



The Impact of Information Dissemination Modes on Information Acquisition and In-depth Understanding--A Case Study of Short Videos

Yuling Song

The College of Journalism and Media Communication, Chongqing Normal University,
Chongqing, China

VINCY-SYL@outlook.com

Abstract. The transformation of information dissemination in the digital era has attracted extensive scholarly attention; however, insufficient discussion remains regarding its mechanisms and long-term impacts on information acquisition and deep thinking. Against this backdrop, this paper focuses on short videos as a representative form of contemporary information dissemination and examines their influence on users' cognitive depth and understanding. Drawing on a comparative analysis of information dissemination across the electronic media era and the digital network era, this study systematically analyzes how algorithm-driven short video platforms reshape information access patterns, cognitive habits, and thinking structures. The analysis reveals that while short videos significantly enhance the efficiency, accessibility, and democratization of information acquisition, they also generate prominent challenges, including information cocoon effects, content compression, emotional manipulation, information overload, and increased risks in information authenticity and user addiction. These factors collectively contribute to shallow cognition and the weakening of deep thinking ability. Based on these findings, this paper proposes targeted coping strategies at both individual and platform levels, such as promoting "information dieting," strengthening critical information literacy, encouraging diversified content exposure, and optimizing platform governance mechanisms.

Keywords: Information Dissemination Modes, Information Acquisition, Short Videos

1 Introduction

The transformation of information dissemination patterns brought about by the changing times has received widespread attention, but there are still shortcomings in the causes and impacts of information acquisition and deep thinking, as well as response strategies. Short video refers to video content within 5 minutes that is played on various new media platforms, suitable for viewing in mobile and short-term leisure states, and high-frequency push. The short video platform market size has grown rapidly in recent years. It will grow from \$1.97 billion in 2024 to \$2.22 billion in

2025 at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 12.8%. Short videos have become the main way of information dissemination in contemporary times due to their ability to obtain a large amount of information and provide audio-visual stimulation in a short period of time. With the advent of the Internet era, while people easily access a large amount of fragmented information and views, they are generally faced with the problem of inattention, shallow, and one-sided access to information. In the long run, this will easily affect people's ability to think deeply, and even cause "brain corruption" [1]. In the current context, 'brain corruption' often refers to the phenomenon of significant decline in deep thinking ability and intellectual degradation caused by excessive browsing of low-quality information and fragmented content [1].

In view of this phenomenon, this article will deeply analyze the principles and mechanisms of using short videos as the main mode of information dissemination, dialectically view the arrival of the short video era, analyze its advantages and disadvantages for information acquisition and deep thinking, and provide effective response strategies for this phenomenon.

2 The Transformation of Information Acquisition Methods

With the breakthrough progress of the technological revolution, the mode of information dissemination has shifted from single to diversified, especially with the information technology innovation in the past two hundred years. The following article mainly focuses on the transformation of information dissemination methods, which are divided into the electronic media era and the digital network era, and analyzes their main dissemination forms, characteristics, and impacts.

2.1 The Age of Digital Electronic Media

From the end of the 19th century to the end of the 20th century, television, telegraph, radio, and physical paper were the main communication media. Their characteristics were official, accurate, and slow dissemination speed. Due to their limited dissemination facilities, a message usually took 2-3 days to be fully covered. The main recipients of information dissemination are the government, newspapers, and television stations, while the main recipients of information reception are the people. Its advantage lies in reliable news channels, authoritative and complete information reporting, which meets the public's demand for obtaining real information. The limitation is that message monopolies are very common, with significant information gaps and huge differences in information obtained by different social classes. There are significant differences in the ways, speed, and amount of information obtained between urban and rural areas. The cost of obtaining information is relatively high compared to the digital network era, and media such as newspapers usually require a certain fee.

2.2 The Age of Digital Networks

Since the advent of the Internet in the 21st century, it has become more convenient to obtain information. Information dissemination relies on big data algorithms, social

media has emerged, and short video platforms have become popular worldwide (e. g. TikTok, YouTube, Instagram). The main media are computers, the Internet, and smartphones, which are characterized by immediacy and convenience. The target audience of information dissemination is not limited to official media; everyone can be both an information disseminator and an information receiver. The advantage lies in the lower cost, faster and more convenient way of obtaining information compared to the electronic media era, and the globalization of dissemination scope; The situation of information monopoly has greatly reduced, the information gap between people has decreased, the pyramid shaped mode of information dissemination has become a flat network structure, and the difference in information acquisition between urban and rural areas has narrowed; The Internet has become a means for many people to seek justice, such as the oppression of mafia and drug traffickers. Responding to the public's desire for quick access to more information and reducing information gaps.

