

New Media Events Crown the Public: The Example of Douyin's Rebroadcast of the 2022 Qatar World Cup

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Abstract. In the era of web3.0, bottom-up and decentralized communication has received more attention. As a digital content entity with both the professional editorial authority of a media outlet and the unique openness of a user-oriented platform, the user base of Platisher is expanding year by year. In the development process of Platisher, Media Event Theory(MET) found by Dayan and Katz has been given new meanings and functions. Based on MET, this article takes the 2022 Qatar World Cup as a typical New Media Event (NME) to explore the new characteristics of NME in Platisher, and discuss how Platisher represented by Douyin uses NME to empower the public and promote social equality.

Keywords: Media Events; New-Media Events; Platisher; Empowerment; Social Equality.

1. Introduction

According to Lei (2011), in the past, Media Events were mainly in the form of live television broadcasts, emphasizing the special communication process in which a historically influential event led by an institution attracted public attention. In recent years, platisher have been widely used, not only the shape of Media Event(ME) has changed, but also the way they draw the attention of society. Therefore, based on the MET of Dayan and Katz, this paper analyzes the 2022 Qatar World Cup as a NME, and discusses how platisher represented by Douyin can use NME to empower the public.

On November 16, Douyin purchased the rebroadcast rights of the 2022 World Cup and carried out 28 days of full race broadcast and related event planning. World Cup matches are spreading rapidly on Douyin with extremely high play volume. According to the World Cup viewing report of group stage released by Douyin, the cumulative number of hot videos in the group stage alone reached 81.4 billion.

There are many reasons for the victory of Douyin's traffic. From the audience level, new media has a huge audience base. According to the China Network Audiovisual Development Research Report (2023) released by China Netcasting Services Association on March 29, the scale of China's online audiovisual users reached 1.040 billion, surpassing instant messaging (1.038 billion) and becoming the largest Internet application, with a usage rate of 97.4% among online audiovisual netizens. From the platform level, as a popular platisher in China, Douyin has strong Technical Affordance. Abundant search and release functions can effectively lower the threshold of user participation, attract the original audience to participate in the transmission process, and even become one of the main makers of the transmission content.

2. Literature Review

In previous studies, scholars have mostly distinguished between ME and NME in the nature of events, which has certain limitations. "The important characteristics that distinguish NME from traditional media events are disenchantment, derailment and conflict"(Dayan & Katz ,2011). However, after 2012, algorithms and audiovisual technology have been greatly improved, and the power relationship between users and media has changed. Yu point out that the social governance model of traditional society, which is based on the monopoly of information resources, has undergone a fundamental transformation from Panopiction to Synoption. In *Crashing a National Media Event: The Circulation of Social Imaginaries in the Gatecrashers Riots in Finland*,Mitu and Poulakidakos suggested that the biggest difference between NME and ME is the main body of communication.

The term NME mentioned in this article refers to ME where the medium is new media instead of a new kind of media event. On the basis of retaining the 3C model of ME proposed by Dayan and Katz, ME that occur on platisher have the characteristics of challenging the problems of information asymmetry and power inequality, and have a wide range of dissemination and high traffic rate.

3. The Characteristics of the Spread of New Media Events

3.1 Lower the Threshold for Participation and Expand the Scope of Dissemination

First, the technological affordance of NM laid the foundation for Douyin to attract a wide range of users, and platisher built by the technology became the main field for the development of NME. New media technologies have greatly disrupted the original centralized and monopolistic power pattern of the media industry. "The low threshold for content production and the technical dependence of communication networks and platforms provide the possibility for forces outside the traditional media industry to enter and gain their power"(Peng, 2022). At the same time, Douyin produced programs such as "DOU to the World Cup", match replay, star story sharing, event prediction. The rebroadcast of the World Cup by Douyin deliberately lowered the threshold for users to watch and participate. For example, in terms of audio and video quality, Douyin has launched five modes for users to use for free. Except for the last mode, which is free for a limited time, all other frame rate modes are free. Differ from the previous World Cup in which only fans participated, in the NME, each user can find their own angle of interest to watch this sports event, and both fans and ordinary spectators can equally participate in the hot topics of the World Cup and watch this carnival together.

3.2 Stimulate the Vitality of UGC Creation and Enrich the Content of New Media Events

As a NME, Douyin World Cup empowers the communication of lower class. Research by Qiu and Lin (2011) supports:

The New Media Event is a finished product produced by political and economic forces and media systems, and it is also a unfolding event, which can change the hegemonic position of the social elite in traditional events, thereby making the event more difficult to predict, which is the key to the information middle and lower classes on the fringes of society joining to create historical events.

On Douyin, users can recreate or popularize the picture of games and deeply participate in the World Cup activities. For example, after Qatar, the hosts of World Cup, lost their opening game, the video of Qatar's little prince expressing surprise in the audience, quickly take off on social platforms. Netizen created emojis about this little prince like "wonton wrapper surprised" and "220 billion is gone " as well as other memes, which attracted the forwarding and attention of Chinese netizen. In the past, the stars and the events were the focus of transmission. However, after NM became one of the main communication subjects, some topics that seemed to have nothing to do with the World Cup became burst point. "Users in NME are no longer just passive recipients of ME, but will actively participate in the planning and development of it, create new hot topics, and give birth to a series of collective actions"(Yang,2011).

3.3 Carefully Plan and Design to Bridge the Information Gap

"In the process of seeing and being seen in NME, the power of the management in panopticon has been challenged to a certain extent, and the phenomenon of information asymmetry has gradually declined on platisher" (Foucault, 2007). The French philosopher Foucault used the concept of panopticon to reveal the phenomenon of power and class differences caused by information asymmetry in society. However, with the perfect technology availability and a large base of users, such stratification between user groups tends to be narrow on the same platform. For example, when rebroadcasting the World Cup, Douyin provides audience with a detailed review and analysis of each match, which provides equal information accessibility and reduces the gap between each user. At the same time, Douyin has designed an interactive section for player information presentation, where users can click on the player's avatar while watching the game to view their background information,

including but not limited to the player's age and participation in the World Cup. Different from previous live TV broadcasts, Douyin provides real-time updated technical statistics tables to digitize and visualize the competition, help users intuitively analyze the status of the event, lower the threshold for watching professional events, and further narrow the gap between the audience's information asymmetry.

Platisher not only pays attention to the macro communication effect of NME, but also the experience of individual users to enhance the stickiness of user. Douyin has set up several zones in the World Cup broadcast interface, including live chat areas and personal chat rooms. In the live chat area, users can communicate and interact with all the fans who watch, forming a large number of fans. In personal chat rooms, users can invite friends into the same screening room, forming a virtual presence, and the immersive feeling of watching competitive matches together will become stronger.

However, between users and media platforms, the problem of the media being in the upper of power spying on individuals still exists. For example, after the rebroadcast, the platform will accurately push the event information of the corresponding country to each group that has watched the rebroadcast according to the algorithm. In this way, users are less likely to have access to information about other teams, always be limited in a relatively closed information cocoon.

4. Conclusion

Overall, the 2022 Qatar World Cup has the characteristics of crown, compete and conquest of ME, but also absorbs the characteristics of national participation in ME in the new media era and UGC creating traffic miracles, so as to empower the widest range of ordinary audiences in society. Platisher promotes users to form a sense of presence in watching competitive events together. Although there are still certain problems in the algorithm and recommendation of platisher, it has to be admitted that in this competition of common viewing, platisher lowers the threshold for users to deeply participate in the planning and production of ME, narrow the information gap between users, stimulates more collective behavior, and crowns and empowers ordinary audiences.

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