

On the New Media Communication and Audience Orientation of the Art Film “Elephant Point-to-View”

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Abstract. The contemporary film industry is facing tremendous innovation and change. Every part of the whole industry chain is experiencing new quantitative or qualitative changes under the technological background of Internet new media. In this paper, the literature review method and case analysis method are used to study the “Elephant Point-to-View” in art film distribution and audience communication. The reason for choosing the “Elephant Point-to-View” is that it is a distribution platform based on the Internet’s new media technology, and it uses the brand-new Internet communication logic and community economic model to carry out the film distribution and promotion business. Therefore, its innovation lies in that the art films of the minority on the market can break the time constraint of the limitation of cinema shows and then find the specific audience groups who are more enthusiastic about such films through precise communication channels so as to find a way out for the minority films. This paper explores how the “Elephant Point-to-View” uses the logic of new media and reshapes the relationship between the film and the audience to release, disseminate and promote the film in an in-depth way.

Keywords: Elephant Point-to-View, art films, new media communication, distribution and release, audience group.

1. Introduction

The Internet has given the business model a diversified dissemination advantage. In the field of film communication, compared with commercial films, the content and artistic style of art films are relatively small and vanguard, which has certain requirements on the audience’s appreciation ability. In addition, under the single traditional cinema distribution mode in the film market, the instinct of cinema chains to pursue profits makes cinema managers more inclined to give more films to commercial films with box office potential, which to some extent, reduces the living space of art films. As a result, the “Elephant Point-to-View” emerged as a new mode focusing on the film screening and distribution stage and based on the Internet.

The “Elephant Point-to-View” was founded in 2016 by Wu Feiyue, who is proficient in financial documentary creation, and Cai Qingzeng, an IT industry elite. It has the dual genes of the film industry and the Internet industry. It mainly targets film and television producers in the industrial chain. With years of accumulated industry experience and business insights, the “Elephant Point-to-View” has conducted investment and creation for new film and television production teams. From the whole value chain support services of publicity, distribution and quality control, the study of the “Elephant Point-to-View” is helpful in understanding the latest changes in the distribution and screening of the film industry and provides some new thinking and new reference for the social communication of art films.

In the relevant research results, Zhao Yan analyzed the crowdfunding viewing mode of the platform from four aspects: film, cinema, promoters and moviegoers, providing more reference value for the construction of new art theater lines [1]. Specifically, in terms of the circulation of documentaries in the film market, Chen Song believes that due to the limitation of communication efficiency, circulation channels and cost, there are defects in the documentary marketing methods of traditional cinemas, while the crowd-funded movie-watching method of the “Elephant Point-to-View” has broken the original circulation structure and marketing mode of documentaries and made up for the shortcomings of traditional marketing methods [2]. Some scholars also conducted research from

a macro perspective. For example, Liu Yu discussed the operation mode and practice mode of the “Elephant Point-to-View” from the perspective of minority culture transmission and finally pointed out the enlightenment to the communication of other minority cultures [3]. Li Ruihua and Fan Qipeng believe that crowdfunded screening can realize the precision marketing of recorded films by using the Internet and social tools and exploring new promotion channels for recorded films and art films, successfully opening up the long tail market of the film industry [4]. It can be seen from the literature review that the “Elephant Point-to-View” is intended to launch a “bottom-up” reform of the screening and distribution industry and build the ecological chain of film communication in the new media era.

This paper will take the “Elephant Point-to-View” as the core, through case analysis and related literature analysis and collation, and explore the new path of art film communication. Firstly, this paper introduces the research object through the overview of the “Elephant Point-to-View” and clarifications its innovation of it. Then, through the two key points of the new media communication ecological chain and the audience service of the “Elephant Point-to-View”, the innovation of it in the distribution and screening process is illustrated and deeply discussed, and the positive effect of it on the social communication of art films is clarified. In the end, this paper demonstrates and analyzes the role of elephant screening in the social communication of art films and summarizes the research content and prospects.

2. Overview of the “Elephant Point-to-View”

Since its inception, the “Elephant Point-to-View” has completed the incubation of the film, sending the First Departure to the platform of major international film festivals. Later, it also created a documentary series named Time Machine, which was brilliant in the Chinese documentary industry [5]. The main difference between the “Elephant Point-to-View” and other film and television platforms is that the “Elephant Point-to-View” focuses more on “running” rather than “stepping in”. It not only reflects its unique judgment of filmmakers and their works but also has accumulated unique industry experience in publicity work based on literary films and documentaries and is good at handing over the initiative to new directors. Actively expand the development space of film works. Currently, it has more than 100 films in its library, and thousands of film companies have signed contracts with the platform. Moreover, more than 2,000 film promoters with crowdfunding mode have held more than 3,000 screening activities in China, and the overall attendance rate has reached more than 70% [6]. It can be said that the “Elephant Point-to-View” has a fixed fan base in more than 100 cities in China, and its new model of Spot Screening has gradually attracted widespread attention in the industry. Therefore, as a film platform, it enables users to freely choose films and make films, assemble teams by themselves, hold interactive activities and other forms of community connection, aiming to change the traditional relationship between theaters and users and provide a new solution for the reform of the distribution and projection industry.

