

# Research on the Ways to Improve the Public's Visual-Media Literacy in the Context of Short Video Communication

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**Abstract:** Short video communication is popular with the public because of its low threshold of participation, short playing time, massive content, immersive browsing and other characteristics. The wide participation of the public has also made short video communication one of the important forms of online information communication in China. However, while the volume of short video communication is increasing rapidly, there is still much room for the public to improve their visual media literacy. In order to better promote the development of short video, the public needs to constantly improve their visual-media literacy from four aspects: video awareness, video knowledge, video skills, and video ethics. This requires the joint efforts of the government, traditional mainstream media, short video platform and the public to build a path to improve the public's visual media literacy.

**Keywords:** Short video communication, The public, Visual-media literacy, Promotion Path.

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## 1. Introduction

Since 2017, with the development of mobile communication 4G、5G technologies, the scale of short video platforms and short video users relying on mobile terminals such as mobile phones and tablets for information dissemination has developed rapidly. According to the statistics of China Internet Network Information Center, as of June 2022, the number of Internet users in China is 1051 million, and the Internet penetration rate is 74.4%. The number of mobile Internet users is 1.047 billion, and 99.6% of Internet users use mobile phones to access the Internet. Among them, the number of short video users was 962 million, an increase of 28.05 million over December 2021, accounting for 91.5% of the total Internet users [1]. With the rapid growth of short video users, the connection and integration of short video communication with users and society become closer. With the extensive and deep participation of the public, short video communication has become an important social media with strong influence on the public. Online video and short video have also become the most frequently used personal applications after instant messaging applications [2].

With the rapid development of short video communication, the media reality constructed by it has become an important link between social reality and audience reality. In the public groups that rely on the "pseudo environment" created by short video communication to construct social reality cognition, it reflects an increasingly urgent need to improve visual-media literacy.

## 2. Short Video Communication and Public Visual-Media Literacy

Short video, as a new type of information dissemination mode, although it has developed rapidly, there is no standard definition of it in the academic circle so far. However, some

basic features embodied in the short video communication have been widely recognized by the public and academia. As a comprehensive communication form, it integrates many elements of information communication after sound, text and pictures. The emergence of short video makes video communication become the model and mainstream style of modern media integration communication.

Based on the propagation characteristics of short video, this paper believes that short video can be defined as a new video form that counts in seconds, often within 1 minute, and relies mainly on intelligent mobile terminals for rapid shooting and editing beautification, thus realizing real-time sharing on social media platforms. Short videos are generally divided into two types in terms of creation and dissemination. One is the information short video provided by the official video websites represented by the traditional mainstream media, the government, universities, etc., such as the surging news, the nine faction news, and the short video released by the official propaganda agencies. The other is short video in the form of UGC based on mobile intelligent terminals, such as dithering, fast hands and other video forms with Internet users as the main communication subjects. It can be seen that the participants in short video creation and communication mainly include the government, traditional mainstream media, short video platforms and the public.

With the rapid popularization of short video communication, various problems have also been exposed in the communication process. False content, anomie of communication ethics, and blind pursuit of traffic have brought negative impacts on the healthy development of short video communication [3]. This also makes how to effectively improve the public's visual-media literacy enter the academic field of vision in the context of short video communication.

In the mass communication era in the 1930s, British scholars began to attach importance to improving the public's media literacy, aiming to oppose the popular cultural values in the media and train young people to resist the "low level of

satisfaction" provided by the mass media[4]. In the 1980s, in the face of the rapid development of computer and network technology, the trend of information worship and technology fantasy rose in society. Theodore Roszak, a famous American historian, sighed: "Information is everywhere, but there is no thinking mind." [5] In 1994, American scholar Mc Clure first used the concept of "network literacy" to describe individuals' "ability to identify, access and use electronic information in the network." He believes that knowledge and skills are the most important two aspects of the public's network literacy, and network literacy will become an important skill to help citizens carry out their personal life and work in an efficient and high producing area[6]. As the network is known to the public as a new media, media literacy has become one of the basic qualities that the academic community should have for the public to use the network. Media literacy generally refers to people's ability to interpret and criticize various media information and the ability to use media information for personal life and social development[7]. With the in-depth and comprehensive integration of network communication and the real society, the media literacy of the public as users has a richer connotation.