3 The Influence of Information Dissemination Methods -- Taking Short Videos as an Example

Although digital media has greatly improved the efficiency of information dissemination, its operation mode from short video platforms, short video bloggers to user audiences will also bring a series of challenges to the scope of information reception, depth of information, the authenticity of information, and user emotions.

3.1 Circle Solidification

The mechanism of big data push is prone to creating information cocoons, and homogeneous content limits users' ability to receive information and opinions, resulting in one-sided understanding and affecting their ability to think deeply [2]. The information cocoon refers to being confined to a fixed way of thinking and cultural environment by personal hobbies, cognition, etc., like a cocoon, without realizing it. The formation of information cocoons is due to the combined effects of platform algorithms, user personal interests and preferences, and traffic-driven business logic [3]. This phenomenon allows people to obtain information calculated by big data, and can only obtain a single information output and concept. Over time, they cannot see the multidimensionality of things, and their thinking is stereotyped. They are trapped in their own thinking cage, like "sitting in a well and observing the sky", which weakens their thinking ability and is not conducive to the formation of dialectical and critical thinking. It seems that they have obtained a large amount of information, but in fact, it is a single and homogeneous information cocoon, causing the solidification of circles [3].

3.2 Content Compression and Emotional Hook Embedding

Short video bloggers, in pursuit of traffic, usually pursue content rendering forms, manifested as content compression and emotional hook embedding, which have a series of impacts on deep thinking ability. One of the main features of information transmission on short video platforms is content compression, which compresses

events that originally took more than ten minutes to explain clearly into concise summaries that only retain key information [4]. This type of information usually only has the climax part, which leads to rendering and brings strong emotional feelings to people [4]. Emotional hook embedding refers to placing a sufficiently eye-catching opening at the beginning of a video, arousing the audience's emotions and stimulating their desire to watch. For example, displaying the climax of the story at the beginning is intended to resonate with the audience through emotional expression and achieve good dissemination effects. It manifests as achieving eye-catching effects, with content quality vastly different from the beginning, exaggerating content, stimulating extreme emotions among the masses, and utilizing the psychology and needs of different groups to expand the dissemination volume. Therefore, the information acquisition of short video platforms is usually insufficient and lacks logical chains, making it difficult for people to know the complete process of things. The habit of being able to obtain key information in just a few seconds has also gradually made people lose patience with longer videos and exploring the complete process of things. Internet buzzwords are also accustomed to shortening the characteristics of a popular event into a phrase and applying it to other contexts, entertaining all events through memes. Some netizens are trapped in their own world and mocking other incompatible concepts. In such an environment, some people have lost the patience to understand, think, and express themselves in complete language. On the other hand, their ability to think deeply and express themselves in language gradually declines, approaching the direction of "brain decay" [1].

3.3 Information Identification and Risk

In the current era where traffic is paramount, it is particularly important to distinguish the authenticity of information. Firstly, the explosive growth of information has led to a proliferation of mixed-quality information on the internet, making it difficult to distinguish between true and false. Many pieces of information, intended to attract attention, may be exaggerated, fabricated, or maliciously spread to provoke opposition, making it difficult to prevent. Some netizens have weak information recognition abilities and are likely to easily believe false information. Later on, these netizens become disseminators of information, and with further dissemination, the degree of falsehood and spread becomes even stronger. This type of information can easily cause serious consequences to society.

Secondly, incorrect information can lead to misunderstandings and discussions, and netizens who accept incorrect information may become the main force of online violence, causing irreparable harm to the parties involved. Moreover, some minors have a high degree of participation in the Internet and a weak ability to identify general information. Internet information can easily impact the three views of minors and have a profound impact on their physical and mental health [5].

Finally, as people's online participation continues to increase and big data holds more data and user information, cybersecurity risks have become a serious issue. The leakage of personal information and privacy can range from widespread advertising and privacy-threatening fraud to the loss of all property and even life. In short, the

digital network era has higher requirements for the ability to identify and screen personal information, as well as protect against personal privacy and security risks.

