

Decoding the Matrix: Institutional Innovation and Content Governance in China's Global Social Media Initiatives

Yin Liu, Wan Zhang, Boyuan Xue

Zhengzhou University of Technology, Zhengzhou 450044, Henan, China

Copyright: © 2026 Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY 4.0), permitting distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is cited.

Abstract: In today's era of profound restructuring of the global communication landscape, China's international communication is undergoing a systematic transformation from one-way output to multi-dimensional dialogue. Guided by the theory of "goodwill communication", this paper explores how to achieve the affable shaping of China's image through institutional innovation and content governance in the omni-media communication ecosystem. The research points out that building a collaborative and symbiotic communication matrix requires advancing the platform structure from "single-unit distribution" to "systematic matrix", transforming the content mechanism from "macro narrative" to "empathic symbiosis", and realizing precise reach and immersive communication relying on intelligent technologies. Meanwhile, the cross-border collaboration ecosystem and goodwill-based evaluation system jointly promote the transformation of international communication from institutional behavior to social common practice. Through case studies across multiple regions, this paper explains the practical paths of the omni-media communication ecosystem in integrating resources, activating subjects, and connecting emotions, providing institutional support for the global, regional, and humanized expression of Chinese stories. Ultimately, it promotes the formation of a new communication pattern of "everyone is a medium, everywhere is visible", shaping a real, three-dimensional, and warm Chinese image on the international stage.

Keywords: Omni-media communication ecosystem; Goodwill communication; International communication; Content governance; Institutional innovation

Online publication: February 4, 2026

1. Introduction

In today's era of intertwined globalization and digital civilization, the shaping of China's image is undergoing a profound transformation from one-way publicity to multi-dimensional dialogue. The practical field of international communication is no longer confined to the linear narrative of traditional media but has evolved into a communication ecological network co-woven by multiple subjects such as governments, media, enterprises, and the public. Against this background, the concept of "goodwill communication" has emerged as the times require. It calls for China's international communication to transcend stylized external publicity stereotypes

and build an omni-media communication ecosystem where elements are organically coordinated, values are mutually nourished, and emotions are bidirectionally connected through in-depth institutional innovation^[1]. This ecosystem not only pursues the wide dissemination of voices but also focuses on the transmission of warmth; it not only pays attention to the arrival of information but also values the resonance of hearts.

2. Theoretical foundation and era background of the omni-media communication ecosystem

The contemporary international communication pattern is undergoing profound structural changes, which have spurred the reconstruction of the omni-media communication ecosystem. In the era of traditional media, the linear communication model once dominated the path of information flow, but under the impact of social media platforms, this one-way communication model is facing unprecedented challenges^[2]. Today's international audiences are no longer silent information recipients but have transformed into active meaning interpreters and content co-creators. In this era context, the effectiveness of communication increasingly depends not on the volume of a single medium but on the systematicness and coordination of the entire communication ecosystem^[3].

There is a natural compatibility between the concept of “goodwill communication” and the omni-media communication ecosystem. Centered on emotional resonance and value recognition, goodwill communication emphasizes narrowing the psychological distance between communicators and audiences through authentic, diverse, and concrete narrative methods. The omni-media communication ecosystem, through institutionalized collaborative cooperation, provides fertile ground for such communication—it can effectively integrate scattered communication resources, stimulate the creative vitality of multiple subjects, and achieve precise matching between communication content and audience needs^[4].

3. Building a platform structure from “Single-Unit Distribution” to “Systematic Matrix”

The hierarchical linkage matrix achieves the complementarity and integration of communication perspectives through the organic coordination between the central and local governments. In Ya'an, Sichuan, the International Communication Center has built the “@PandaHomeYa'an '4+1' Account Matrix”, deeply exploring the two world-class IPs of giant pandas and tea culture, and striving to create the “Pandablogger” brand^[5]. Since its inauguration in March 2024, the Ya'an International Communication Center has released 228 overseas communication works in just one year, with a total communication volume exceeding 50 million. Ya'an has thus won the 2024 “China City (District) International Communication Model Case”, setting an example for cities and prefectures with “zero foundation” in international communication, and contributing valuable Ya'an explorations to telling Chinese stories well and spreading Chinese voices effectively^[6]. This platform layout based on local characteristic resources not only cleverly leverages the universal goodwill of the international community towards panda culture but also effectively avoids the sense of distance that may be caused by the macro narrative of central media.

