

Preface

As the carrier of information transmission with digital technology at the core and supported by Internet and information technology, the new media mainly exists in such forms as online media, mobile phone media, and digital TV. China tops the world in terms of the application of new media in all forms—it is the world's largest network market with more than 600 million Internet users; it has the largest number of mobile phone users, including a large and fast-growing base of smartphone users; and its media industry that grows faster than GDP is in a leading position in the world. The flourishing new media has not only accelerated the technological revolution, resource mobilization, knowledge production, and artistic creation in China, but also changed the way of life, work, socializing, entertainment, and consumption for Chinese people, bringing both positive and negative impacts to the Chinese society.

To present to overseas readers a true picture of China's changes and development in political, economic, cultural, social, and other aspects in the new media environment, this book focuses on the typical impacts caused by new media on the Chinese society, which will be discussed in the following parts.

First, the development history of Internet in China. Internet came to China in 1994. With the passage of time and the ever faster process of information globalization, new media with Internet technology as the core has developed rapidly and affected every aspects of the Chinese society. Chapter 1 of this book—Review of 20 Years of Internet Development in China—reviews the 20-year development history of Internet in China. From China's initial exploration of the Internet to the acceleration of network and information construction and the improvement of network system, and to the abundant achievements today, it records the milestones in the history of China's Internet development.

Second, Internet use in China. China's Internet tops the world in terms of number of Internet users and Internet coverage. As of December 2014, there were 649 million Internet users in China and the Internet penetration rate was 47.9%. The hundreds of millions of Internet users are the fundamental force that pushes the rapid expansion and extensive popularization of Internet in China. Chapter 2 of this

book—Survey of Chinese Internet Users' Internet-Using Habits—will reveal Chinese Internet users' habit of Internet use based on a large multitude of data.

Third, integration of traditional and new media in China. Chinese new media has waged a revolution in such sectors as government affairs, economy, media, and socializing with great momentum in recent years, changing the ecosphere of public opinion and reshaping the public life. Traditional media is actively reforming and adjusting themselves under the impact of the new media, in a bid to reshape their development through integration. Moreover, the “marriage” between China's traditional and new media is getting faster and more extensive. For instance, TV program hosts often hold a mobile device, either a smartphone or a pad, and explain to the audience information from microblog and other new media. They exchange opinions and feelings with the audience for real-time feedback and interaction, which changes the one-way communication model of the traditional TV media. Chapter 3—Transformation and Development of Traditional Media in New Media Environment—will especially introduce the transformation and development of traditional media including newspaper, magazine, radio, and TV.

Fourth, transformation and development of Chinese citizens' political participation in new media environment. Since China Telecom and the Economic Information Center of State Economic and Trade Commission initiated the “e-government program” in 1999, the Internet has gradually become a bridge between the government and the general public. Today new media for government affairs such as government microblog, WeChat, and APPs, with more diversified contents, more approachable style, and more timely response have become an important approach for government departments on all levels to release authoritative information, enhance government-public interaction, guide online public opinion, and improve the governance capability. New media has reformed the way of serving and managing the Chinese society and motivated Chinese people's enthusiasm for political participation. Chapter 4 of this book—Study of Chinese Citizens' Political Participation in New Media Environment—will discuss the change of the environment for citizens' political participation and the change in the form of participation because of new media.

Fifth, change of ecosphere for public opinion in new media environment. In the new media environment, the social structure is flattened and individuals have equal and full opportunities to express themselves. New media has changed the information dissemination model from “one-way” release to “two-way” interaction (release→interpretation→response), diversified and deepened the interpretation of information, and brought about major changes in the ecosphere of public opinion. In particular, as China's Internet has come to the era of mobile connectivity on all fronts, the mobile field of public opinion represented by WeChat, microblog, (micro) video, and client has become the new center of online public opinion. Chapter 5—Study of Online Public Opinion in New Media Environment—will expound on the prominent characteristics, creation and evolution mechanism, problems, and guiding strategies of online public opinion in the new media environment.