2.1 The Communication-Ecological Chain of “C2B” Art Film New Media

2.1.1 Initiator Mode

The initiator mode is the core of the “Elephant Point-to-View”. Specifically, users can select a part of the movie library to initiate point-screening invitations. After the platform approves the invitation, the platform will initiate ticket purchase invitations to all users within half a month, and under certain conditions, the movie attendance rate meets 70% or 80%. People can initiate a point-and-point viewing activity. Therefore, in the initiator mode, since the initiator is the main user of the “Elephant Point-to-View” and the organizer of the event, the relationship between the initiator and the “Elephant Point-to-View” is not a commercial partnership in the general sense, so there is no profit sharing. This mode of innovation aims to mobilize the audience from the bottom up, break the dominant mode of the traditional product side, the producer side and the cinema side, and empower all users or audiences.

2.1.2 Interactive Mode after the Film

In order to assist the promoters in pushing forward the point-to-view project and put some marketing activities into it, the “Elephant Point-to-View” invites Internet celebrities to act as interactive guests of the post-screening event to participate in activities such as recording advertisements and creating materials. It provides corresponding project funds to the promoters to enrich the diversification and feasibility of point-to-view forms. As a result, the post-movie interaction model will generate new social networks, which in turn will activate the community economy. In addition, at its project sites around the world, the initiator will participate in such activities as signing in, sending gifts, maintaining order, entertaining guests and journalists, and holding on-site interaction after the movie. In other words, initiators are the organizers and service personnel. For example, it will usually hire film and television creators, such as directors, screenwriters, producers and architects, to conduct offline interaction with fans after the completion of the project. Because of the good fit between audiences and film types, such activities can extend the service value chain of film products. According to the relevant interview, “In many screenings, the general audience spent one and a half hours watching the film, but after the screening, they spent two or even three hours” [7].

2.1.3 Interactive Mode after the Film

In addition to its self-developed film products, services and we-media, the “Elephant Point-to-View” has also carried out interactive cooperation with other channels and platforms, including financial We-media Wu Xiaobo Channel and movie commentary We-media and more. Based on this, in a general interactive way, the information and product content of the “Elephant Point-to-View”, including the film, original content before and behind the film, national dot-screening content, and media promotion, can attract the attention of potential audience groups and create a public opinion advantage for the urban first dot-screening covering the whole country. In addition, some opinion leaders and “We news media” whose communities cover the whole country also interact with the “Elephant Point-to-View” to watch movies together. We-media selected the release time of the movie according to its own characteristics and the characteristics of the masses and launched actions to call on the whole country to watch the movie and communicate with customers; the “Elephant Point-to-View” has launched a variety of platform businesses related to landing screenings.

2.1.4 Longline Projection Platform

The target group of the “Elephant Point-to-View” is a group of high-quality audiences who are “curious about film stories, have requirements for quality, and have thought about art”. Therefore, this group is not satisfied with ordinary films in commercial cinemas or on public release but more look forward to art films and documentary films with high artistic and aesthetic value. This type of work generally has few screening opportunities in the current commercial cinema lines, which is a kind of market where the audience’s demand for watching movies cannot be effectively matched. Therefore, the “Elephant Point-to-View” started from the gap in the niche market of art film and documentary and sought a large number of “angel round” users through the innovative crowdfunding Point-to-View Model. On this basis, the “Elephant Point-to-View” signed a contract with the film company and put a number of tonal films on the long-term projection platform with the new mode of C2B, “resurrecting” the unpopular boutique. It is reported that in the future development stage, the “Elephant Point-to-View” will anchor the development direction of the unpopular foreign imported films for the user audience to provide better quality movie-watching experience. For example, Elephant Film introduced excellent imported films such as *Island of Dogs* in 2021 and is also actively organizing the “100 City premiere ceremony” of Chinese and foreign films [7].

