

# How to Get Out of The Commercialization Maze of A Professional "Grass-Planting" Content Community

--The Commercialization of Xiaohongshu's "Filter"

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**Abstract:** With the development of Internet economy and new media technology, a number of professional content communities have emerged to provide content services for consumers, helping them make shopping decisions and nurturing users' consumption needs. This paper will take Xiaohongshu as an example and discuss its "filter" incident, find the contradiction between commercialization and market development, regulate the commercialization ecology of content communities, and realize the balance between content quality and commercialization.

**Keywords:** Content operation, Commercialization, Ugc communication, Xiaohongshu, Netflix economy.

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## 1. Introduction

With the continuous development of domestic economy, the economic conditions and cultural thoughts of the new generation of middle-class people in the gradual expansion have reached a new height. At the same time, growing up in the new cultural and market environment, they have new demands for lifestyle beyond traditional perceptions, resulting in higher consumer demand, and content communities such as Xiaohongshu have emerged one after another under the impetus of the times. Xiaohongshu has been in business for 7 years, and has grown from an overseas shopping sharing community that simply provides shopping tips to a "concentration camp" that covers all areas of life.

The real sharing is the trump card of Little Red Book and the origin of its establishment, but now it is difficult to distinguish the authenticity of the soft broad notes and distorted net red filters, which are turning Little Red Book from a grass planting camp into a filter crusher. Behind the "fake grass planting" is not only the simple content distortion, but also a mature business operation of the industry chain. In this article, we will analyze the reasons for the "filter" crash and the effect on users from the business logic behind the operation of Xiaohongshu, and find a balanced road of commercialization and content quality suitable for the development of content communities.

## 2. Analysis of the Positioning of Xiaohongshu.

### 2.1. Audience Positioning

[4] The main users of Xiaohongshu are female students or younger working women, who pursue beauty and exquisite life, like personalized, high quality and high value things, and have a high interest in shopping, beauty and skin care, fashion and dressing. At the same time, this group often has a strong social demand, they love to share, like and collect high-quality content, and also expect to get attention and response; they also search and refer to a large number of user reviews before shopping to make consumption choices, at the same time, they are more impulsive than rational in consumption,

and are easily "grassed" by high-quality content or public opinion leaders' recommendations. They are also more impulsive than rational in consumption, and are easily "grassed" ("grassing" is an emerging term on the Internet that refers to accepting products introduced by others and often having the willingness to buy them), and thus their ability in rational consumption is relatively weak.

### 2.2. Media Positioning

For the above-mentioned user groups, Xiaohongshu's media positioning is "mark my life", which is dedicated to creating a social platform for users to record and share their good life. At present, the content of Xiaohongshu covers 18 topics such as fashion, skin care and makeup, celebrities, etc. It also provides content services for users who do not have clear shopping goals, helping them make shopping decisions and nurturing their consumption needs. The platform connects consumers and products with content in an e-commerce model, which allows consumers to consume through the advice and guidance of content, and thus carries its own commercial attributes.

## 3. The Content of The Small Red Book Features

### 3.1. Content Production Mechanism

[9] UGC (User Generated Content, i.e. original user content)

UGC is the main source of content in Xiaohongshu, and this part of the content production accounts for the largest proportion, produced by ordinary users. The Little Red Book platform has initiatives to motivate users to produce notes, such as setting user levels (such as bottle potatoes, sleepy potatoes and other ten levels), and if users want to upgrade, they need to collect likes and favorites by publishing a certain number of notes to meet the upgrade requirements.

PGC (Professional Generated Content)

Little Red Book has opened several vertical official accounts based on the classification of content topics, such as Captain Potato, Wearing Potato, Entertainment Potato, etc. The content released by these accounts symbolizes the official certified professional content in the field, including the

official accounts' independent production of content and secondary editing of other users' quality content.