In the era of short video, the public deeply participates in short video communication. The technical ability to produce and disseminate short videos, the knowledge acquisition ability to obtain effective information from videos, the social mobilization ability to use short videos to participate in social governance, and the ability to participate in affairs have all become the inherent requirements for the public to use short video communication forms reasonably and effectively. Among them, the visual literacy of watching and obtaining effective information has become the primary requirement for the public to reasonably use short videos in the short video era. Visual literacy integrates the internal cultivation and external performance of visual observation, visual understanding and visual creation. It is a kind of ability to interpret, apply, create and communicate visual information. Guided by visual literacy, the public also needs to have comprehensive media awareness, use, participation and processing capabilities for short videos. The public needs to have the ability to acquire, identify, synthesize and refine the short video information. To sum up, the public in the short video era should have a comprehensive ability to recognize, acquire, identify and use media information with visual literacy as the guide, that is, an internal quality that can be called visual media literacy. As put forward by the Visual Culture Research Institute of Nanjing Normal University, "using visual perception information, cultivate the ability to understand and generate information by means of information tools, use media to spread information, and analyze, select, evaluate and create the information generated and transmitted by the media." [8]

### **3. Composition of Public Visual Media Literacy**

Combined with the communication characteristics of short videos, this paper believes that the composition of public visual-media literacy in the short video era should include four aspects: video awareness, video knowledge, video ability, and video ethics.

#### **3.1. Video Awareness**

First of all, short video combines the advantages of sound,

text, image and other media, and has more powerful reproduction and information dissemination capabilities for social reality. Short video has also been widely recognized by the public. Correspondingly, as the public participating in short video communication, they need to have a strong video awareness. The reproduction and dissemination of social reality should form a conscious awareness of video reproduction and take the initiative to choose video forms.

Secondly, short video is flexible in form and rich in content, and closely integrated with real life. The truth, goodness and beauty in life are fully demonstrated to the public through short videos. Inevitably, some false, evil and ugly phenomena in life, as well as bad thoughts and behaviors are also shown through short videos. This requires the public to have a conscious awareness of criticism and cognition of the short videos they view. The content presented by short videos can be identified as true or false, and the value can be determined. It has the ability to resist bad information in short videos.

Thirdly, the fragmented presentation of social reality and immersive browsing experience of short videos highly cater to the fragmented and atomized social life rhythm and living state of the public. As a result, it is easier for the audience to form a fragmented way of thinking and attach time to the short video platform, which leads to a long time spent on short videos, thus causing various physiological and psychological problems. As users of short videos, the public should have a sense of moderation in the use of short video communication forms. Consciously control the time of immersive use of short videos; Have a clear and comprehensive awareness of the fragmented images presented by short videos. Instead of randomly judging from fragmented images, we should be good at synthesizing short video information from multiple sources to make comprehensive judgments.

#### **3.2. Video Knowledge**

Short video is more carried out through the dynamic presentation of images and pictures when reproducing reality and transmitting information. As important auxiliary factors, words and sounds also play an important role. Therefore, if the public wants to use this kind of integrated media reasonably and effectively, they also need to have some video knowledge.

First of all, the public should have the basic knowledge of video format, encoding, decoding and so on. Different short video platforms, different receiving and playing terminals often have their own requirements for video formats. The public needs to be more proficient in this rm、.wmv、.mov、. Video formats such as m3u8 should target different media. Different frame rates correspond to different rendering effects.

Secondly, in order to make better use of the short video communication form, the public also needs to have a full understanding of the video performance ability. Different compositions, scenes, colors, different music styles, different fonts and text expressions can create a variety of video scenes. The communication effect is also very different.

