**How to control social network “pollution”?**

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**"Chicken soup articles" are rampant and "fake ads" dominate the screen**

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The term "chicken soup" on the Internet comes from the inspirational collection "Chicken Soup for the Soul" created by Americans Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen, which refers to "words full of knowledge and emotion." However, the "chicken soup" that has disseminated countless positive energy in the past has now changed its flavor in the chaos of social networks, with all kinds of "proverbs and witty sayings" being dizzying, and multiple advertising information difficult to distinguish between true and false. What is even more unexpected is that behind these "chicken soup articles" that induce netizens to forward them, there is also a hidden chain of profitable industries.

**Chicken soup articles "take over" the circle of friends**

Every day when I open WeChat, I always find that my friend circle is flooded with all kinds of "chicken soup articles" and "health posts". At the same time, titles such as "Shocked", "If you don't forward, you are not a Chinese", "Forward like crazy", "Must forward" and so on are also annoying. Most of these articles flooding the Internet are pieced together by publishers, with mixed content and difficult to distinguish between true and false.

According to the author's understanding, the "chicken soup articles" that are now "rampant" in social networking spaces are mostly divided into two categories. One is "philosophical" articles, such as "Reading for 5 minutes may change your life!" and "20 proverbs you must learn in life". The other is "popular science" articles, such as "Learn these and you can live a hundred years longer" and "Too scary! Don't eat this fruit like this".

However, whether they are "philosophical" or "popular science", most of them have the same characteristics, that is, they randomly copy unverified content, and in order to attract attention, they are often mixed with various curious and pornographic content, which not only disgusts netizens but also causes serious pollution of the Internet space. What is more serious is that these "chicken soup articles" often contain marketing advertisements and even hidden scams. For example, a product worth tens of yuan on the market can be sold for thousands of yuan in the circle of friends under the same brand and specifications, with a price difference of more than 10 times.

It can be said that for some consumers with low literacy and poor information identification ability, the "chicken soup for the soul" in the circle of friends can easily become "toxic chicken soup".

**Hidden "viral" industry chain**

Why are "chicken soup articles" so popular in "friend circles"? This has to start with the intricate "chicken soup industry chain" behind social networks.

Compared with newspapers, television and websites, social networking channels dominated by self-media lack professional advertising review mechanisms, and therefore have become a "must-fight place" for many illegal advertisements. Most of these advertisements are concentrated in the fields of beauty, weight loss, health care, etc., with mixed content and huge commercial interests. The dissemination chain of "chicken soup articles" also contains a "viral" interest chain characterized by "crowdsourcing distribution".

"You can make money by forwarding and sharing articles, earning 1 yuan per minute and making 10,000 yuan per month without doing anything." Such advertising slogans are common in WeChat groups, QQ groups and Moments of netizens. According to media investigations, these advertisements are mostly posted by third-party platforms of chicken soup articles. In order to induce users to forward articles, the forwarders can earn 1 to 6 cents each time. Users can also recruit downlines to share the income from the downlines forwarding articles, forming a "viral" communication network similar to pyramid schemes. In this process, for an article forwarded more than 100,000 times, the content distribution platform can earn about 30,000 yuan in gray income.

**How to control the “source of pollution”?**

It is important to clean up the chaos of "chicken soup articles" and "false information" and regulate and rectify the "sources of pollution" in cyberspace.

As early as March last year, the WeChat platform had taken action to rectify the chaos of "chicken soup articles" and punished the behavior of inducing sharing in the circle of friends, including deleting the article, restricting the account function or banning the account. However, although the rectification measures have played a certain role, they have not destroyed the interest chain behind the "chicken soup articles". The main reason is that Tencent's official rectification of "chicken soup articles" is mainly to accept reports and warn of risks, and supervision is often lagging and weak.

However, the field of "chicken soup articles" and "false advertising" is not a "regulatory vacuum". On September 1 last year, the new "Advertising Law", known as the strictest in history, was officially implemented. Zhang Guohua, director of the Advertising Supervision and Management Department of the State Administration for Industry and Commerce, clearly pointed out that those who publish illegal advertisements on WeChat for profit will be investigated and dealt with in accordance with the new "Advertising Law". At the same time, Zhang Guohua also admitted that it is not possible to actively supervise the advertisements posted on Moments and personal public accounts through functions such as industrial and commercial system capture, but targeted investigations can be carried out based on reports.

In this regard, public opinion has continuously called on network management departments, industrial and commercial management departments, public security departments, etc. to assume regulatory responsibilities and establish a technical supervision system and a filing and registration system, so that the social networks that have long been polluted by the chaos of "chicken soup articles" can "take a bath", "sweat", and "disinfect", and return a clean and tidy online space to netizens. (Reporter Lu Zehua)