PUGC (Professional User Generated Content, that is, professional user produced content)

PUGC users are mainly divided into three categories, one is the master or team invited by Xiaohongshu from other MCN platforms (Multi-Channel Network, such as Netflix), such as papi sauce; the second is the master users cultivated by Xiaohongshu, who are heavy users of Xiaohongshu and provide a lot of quality content. The third category is celebrities, Xiaohongshu uses celebrity influence as endorsement (similar to the role of endorsement) to bring a large number of fan users, for example, Fan Bingbing and Jiang Shuying are senior celebrity users of Xiaohongshu.

These three content production modes complement each other, so that Xiaohongshu includes note producers of different classes, identities, regions and personalities in content production, and thus produces different types and styles of notes, so that the platform maintains the continuous productivity of high-quality content.

## 4. Content Features

### 4.1. High-quality Content

Users of Xiaohongshu prefer life and knowledge notes, among which knowledge, reviews, recommendations, tutorials and other notes are popular among users. In addition to high quality content, excellent and popular notes are usually accompanied by high quality pictures, comfortable layout, with high hotness tags and other features.

At the same time, Xiaohongshu will also adjust the exposure of the notes according to their likes, collections, retweets and attentions when recommending them. Xiaohongshu uses this recommended "Matthew effect" to expose quality content and naturally "eliminate" poor quality content in order to better maintain the high quality content environment of Xiaohongshu.

### 4.2. Verticalized Content

According to the needs of different users, Xiaohongshu has set up nearly 20 categories such as "video", "fashion" and "skincare" to divide the content produced by users into categories, and set some For example, under the category of skin care, there are contents such as acne removal, whitening, and light spot. In addition, in order to broaden the intersection between vertical content, Xiaohongshu will choose popular time for special planning, such as Double 11.

### 4.3. Accuracy of Push

For users, much of the information they receive is "carefully selected" by Xiaohongshu. The big calculation of Xiaohongshu will randomly push similar contents on the home page according to users' search records.

### 4.4. Content Fragmentation

From the user's media habits, Xiaohongshu users mostly use cell phones, and cell phone users have the habit of fragmented reading, they mainly look at their cell phones in the morning before work (class), at lunch break, at night after work (class), before going to bed, etc., and use fragmented time to read during this period, and in the layout design of Xiaohongshu's content, the length of the video upload is generally within one minute, the upload of pictures is within 1-9 The maximum word count of text writing is 1000 words

(including punctuation, small red book or mobile keyboard with small expressions), plus the use of small expressions for content highlighting, thus, the content layout of small red book is designed to meet the fragmented reading habits of users.

## 5. The Business Operation Mode of Xiaohongshu

### 5.1. Operation of Products and Merchants [5]

A. Brands and different businesses can intuitively see the real users who collect and love their products in the community, and the list of Xiaohongshu comes from the wisdom of the masses, and the value of credibility is also based on UGC. The "content+social+marketing" is actually the conversion of content value into commercial value, thus realizing the role of word-of-mouth marketing.

B. The later section of Xiaohongshu, "Welfare Club", is a solution to the problem that users "can see but can't buy". Users can do their shopping homework and then place an order in the welfare club, and the Little Red Book will directly contact foreign brands or first-class suppliers for purchasing. For overseas merchants, Xiaohongshu is a good online advertising channel. Unlike Sina Weibo and other general social networks where commerce can affect user experience, users use the shopping notes community to obtain or share valuable information about overseas products, and information about discount promotions and new product releases from merchants is spread in the user relationship chain based on the purpose of purchase, so there is no obvious "sense of incongruity" in the communication effect for users. Therefore, there is no obvious "sense of incongruity" in the communication effect.

C community-based operation mode has accumulated very valuable pre-purchase data for Xiaohongshu, including users' browsing data, wish list data, sharing and likes data, etc., which provides big data guidance for the welfare agency's product selection and stocking, as well as the business cooperation between the official and Xiaohongshu.