#### **3.3. Video Skills**

As the basic change and supporting force of media development, technology also has a profound impact on short video communication. With the evolution of 4G and 5G mobile communication technology, video coding technology, network video streaming technology, algorithm recommendation and other technologies, the development form of short video will inevitably change accordingly. As

users of short video media, the public also needs to have corresponding basic skills.

First of all, the public should have basic video shooting, editing, sharing and publishing capabilities. Before the rise of short video communication, it was still very difficult for ordinary people to make, edit and release videos. However, with the rise of short video platforms, the smart and stupid editing software on mobile phones and PCs such as clip and flash, and the continuous improvement of mobile video performance, the production, editing, sharing and publishing of short videos have become very friendly to the public.

Secondly, the public should have strong short video network communication ability. The threshold of short video production is low, and the process from production to release is mature. However, in order to achieve better communication effect, the public still needs to have a strong network communication ability. Network is the basis of the existence and development of short video media. Ensuring effective signal communication has a fundamental impact on the short video effect. Therefore, the public needs to be familiar with the work sending terminal, publishing network, receiving terminal, etc., and be able to understand and handle common network and hardware failures.

### **3.4. Video Ethics**

The Internet is a large platform for social information. Millions of Internet users obtain and exchange information on it, which will have an important impact on their way of seeking knowledge, way of thinking and values, especially on their views on the country, society, work and life[9].

Short video communication also needs constraints and norms from national laws and regulations, social public order and good customs. The Internet is not a place outside the law, and short video communication is not a completely free expression of individuals. As users of short video media, the public needs to consciously cultivate awareness of video ethics. In the production, sharing and release of short videos, we consciously did not violate national laws and regulations, social ethics, and the legitimate rights and interests of citizens, adhered to the "seven bottom lines"[10], and maintained a healthy and harmonious cyberspace.

## **4. Ways to Improve Public Visual Media Literacy**

There are a large number of Internet users in China, and short video users are also growing at a high speed. In addition, China's economic and social development is uneven, and there is a huge difference between the development of the east and the west. At present, the mass media literacy education for the public in China has not been carried out, and there is a lack of comprehensive survey and statistics in this regard. Therefore, this paper will not make an overall evaluation of the current situation of the public's visual media literacy in China.

As far as the improvement of the public's visual-media literacy is concerned, this paper believes that the participants of short video communication media can be involved in the following aspects.

### **4.1. Establish and Improve Laws and Regulations, And Build A Good Development Guarantee System**

No rules, no circles. The wanton communication without

legal norms will not bring about the real prosperity of communication, but will only accelerate its rapid decline. In recent years, with the promulgation of a series of laws and regulations on cyberspace governance, such as the Network Security Law, the Measures for the Security Review of Network Products and Services (for Trial Implementation), the Provisions on the Administration of Internet News Information Services, and the Regulations on the Protection of the Right of Information Network Communication[11], the orderly and harmonious development of China's Internet space has been effectively guaranteed. This has further promoted the sound development of short video and other media. We should, in line with the attitude of being responsible for the society and the people, strengthen the governance of cyberspace according to law, strengthen the construction of network content, strengthen the positive publicity on the Internet, and cultivate a positive, healthy and upward looking network culture.[12]

### **4.2. The Traditional Mainstream Media Took the Lead in Setting an Example to Guide the Development of Short Video Communication**

In the era of mass communication, the traditional mainstream media has firmly occupied the dominant position of social communication, accumulating strong technical and talent strength. After the rise of network media, the traditional mainstream media took advantage of the situation and used their traditional advantages to carry out network transformation. In the era of short video, traditional mainstream media represented by People's Daily Online and Xinhuanet still play an important role in guiding public opinion in the short video communication pattern.