The “Elephant Point-to-View” will focus on building the industry’s first long-term Internet screening platform, and the films joining it will no longer have to compete with traditional commercial blockbusters in the first weekend or the first half of the month. In this way, it can be seen that the new Internet media platform has successfully overcome the long-term problems of secret key manufacturing, hard disk delivery and more so as to put forward the technical services that can solve

the long-term broadcast of the film. In this way, audiences and filmmakers can choose works from the works library of the “Elephant Point-to-View” at any time and anywhere and carry out screening activities or directly arrange films, as well as plan film festivals. Not only art-house films and documentary films can be released, but also newly released works can be signed into the long-term broadcast stage of the “Elephant Point-to-View” for the first time. However, classic old works, which only audiences used to grab tickets at film festivals, also have the opportunity to return to the big screen with the help of elephant screening [8].

2.1.5 The Docent Program

The “Elephant Point-to-View” launched the “Docent Program”, similar to the judicial review system, which certifies users with strong movie-watching ability and excellent cultural quality as a docent who is both column writers and judges. As a result, these docent writers will write and post tweets in the we-media matrix, allowing a wider user base to discover the best works hidden away. In addition, in terms of the business model of the docent, the movie’s box office share can be obtained by taking elephant screening as the main distribution channel, which is also its biggest source of income at present and can be used to nurture the high-quality movie-watching behavior of customers. The “Elephant Point-to-View” mainly focuses on the use of high-quality films to achieve the accumulation of high-quality fans. It is also ready to extend more businesses to achieve richer sources of income through the dissemination service of this kind of group viewing experience.

2.1.5 Summary

The core business logic of the “Elephant Point-to-View” is B2C, aiming at giving full play to the creativity and enthusiasm of the vast number of users. Its post-screening activities are aimed at the value chain of the film industry. Platform interaction and cooperation aim to strengthen the degree of collaboration between the upstream and downstream industry chains. The long-term screening platform aims to enhance the survival time of high-quality films and promote the supply-side reform of the screening and distribution industry by breaking the time-space restrictions of the traditional screening and distribution industry; The Docent program aims to increase user engagement, transform users from traditional audience status to a new creative identity, and make watching movies a “collective intelligence”. Therefore, the business logic of the “Elephant Point-to-View” breaks the traditional B2B upstream and downstream business model of the film industry. As a cultural product, the film has become a cultural service project that audiences can lead and participate in.

2.2 Service Innovation Based on Art Film Audience

2.2.1 Connecting the Two-Sided Market of “Cinema and Audience

Relying on the technological revolution brought by new media, the “Elephant Point-to-View” uses the O2O social and marketing network platform to break through the poor efficiency caused by the information asymmetry in the traditional art film communication mode, and establishes a new business chain based on this, so as to promote the acquisition of demographic dividend to compete for “connection dividend”. It redefines the transmission path and commercial logic of art film value creation. Therefore, the “Elephant Point-to-View” needs to provide users with an endless stream of film resources with high use value to stimulate the consumption motivation and desire of the target audience of art films, cultivate their consumer preferences and consumption habits, and thus enhance the loyalty of platform users and promote brand cultivation [8]. For example, it will contact quality films that are qualified for cinema screening but cannot be valued by cinemas and sign them into the platform’s own film library as soon as they are released. The film producers who have failed the cinema release will also take the initiative to seek cooperation and extend the release time of the film by using the C2B business model of the platform. For example, the “Elephant Point-to-View” and iQiyi announced strategic cooperation to jointly launch a publishing model for young creators that covers the whole online and offline life cycle. The films selected for the first batch of the cooperation program include “Awesome! Youth”, “Love Poem”, “Why the Singing is Slow”, “Back to the South”, and “Hannan Summer”, which are all cutting-edge art films created by young directors in the past

two years. It has thus become the middle end of the cinema and the audience, the “quality assurance officer” to improve the audience’s consumption experience, and provides the platform with the technical support of new media communication channels to complete the resource integration of the art film industry.

2.2.2 Shaping Emotional Identity and Community Economy

Relying on the Internet and new media, the “Elephant Point-to-View” breaks through the geographical boundaries of offline movie-watching with the operation concept of social software. In the process of publicity and distribution, the information and related information of art films have been greatly improved, while the main body of the communication is becoming more diversified, and the channels of information transmission are constantly increasing. For example, in terms of obtaining movie-watching demand, Social applications promote two-way interaction between information dissemination subjects and audiences [9]. Take the communication mode of the “Elephant Point-to-View” as an example. On the one hand, the platform releases information through sponsors to gather fans and collect demands; On the other hand, fans participate in marketing, spread information about point screening, and promote word-of-mouth fermentation. In this context, the consumer groups of art films gather into the network virtual community, and the industrialization and marketization of art films are also possible [10]. During the release of the art film *My Psalms*, the “Elephant Point-to-View” organized a group of promoters as opinion leaders in the publicity stage to promote the social dissemination of the film information. In addition, on its WeChat service account, the audience can find the screening activities initiated by different sponsors in different cities after clicking “Purchase tickets to watch the movie”. Each screening has a detailed cinema and time, and the audience needs to buy a ticket to be considered as a successful registration. If the number of applicants reaches the target, the screening will be really held. Otherwise, the screening will be cancelled. Viewers will receive refunds. Similarly, in recent years, new art films created by young directors, such as “Awesome! Young”, “Love Poem”, “Why the Singing is slow”, “Back to the South”, “Hannan Summer”, and so on, are facing the pain point of publicity and communication channels. The fan community created by the “Elephant Point-to-View” plays an important role in the problem of “old difficulties” of art films, which is the basis and key to accurate film communication. Therefore, it is particularly important to strengthen the emotional identity and trust relationship of the community. Consumers with common interests are more likely to generate emotional identification and value resonance in similar consumption preferences, and individuals are more likely to obtain the emotional and value meaning given by their groups.