## 6. The Road to Commercialization of The Xiaohongshu Content Community

### 6.1. Commercialization Origin

Relying on the interactive atmosphere of the community, Xiaohongshu started from UGC seven years ago and gradually grew into an interactive community with more than 100 million monthly activities. In the eyes of businessmen, UGC is the value of Xiaohongshu. [7] The founder of Xiaohongshu, Qu Fang, said in an interview with China Entrepreneur that 97% of the content on Xiaohongshu is contributed by UGC, and the percentage of UGC content in the daily exposure is 70%, and the percentage speaks to the qualitative nature of the platform.

### 6.2. Analysis of the Dilemma Brought by The Commercialization of The Little Red Book

Recently, the topic of Little Red Book attractions wrapped with deceptive filters has been frequently searched on Weibo. The first two are pictures of a Xiaohongshu blogger traveling in Sanya, with blue houses and the sea, while the third is a picture of her field visit, and after removing the filter, the so-

called beautiful scenery becomes a mess.

The content of "seeding" seems to be inevitably moving towards advertising. The information about real consumer experience, which should be shared by consumers and experience officers, is gradually becoming a substitute creation and hidden advertisement. When users have no way to distinguish which are real grass-planting notes and which are planning and promotion of businesses, Xiaohongshu, which aims to eliminate information asymmetry through user sharing, is heading towards the opposite of what it was originally intended to fight.

### **6.3. The Commercial Essence Behind The "Filter"**

The root cause of the chaos is due to the "content + community + marketing" media structure of Xiaohongshu, coupled with the near-zero cost of production, a number of marketing agencies with ulterior motives are involved, from the Netflix incubator to brokerage companies, live broadcast platforms, and then to commercial cash, a Netflix economic production chain is clearly visible. [8] In this, each link has its own role to play, from text to pictures to persona building, preparing a batch of content with a popular nature and harvesting the dividends brought by a batch of weblebrities.

The important logical node is that the core purpose of these shared notes is not to let people simply share their lives and provide experience, but to gain commercial benefits. Earn advertising fees, so it directly leads to a large deviation between the shared content on Xiaohongshu and reality. When the content sharers aim to make money and scrape away a large amount of traffic, they tend to overly embellish or even overly misinterpret the essence of the matter, evolving into deceptive "seeding" content. [3].

### **6.4. The Drawbacks of Commercialization**

In the "April 2018 College Student Group App Behavior Research Report" released by Aurora Big Data, it is pointed out that Xiaohongshu is becoming more and more popular among young users, and more and more post-95s are flocking to Xiaohongshu, which makes Xiaohongshu the most popular online shopping app for college students, and if Xiaohongshu fails to achieve a relative balance between commercialization and content quality, allowing soft ads to proliferate, allowing the truth to be filtered. If Xiaohongshu fails to strike a relative balance between commercialization and quality content, let soft ads proliferate and let the truth be filtered, it will seriously affect its product community image and reduce user stickiness. The "Filtergate" incident is a reflection of the dissatisfaction of netizens with the filtered aesthetics of Xiaohongshu, which has been too voluminous for a long time. This kind of filter "in-roll" for commercialization has to some extent aggravated the wind of pomp and falsity in the Red City community. This will lead to the majority of users, especially ordinary users, even if the original intention of posting is not utilitarian purposes, simply uploading daily photos also have to do their homework, photos to fix enough to be beautiful, "sun" out of life to be exquisite enough, invariably bear a lot of unnecessary psychological and participation costs. Not to mention the KOL bloggers who can't take off all kinds of elaborate filters to meet the tone of brands and businesses. This kind of community atmosphere and operation strategy will lead to an insurmountable gap between content producers and consumers in the long run.

## **7. How to Break the Small Red Book? Need to Draw A Red Line of Ecological Governance**

The "crash" of travel notes is a proof of the mismatch between this kind of pan-life content sharing and the audience, sharing mechanism and sharing culture in the community. [2] The official response to the "filtergate" incident was very good: the official statement acknowledged that some users had overly embellished their notes and apologized, and also launched a pit avoidance category to allow users to participate in content re-creation. The author believes that, in addition to good PR for negative hot searches, content communities should pay more attention to the ecological governance of the community, which, if not handled properly, will lay hidden dangers for the sustainable development of content-based platforms.