Sixth, economic vitality of the Internet. The rapid development and extensive application of digital and information technologies have brought tremendous challenges to China's economic growth and imposed substantial impacts on the way of resource allocation, procedures of production and operation, and economic and trade organization and management. At the same time, China's economic environment and various economic activities are constantly adjusted and transformed while embracing those challenges, and the Internet has become a new engine that drives China's economic growth. Chapter 6—Evolution and Development of Business Models in New Media Environment—will introduce the evolution and development of four mainstream business models including Chinese web portal, Chinese search engine, e-commerce, and Internet finance.

Seventh, expansion and innovation of new media marketing. The rapid development and extensive application of new media technologies have made the age we live in filled with a huge amount of data and information, giving potential consumers in the traditional sense more options. Although this has made marketing more difficult, it has also promoted the marketing reform. Chapter 7—Reform and Expansion of Marketing in New Media Environment—will focus on the reform of marketing concepts, innovation in marketing platforms and the marketing transformation, and development in such industries as real estate and tourism in the new media environment.

Eighth, changes in Chinese people's cultural lives in the age of new media. As new media has penetrated every aspect of the cultural ecology in China, the cultural life of Chinese people has undergone great changes, and new media culture has become an indispensable and important part of their everyday life. Chapter 8—Changes in Chinese People's Cultural Life in New Media Environment—will discuss several typical aspects of Chinese people's cultural life, including reading, travel, fashion, and game.

At last, problems brought by new media to the Chinese society. The new media with Internet technology in the core is a "double-edged sword" that, on the one hand, connects the virtual information environment with the reality and also leads to a range of problems on the other hand that have caused many negative impacts on the Chinese society, such as untruthful media reports, lack of social responsibility, and distortion of ethics. The last chapter of this book—Reflections on Social Problems Caused by New Media—will discuss the problems caused by new media in the everyday life and work of the Chinese public, covering the four aspects of threat to privacy, copyright crisis, cyber bully, and improper online information.

In today's context of digital technologies, not only the world's form of existence (significance of space and time, etc.) is given new definitions, but the uncanny time and space of existence has also enriched people's experience and perception unprecedentedly. In the new media environment, China, in a sense, is in a time similar to the one described by Dickens at the beginning of *A Tale of Two Cities*.

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way—in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only.

This era is an important period of strategic opportunities for China because it will not only access rare historic opportunities, but also encounter all kinds of foreseeable or unforeseeable risks or challenges. Only by facing up to, understanding, leading, and going beyond this era can China realize its dream and benefit the whole world. Living in such a time, we should bravely shoulder our mission. As a decision advising center for China's National Social Science Foundation and the Shanghai innovation and research base of philosophy and social science, the Research Center for New Media and Society of Shanghai Jiao Tong University is specialized in the research on new media development, Internet users' habits of Internet use, important topics in the Internet field, and impacts caused by new media on the Chinese society. Its research achievements have been increasing, and research level has been improved year by year.

In the process of study and accumulation, we need both “in-depth” and “broad-ranging” knowledge. In the information-based and globalized world today, we can only confirm and verify each other by drawing on one another's strengths, and we will become narrow-minded and ill-informed if we refuse to learn from others and make progress. From the moment it was founded, the Research Center for New Media and Society of Shanghai Jiao Tong University has placed equal importance on both “depth” and “breadth”. On the one hand, we have put in place a high-caliber cross-disciplinary research team comprised of talents in both humanities and engineering and have worked hard on such fields as new media, social public opinion, and social governance in an approach combining Big Data mining and social survey. On the other hand, we have extensively studied and drawn on the excellent and cutting-edge research results both at home and abroad and actively communicated with domestic and foreign academia. As mentioned before, we wrote this book—*New Media and China's Social Development*—to open a window for overseas readers to understand the changes and development of Chinese society in the new media environment. Therefore, this book is focused on the introduction of facts and contains more narration than comment. Besides, due to the limited time, the book may contain mistakes or omissions, and we welcome readers' corrections thereof.

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Yungeng Xie



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