2.2.3 Create a Customized and Social Movie-Watching Experience

In the initiator mode of crowdfunding movie viewing, most people prefer literary films, which is the most important core resource of the “Elephant Point-to-View”. It is reported that the profit model of the “Elephant Point-to-View” is more dependent on the number of successful Point-to-View sessions held by the initiator, and the appeal of the organizer and the initiator is the basis for the success of a Point-to-View. Therefore, Point-to-View focuses on cultivating opinion leaders with many users following its operation process. Therefore, in the whole operation process of Point-to-View, the movie box office is affected by the movie scheduling rate decided by users. Therefore, the process of the B2C viewing mode of Point-to-View is “first confirm the content and then match people”. This is a logical elephant shot that matches the content after finding someone. On its online platform, users go through several stages, including “project initiation invitation -- estimator -- movie selection -- date and location selection -- post-screening interaction selection”. After verification by the platform, point screening can be carried out. In addition, promoters can realize “what they want is what they get” at any time through elephant screening. In each stage, there are several selection areas for the audience to choose freely, like ordering, where they want to watch, how to cut segments, and how to choose post-screening activities; all are decided by the audience [11]. So, this is an innovation that has never been done before in the history of the film industry. It is the era of “Internet +” that liberates people’s subjective initiative. As a cultural product, the film should not

only stay in the product stage but should be more like the Big elephant movie. The product should be integrated into the service system so that the product can integrate post-movie interactive activities, the participation of promoters and the training of movie directors. And a series of extended value chain service systems, such as the opening of peripheral products and services in the future. To sum up, the process model of the “Elephant Point-to-View” enables users to make decisions on the production link of the film industry value chain, thus realizing a new model of screening and distribution in which the “Elephant Point-to-View” provides a platform and users decide the film schedule by themselves.

3. Advice and Enlightenment

In order to strengthen the platform users' right to participation and decision-making and then solve the pain points in the promotion and distribution of art films and social communication channels, the “Elephant Point-to-View”, based on B2C mode, has made great efforts to break through the upstream and downstream of the on-demand film industry chain represented by art films, and initially formed a crowd-funded movie-viewing platform ecosystem covering audiences, producers, cinemas and film critics. Thus, the value co-creation of all sectors in the platform ecosystem is effectively promoted [12]. However, Elephant imaging is still at a pioneering stage and will need to be optimized in terms of data collection and processing in the future. Therefore, the future development of the point-to-view model should collect and sort out various big data of customers on every movie-watching platform and provide data support for cinema producers to more accurately determine movie-watching groups and different marketing styles of cinema cities. Based on this, data processing will produce a knock-on effect to enhance user engagement [13].

In the future outlook of the “Elephant Point-to-View”, according to the logic of B2C, the “Elephant Point-to-View” as an Internet crowdfunding platform may explore the expansion of crowdfunding from the consumption end to the production end. The platform will not only undertake the whole film and television scheduling process. At the same time, it can also build a closer relationship with the audience by means of early-stage investment support, mid-term production advantages and post-stage marketing and promotion so as to expand the entire film industry value chain in order to explore more profit models and provide new business logic for the development of China's film industry.

4. Conclusion

As a very important part of the modern cultural system, new media has a special position in cultural communication, which can provide sufficient vitality and effective power for the cultural communication of the social mass. In recent years, with the rapid expansion and development of the means of communication technology and information media, new media's influence on cultural communication needs to be cleverly and flexibly applied according to the actual situation to increase the wide spread of culture in more regions. Taking into account the background of globalization, the ecology of new media and the overall transformation of communication research, it not only considers the influence of macro social structure but also pays attention to the role played by new media at the level of personal experience. By striking a balance between macro theory and micro vision, it can not only put forward independent research questions on the basis of Chinese social and cultural characteristics but also develop theories with universal significance and contribute to the further development of communication research.

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