3.4 Information Identification and Risk

Obtaining overloaded information can lead people into anxiety, repeatedly hesitating and not taking action, making it impossible to truly acquire knowledge. There are various types of short video content, including high-quality and valuable video content. Coupled with zero-cost access to the information people need, many people are addicted to endless information acquisition [6].

Based on this, many young people now have a weaker sense of control over time, and the addictive nature of short videos can easily make people spend several hours without realizing it [7]. When anxiety strikes, some people will choose to watch short videos to relieve their anxiety, and over time, they will fall into a vicious cycle [8].

Learning a certain type of knowledge is not something that can be learned just by watching a teaching video. Hands-on operation is the most important. The role of input is extremely limited, and most of it will be quickly forgotten. Learning to output is the key to acquiring knowledge, like a dry knowledge blogger who talks about knowledge and constantly reviews and consolidates it. Many videos create gimmicks like "teaching in a few seconds" just to gain views. Many people equate acquiring information with acquiring knowledge, and when they come across extremely fragmented information, they believe they have a basic understanding of a certain field. Those fragmented pieces of information are like pebbles thrown into water, never embedded into the precise machine gears [9]. Most knowledge is easily forgotten by people. What is important is the academic thinking and methodology formed when exploring knowledge, deeply thinking, and constructing a knowledge system [10]. This is what truly plays a key role in life. Overloaded information acquisition can easily lead to confusion, and ultimately, learning nothing will only make one more anxious.

4 Coping Strategies

The problems brought about by the era of short videos in people's understanding and thinking cannot be ignored. While enjoying the convenient information of the times, effective ways should also be sought to solve them, making effective responses for personal development and physical and mental health.

Firstly, users should establish an awareness of "information dieting". The platform, video publishers, and users should work together, especially users should have a mature mind to cope with the complex and ever-changing online world. Users need to learn how to filter information. The online information is too complex; filter the information they need, and then identify and verify it. Do not trust or evaluate information without knowing its source. Do not passively accept information blindly, have the spirit of questioning, and avoid becoming a member of spreading false information and a sharp weapon to attack and harm others [4]. Learn to actively manage time, such as setting a fixed time for browsing short video platforms. Learn to actively explore, broaden the circle of limitations of big data, consciously search and

think about viewpoints that contradict your own, and avoid getting stuck in cognitive rigidity [3].

Users have become tools for profit in the "attention battle" of capital. Individuals should consciously pay attention to their own attention and focus it on things they are truly interested in, cultivating a wide range of interests and hobbies, whether it is skills or books. Only by focusing on things they are interested in and consider meaningful can their spiritual world be truly satisfied. Having more interesting support points can not only reduce the addiction caused by watching short videos but also enhance self-confidence and promote healthy physical and mental development. To establish the awareness of "information dieting" and control the amount of information obtained, it should be recognized that information acquisition is necessary, but excessive and diverse information can bring excessive processing burden to the brain and mind, and even negative emotions and mental health problems [1].

Do not blindly indulge in obtaining fragmented information; instead, immerse yourself in logically complete and thoroughly argued in-depth content. There are many high-quality video accounts on social media platforms that fully utilize subjective initiative to explore deep content, attempt to process thinking, and logical organization to exercise the brain's ability to think deeply. Whether watching videos, books, or movies, learn to watch, think, and express with questions, enhance individual thinking breadth and depth, and strengthen individual subjectivity.

From a platform perspective, the platform can add a free exploration mode, allowing users to freely learn about content beyond big data recommendation algorithms. The self-control ability of different age groups is different. For this platform, it should develop personalized programs to suit the right medicine to create a healthy Internet environment. The platform should improve addiction and retrieval performance to enable users to obtain accurate information and knowledge. Video publishers should take responsibility for their words and actions, disseminate truthful information, avoid overly emotional comments, and aim to improve the quality of video content to attract long-term fans.

5 Conclusion

This article provides a profound insight into the impact of information dissemination in the era of short videos on people's behavior habits and abilities in understanding information and thinking processing, by analyzing the characteristics of the transformation of the information dissemination era, including understanding methods, dissemination forms, thinking and expression abilities, information recognition, and learning methods. At the same time, relevant suggestions and countermeasures are proposed. Future research can further supplement data evidence, support and provide more specific and effective recommendations.

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