**Reshaping the Law of Attraction in the New Media Era**

*Break the "information cocoon" and do not judge heroes by traffic*

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Author: Huang Chuxin

Editor: Zhang Lei

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[Abstract] In the new media era, the application of intelligent algorithm recommendation technology enables people to obtain information more accurately, but improper use can cause problems such as "information cocoon". In the "information cocoon" recommended by algorithms, people may fall into the trap of tool slaves, lose their correct values, and then fall into misunderstandings about the real world. Simple traffic orientation should not be the value criterion for the operation of new media platforms. Letting the good value of content return is the key to the law of attraction.

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In the new media era, with the rapid development of technologies such as big data and artificial intelligence, intelligent information dissemination mechanisms have made accurate information matching possible. In order to compete for user attention resources and stand out in the fierce competition, new media platforms have used "catering to users' preferences" algorithm recommendations to become a powerful weapon in the battle for traffic. However, while personalized recommendations are popular, the public's information bias has become prominent, and it is easy to fall into an "information cocoon", bringing a series of negative effects.

The impact of “information cocoon” under algorithm recommendation

Regarding the "information cocoon" theory proposed by American scholar Cass Sunstein, whether it is the concern about the closed personal vision and rigid thinking caused by long-term information bias, or the "group polarization" problem discussed by the author in his book Republic.com published as early as 2001, the academic and industry circles have discussed it a lot, so there is no need to repeat it here. What we should pay more attention to is the trap of tool slaves and the loss of correct values ​​in the "information cocoon", and be vigilant against falling into misunderstandings of the real world.

First, there is the trap of tool slaves. In the new media era, users have been pursuing the satisfaction of personalized information needs. People in the "information cocoon" seem to be enjoying the supply of personalized information, but in fact they may have fallen into the trap of tool slaves without knowing it. In communication studies, there is a concept of "media addiction", which is a social pathological phenomenon brought about by new media. Its characteristics are excessive indulgence in media contact and inability to extricate oneself; all values ​​and behavioral choices must be based on the media; satisfaction with virtual social interaction in the media and avoidance of real social interaction; lonely and autistic social personality, etc. In fact, the media relies on the information content it disseminates to control the audience's dependence on it. In media addiction, what really controls people is the content disseminated by the media. Algorithm recommendation tools control the dissemination of content. While satisfying users' personalized information needs, they also make people fall into the trap of tool slaves. Intelligent algorithm distribution realizes accurate information matching. Users who are accustomed to fragmented reading are increasingly dependent on algorithms. Large amounts of information push will even squeeze and occupy people's time that should be used for learning and working. In the long run, people become slaves of algorithm tools without knowing it.

The second is the loss of correct values. Algorithmic recommendation provides personalized information based on personal interest preferences. On this basis, there is also user-based collaborative filtering, that is, the algorithm pushes the same or similar content to the target user based on the information contact behavior of users with similar preferences. Take Sina Weibo as an example. In 2017, Weibo established a centralized algorithm traffic distribution based on the attention distribution mechanism. The algorithm recommends objects and information that users may be interested in based on the analysis of user profiles and their information contact behaviors. The most common interests and concerns in the user group will become the largest proportion of the pushed content in the algorithm recommendation. This information will be highlighted to the greatest extent, and correspondingly, other information will be obscured. In fact, the user group is full of low-level interests, and the information pushed by algorithm recommendations implies negative value orientation. Most people in the online group will not realize this, and a small number of opponents are likely to turn to silence or echo under group pressure. This seems to have formed a "spiral of silence", and the correctness of the value orientation depends on the number of supporters. Whether right or wrong, the value orientation of the majority will oppress the minority, and the growing momentum of opinions will force opponents to agree or remain silent. In this process, correct values ​​may be lost.

The second is the misunderstanding of the real world. In the era of traditional media, journalists, editors, and media organizations are the "gatekeepers" of news products, and information is presented to the audience after screening. The information environment that people know is the environment in which mass media select, process, and report news information, and then present it to people after structuring. It is a "pseudo-environment". In the new media era, intelligent algorithm recommendation is promoting the formation of another "pseudo-environment" based on personal interest preferences. Take Toutiao as an example. Since its establishment in 2012, algorithms have become the core of its application. Toutiao shouts the slogan "What you care about is the headline", relying on algorithms to build a "privately customized" personal homepage for users, and the personal homepage becomes a window for users to understand the world. The interest-oriented information pushed by the algorithm becomes the basis for people to understand the world. The "pseudo-environment" recommended by the algorithm is narrower than the real world. If people are in it for a long time, their cognitive structure will be narrowed, and their understanding of the real world will be biased.

The series of problems brought about by the "information cocoon" can be attributed to the popularity of algorithmic recommendations, but the deeper reason is that traffic orientation has become the value criterion for the operation of various new media platforms. In order to compete for users' time and attention, major platforms regard "traffic is king" as a criterion, making the problem more prominent. Faced with such a situation, we have to think about the law of attraction in the new media era. From the perspective of new media platforms, value orientation should be the consensus to be reached in the battle for traffic dividends. Driven by technology, realizing platform empowerment, and returning the good currency value of content are the key to making the new media law of attraction work.

Technology-driven, human-machine collaboration attracts user resources

Intelligent technology has entered the field of new media content, upgrading the elements of each link. In terms of content production, artificial intelligence is becoming the underlying support. From topic planning to information collection and then to information processing, technology-driven optimization has optimized the entire production process. The application of IoT sensors has achieved all-round data collection, and intelligent speech recognition and intelligent translation technologies are expanding data sources. Robot interviews, automatic information capture and preliminary filtering are expanding the capabilities of media people. Data journalism, robot writing, and intelligent processing of images and videos make information processing more accurate and efficient.