In this paper, we analyze the internal operation logic of Xiaohongshu and the problems in the business operation of Xiaohongshu, and explore the community eco-governance solution for the long-term development of Xiaohongshu.

### **7.1. Improve the Effective Positioning of Advertisements Based on Big Data and The Verification of The Authenticity of The Evaluation**

Starting from the positioning of shopping guide, the platform property of Xiaohongshu determines that it is difficult to make effective verdict on commercial advertisement and real evaluation, because it is an amenity community itself. Therefore, the screening and monitoring system of big data still needs to be improved, even if it can't do all-around to combat the content of soft advertisements, exaggerated filters, and the wind of climbing, at least to gradually improve the accuracy of screening and filtering, so that users can see more and more clear content sharing space and improve the user stickiness and credibility of Xiaohongshu.

From the nature of the content, because there is no quantifiable rules for quality content, the judging mechanism for advertising on Xiaohongshu basically relies on guessing or keyword positioning, and there is inevitably misinjury in the removal of the offending KOL. This problem also needs to be solved, it will frustrate the enthusiasm of some quality content producers. Therefore, it is also necessary to set up a relevant creator supervision department in Xiaohongshu, to establish a multi-dimensional algorithm model and a dual audit system of human review, and to establish a clear community atmosphere and content quality maintenance mechanism to prevent content hydration.

### **7.2. Limited Open External Links, Actively Explore the Actual External Business, KOL Cooperation Sharing Model**

There are certainly many excellent content creators in Xiaohongshu, as opinion leaders, they have a guiding role for ordinary users, and the output and supply of quality content is one of the criteria for the success of the platform ecological construction. But KOL is not unconditionally contribute content, after all, he (she) also need to rely on the platform to make money. [10] Therefore, how to establish a high quality and efficient cooperation platform, the high quality users or KOL into Xiaohongshu internal shopping mall and brand

specialists, under certain rules to participate in the promotion and brand customization services, KOL resources for the use of the establishment of win-win model, the flow of resources to revitalize and achieve sales conversion.

Continued production of a large amount of quality content behind the inevitable need to promote the production of content inherent drive, whether to achieve B2C [6] to C2B transformation, good platform and business, content creators of the sharing model, to determine whether its content e-commerce model can open up new imagination.

### 7.3. Improve the Community Management System

Real-time monitoring of a large amount of spam in the community's content, likes, comments and other ads to ensure that what people come to share is useful and meaningful. The new version of Shopping Notes adds a user reporting function to reward users who report traffic support and other rewards to encourage users to participate in the ecological governance of the community; editors should also pay attention to posts reported by users, especially those with high ranks, and posts reported by several people at the same time will be deleted to allow users to monitor the purity of the content. Let the water army in the shopping notes platform to send soft

The text also cannot be promoted to higher traffic pools. Social media's user-following feature is a good filtering mechanism that needs to be utilized and continuously improved by the platform.

In addition to the reward and punishment system, if there is a 0-cost simple and brutal advertising model of the business, the background of the small red book can be taken to block the number, training and other ways to limit and filter the advertisers, in order to maintain the good reputation of the platform and win the trust and love of more consumers.

## 8. Conclusion

In this paper, from the positioning of Xiaohongshu and its content operation, the development of commercialization and its dilemma, the call for "good life" and the invitation to "mark" in Xiaohongshu are in fact hidden behind

The analysis and study of the new value extraction method in the era of "platform economy", and the relevant

suggestions for the commercialization of content communities.

Through the above analysis, the author believes that Xiaohongshu is a content community with good development prospects, using ugc content aggregation in the web 3.0 era to form a collective wisdom, and further play out the value of the platform. But I also need to emphasize again, the real value of the content and reasonable commercialization need to maintain the original intention of the platform, but also need to maintain the original intention of the creator, in order to achieve mutual benefit and win-win, common growth.

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