The rise of short video provides a new opportunity for traditional mainstream media to expand their communication influence. Traditional mainstream media and short video platforms are deeply integrated in content, technology and channels to better guide public opinion. The data shows that as of June 2022, there are 8028 media accounts on the four major platforms of Weibo, Douyin, Fasthand and Bilibili, with an average number of 1.38 million fans, 19.5% of which are millions of fan accounts, and 2.8% of which are tens of millions of fan accounts. Among them, the number of fans of the People's Daily Douyin account and CCTV News Douyin account is 155 million and 144 million respectively, ranking the first two of all media accounts[13]. Because of such strong social influence and its dominant position in the network communication pattern, traditional mainstream media need to make greater efforts in content, technology and channels to continuously improve their own communication influence. We should arm people with scientific theories, guide people with correct public opinion, shape people with noble spirit, inspire people with excellent works, and guide the development of short video communication.

### **4.3. Short Video Platform Gatekeeper to Ensure the Standardized Communication of Short Video Content**

As the main channel of short video communication, short video platform is at the important position of the main entrance and exit of short video social communication. As a short video platform enterprise, it needs to establish a high sense of social responsibility and do a good job in the

standardized communication of short videos. Research shows that the higher the social responsibility of the short video platform, the higher the loyalty of its users, showing a positive relationship between the two[14].

In the short video communication pattern, the short video platform has tool attributes (providing users with effective video production, dissemination, sharing tools and a stable running platform), content attributes (presenting rich short video content, assisting users to receive, produce and share short video content, and effectively supervising and guiding the content) Social attributes (provide a social space between users, and provide effective help for users to expand their social space through likes, comments, forwarding and other functional settings). The effective play of the three attributes is inseparable from the social responsibility of the short video platform itself. The short video platform needs to make full use of its technical advantages to screen, standardize and screen content, and screen and delete content that does not conform to national laws and regulations, violates public order and good customs, and infringes on the legitimate rights and interests of the public. Manage users who violate platform regulations and laws and regulations.

#### 4.4. The Public Actively Participates in Improving Visual Media Literacy in Practice

"I have to feel shallow on paper. I absolutely know that I should practice this matter.". Only by combining knowledge acquisition with practice can we improve and consolidate the learning effect more effectively. With the help of the deep integration of the network and social reality, the combination of short video and reality is getting closer. The public is also using short videos to record their lives, express their views, vent their emotions, socialize, and even online shopping and financial activities, thus improving their visual media literacy in practice.

Taking the integration of localized life as an example, the short video platform has developed into an integrated online and offline service platform through cooperation with third-party platforms. In January 2022, the "fasthand stores" will be open to local businesses in the life industry. At the same time, Fasthand promoted its large-scale offline market layout by cooperating with Meituan and Shunfeng in group buying, distribution and other fields, giving play to its traffic advantages, and finally realizing value realization. Douyin chose to develop its local life business independently, mainly focusing on the some large cities and online popular cities. It successively launched food exploration, takeout and other businesses, and provided traffic support to local catering merchants, attracting customers through planting grass, and promoting the closed loop of online and offline transactions. The "content+E-commerce" grass planting realization mode has deeply affected the user's consumption habits. In the first quarter of 2022, the total volume of fast e-commerce transactions reached 175.1 billion yuan, a year-on-year increase of 47.7%, of which the self built e-commerce system "fasthand stores" contributed more than 99% of the transaction volume[15]. The development of short video platform online and offline integrated integrated service platform is showing the active participation of the public. It can be predicted that with the enthusiasm of the public for active participation, the public's visual media literacy will also be rapidly improved.

## 5. Conclusion

As a new integrated media, short video has developed at a high speed with the development of digital, intelligent and mobile network media[16]. Its integration and application of sound, text, image and other communication media also put forward higher literacy requirements for its users. As users of short video media, the public needs to establish and continuously improve the integrated visual media literacy, which is guided by visual literacy and integrates multiple literacy. In this process, national authorities, traditional mainstream media, short video platforms and the public themselves should work together to build a path to improve the public's visual media literacy.

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