or issue, achieving many things at one stroke.

### *3.3 Expand More Information Channels*

The emergence of new media platform has further expanded the channels of mass communication, and more information is coming from all directions. The host industry has high requirements for practitioners, and the hosts must maintain the state of “dynamic learning” and “learning at any time”. The original main channels of learning can be print media, electronic media, interpersonal communication and so on. In such a new media environment, however, the network media greatly improves the speed of information acquisition, and one can obtain more high-quality content in the same unit of time. This provides great convenience for the hosts to improve their knowledge and cultural level. For instance, on bilibili, there are “knowledge”, “classroom” and other special areas, including social sciences, humanities, finance and economics, science popularization, campus learning, workplace learning and other sections, providing platform users with diversified learning content, and providing more channels for the hosts’ information collection, learning and promotion.

## **4. Explore the Plan to Turn Crisis into Opportunity**

Since the development of new media has become a trend, rather than passively affected and restricted by the environment, it is better to actively adapt to the environment and seek new opportunities for development.

#### *4.1 Embrace New Media*

The emergence of new media has a profound impact on the entire media industry. At this stage, the popularity of short video apps such as TikTok, Kuaishou, Mei Pai and so on, as well as the development of the live broadcast industry, make many ordinary people become well-known Internet celebrities. Practice and time have proved that traditional media need to be integrated into the development trend of new media in order to develop better. Newspapers, for example, have “surfing the Internet” and opened electronic editions, which have given new vitality to the traditional newspaper industry; major television stations have been reformed one after another, and greater benefits have been produced through the “station-network linkage” ... It is not difficult to see from the practical examples that people’s reading habits, viewing behavior, aesthetic standards and value evaluation have all changed in the new media era. In order to stand out in the dazzling array of infotainment products, only traditional media hosts understand and integrate into emerging things, dare to try, embrace new media and promote personalized development, can they keep up with the pace of the times, achieving longer-term development.

#### *4.2 Expert in One and Good at Many*

In the current media environment, the competition is becoming more and more fierce. Generally speaking, the number of host posts is relatively small with relatively fixed candidates. To stand out from the crowd not only depends on outstanding individual skills, but also requires the host to have a strong comprehensive quality: with planning, interview, editing, broadcasting and even operation and other abilities, namely, all-round talent. At present, most hosts are still limited to their own professional areas: staying in the field of “broadcast”, which causes problems: in the small area of “broadcast”, a large number of people of the same level are gathered, resulting in fierce competition. When a host has one specialty and many abilities at the same time, he or she will be able to widen the gap with other hosts, and better adapt to the needs of the new media environment for host talents, so as to be able to survive in the media industry for a long time.

#### *4.3 Pay Attention to Specialization and Deep Ploughing*

With the continuous development of TV programs, the audience continues to narrow and subdivide, which requires the host to have a deeper understanding of a certain industry and the ability to develop vertically in this industry. This is also why some programme groups do not invite professional hosts, but invite experts and masters from the industry related to the theme of the program, which is the underlying reason for the emergence of pan-host. Compared with the traditional host, the advantage of pan-host is that he or she is professional to his or her own industry and can bring more praiseworthy content to the program. Therefore, while ensuring their own professional study and training, traditional hosts should also specialize in a certain industry and a certain field. Only in this way, they will not talk in general terms like most hosts, can provide their own unique insights for more audiences instead.

## 5. Conclusion

Under the background of the integration of traditional media and new media, the introduction of technology has brought new opportunities and challenges to the field of broadcast hosting. In any environment, “crisis” and “opportunity” always coexist, and the crux of the problem is how to give full play to our subjective initiative and transform “crisis” into “opportunity”, which requires announcers and hosts in the new media ecological environment, keep up with the pace of the times, grasp the needs of the audience, and produce high-quality content. As long as “there is rich cultural and scholarship foundation in your mind”, then no matter how the media situation changes, you will be in an invincible position, and can find opportunities in the crisis, seeking better development.

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