In terms of information distribution, although algorithmic distribution based on intelligent algorithms for matching information and people will produce some of the problems mentioned above, it cannot negate itself. With the advancement of technology and the realization of human-machine collaboration, the development of personalized distribution platforms will get better and better. For example, in 2017, Baidu proposed the "Information Distribution 2.0" model, which uses the combination of "search + recommendation" driven by artificial intelligence to make users obtain information more efficient. User active search + artificial intelligence in-depth learning and analysis of user behavior, which makes information push more accurate and comprehensive.

Intelligent technology is helping the production and distribution of information, but at the same time, people should be wary of their own superstition and abuse of machines and algorithms, and hold the reins of the development of intelligent machines. Going beyond machines and algorithms, maintaining human judgment and insight, and injecting human emotions and warmth into information products are the values ​​that professional media people should adhere to. Understand and apply technology, analyze and judge content, and people should complete higher-dimensional production and creation in collaboration with machines.

Platform empowerment opens up the three paths of users, content and consumption

In the past, the connection between users and content in traditional media was a channel, which was the only way for content to reach the audience. The isolation of the channel made content and users separate, and users were more content consumers, with very few users entering the field of content production. Now, the platform has become a channel connecting new media users, content, and consumption. Multiple paths from content to users have been opened up, users are connected, and content production and consumption are aggregated on the same platform.

The platform and users coexist. The platform's auxiliary creation capabilities and precise distribution capabilities help content production, stimulate user vitality, guide content producers to meet consumer needs, and achieve precise content production. Users' content production and consumption continuously enrich the platform's content ecology, enhance the platform's competitiveness, and promote the further development of the platform. The platform's big data analysis, intelligent distribution and other technologies can clearly depict the user's digital portrait and help content producers complete targeted content creation for user consumption needs.

In terms of enhancing the value of content, the platform stimulates the creative vitality of content producers and encourages the production of high-quality original content by supporting original creation and giving priority to promotion. For example, on November 22, 2017, Toutiao's Toutiao account announced the launch of the "Thousands of People and Millions of Fans Plan", planning to incubate 1,000 million-fan accounts in the next year; in February 2017, Tencent launched the "Mangzhong Plan 2.0", investing 1.2 billion to provide content creators; in December 2017, Alibaba's Dayu launched the Dayu Plan, which encouraged creators to publish exclusive content by adding Dayu potential bonuses, supporting potential new accounts, and signing annual Dayu high-quality accounts with a large amount of money. On the one hand, the platform helps the production of original content through financial subsidies and policy support, and on the other hand, it promotes the sustainable production of high-quality content by promoting content monetization. On the platform, content monetization, including content payment, advertising, e-commerce operations, etc., brings considerable benefits to content producers, and top users are the biggest beneficiaries.

Content value returns, new media narrative and operational capabilities need to be improved

New media application platforms are booming, and content information is growing explosively. Content platforms are in fierce competition, and in order to compete for traffic dividends, low-quality and vulgar content is rampant. Some platforms only distribute content based on user "interests" and have no time to pay attention to content quality. More and more vulgar content has aroused users' disgust. In the video content industry, the rapid development of live broadcasts and short videos has attracted the attention of a large number of users. The policy support and financial subsidies of network platforms have attracted a large number of content creators to enter the video content field. In order to compete for limited empowerment resources, the spread of vulgar and violent content is common, and there are even behaviors that violate public order and good customs. More and more vulgar and junk content is spreading on new media platforms, and users are fed up with it. Improving the quality of content is imminent.

When the good currency of content returns and the value appeal increases, in order to maintain the user position, the narrative and video capabilities of new media need to be improved. Now, new language expressions and narrative methods are entering the field of new media content, and popular expressions of the times are gradually being accepted and sought after. The new generation of Internet groups have created Internet-born words through abbreviations, homophones, etc., and widely used them on social media platforms. These personalized expressions are gradually mediatized and recognized by users. Humorous text expressions have become the aesthetic preference of many users. Popular expressions are being introduced into the new media context, and the production and creation of content requires new narrative methods.

With the development and application of media technologies such as live broadcasting and virtual reality (VR), the carriers of information products have been expanded, and the production of information products such as online live broadcasting and short videos has entered the new media communication ecology. Live broadcasting and short videos have developed rapidly and have become the mainstream content carriers of new media. New media content expression presents video characteristics, and users' information acquisition also shows a video trend. In order to improve user stickiness and improve content quality, the ability to use lenses in the network environment has become a necessary skill, and the video capabilities of new media need to be strengthened.

In the new media era, algorithms are playing the role of liaisons between users and values. The root cause of the "information cocoon" problem is that various new media platforms ignore value orientation and instead use traffic orientation as the criterion for their operation. Therefore, we can further consider the issue of the law of attraction in the new media era. From the perspective of the media platform, we can establish a mechanism to trigger the law: taking value orientation as the core, relying on technology drive and platform empowerment, and focusing on the improvement of content value are the keys to making the new media law of attraction work.

(The author is the director and researcher of the Journalism Research Office of the Institute of Journalism and Communication of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences; Diao Jinxing, a graduate student at the School of Journalism and Communication of the University of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, also contributed to this article)

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Editor/Zhou Suli Art Editor/Wang Mengya