At the same time, Chongqing's international integrated media communication project “Let's Meet” has innovatively built a four-dimensional integrated omni-media communication system of “radio and television + newspapers + online audio-visual + international communication”. Based in Chongqing and looking global, the project focuses on multiple segmented fields such as finance, culture, and tourism. Through the linkage of

large and small screens and the integration of internal and external publicity, it decodes innovative practices such as urban governance, ecological protection, and cultural-tourism integration from an international narrative perspective. The program adopts full English broadcasting and Chinese-English bilingual subtitles to accurately spread Chinese voices and reduce information errors, which not only shortens the distance with audiences at home and abroad but also realizes the international expression of Chinese stories, conforming to the new trends of international communication^[7]. This in-depth integration of cross-media platforms breaks down the barriers between traditional media and forms a strong communication synergy.

4. Creating a content production mechanism from “Macro Narrative” to “Empathic Symbiosis”

The content production mechanism of the omni-media communication ecosystem is rooted in a profound understanding and grasp of the cultural psychological map and emotional demand structure of international audiences^[8]. It consciously abandons the condescending grand publicity narrative and instead pursues a more affable, appealing, and empathetic narrative aesthetics^[9]. Through the modern translation of cultural symbols, the emotional presentation from micro perspectives, and the co-creative production with user participation, this mechanism effectively eliminates the psychological distance between China’s image and international audiences, transforming communication from one-way information transmission to two-way emotional dialogue^[10].

In terms of the modern expression of cultural symbols, the key is to endow traditional elements with new vitality in the contemporary context. The Ya’an International Communication Center in Sichuan has made innovative explorations in this regard. Supported by AI technology, the center has meticulously produced the micro-documentary series “This is Ya’an”, telling warm stories of harmonious coexistence and mutual guardianship between giant pandas, their umbrella species, and humans through delicate lens language, achieving a communication volume of over 5 million times across the entire network^[11]. More innovatively, the center has carried out cross-border cooperation with the Lang Lang Foundation, successfully holding the “When National Treasures Meet National Treasures” piano concert, inviting Lang Lang, the Sino-French Cultural Friendship Ambassador and international piano master, to interpret the piano piece “Giant Panda” composed by local Ya’an musicians^[12].

Emotional narrative from micro perspectives presents major themes through small entry points, reducing the understanding threshold for international audiences with concrete stories. High-quality content such as “Data Empowers Governance in Megacities” produced by Chongqing’s “Let’s Meet” program elevates Chongqing’s local experience into a replicable Chinese governance plan, allowing local characteristics to go global through international expression. Similarly noteworthy is that during the 3rd Hemei Life Month in Luohu District, Shenzhen, Chinese and foreign residents were organized to wear exquisite Hanfu and experience traditional hairpin flower makeup, making participants become ancient-style beauties set against the beautiful scenery of Honghu lotus flowers. This innovative practice of skillfully integrating Chinese cultural elements into the construction of international consumer business districts, through specific scene creation and emotional experience, makes Chinese culture no longer a distant and abstract symbol but a perceptible and experienceable daily life^[13].

The user-participated content co-creation model is even more the core mechanism for building “goodwill communication”. The Guangdong IP “Guangdong” platform is committed to activating global folk creative forces, creating the “Visual Guangdong Window” that gathers various materials such as pictures, videos, and

designs, comprehensively showcasing Guangdong's practical achievements and dynamic image around eight themes including Fashion Bay Area and Opportunity Bay Area. The platform is open to global creators for registration, contribution, and collaboration, actively building a global creative community. This open co-creation mechanism transforms international audiences from passive information recipients into active content communicators, realizing a qualitative leap in international communication from "talking to you" to "talking together". In the "KOL Program" launched by Henan Radio and Television, by incorporating hosts' new media accounts into the unified operation of the MCN system, and building "composite communication subjects" through traffic support and content training, the average fan growth of hosts' personal accounts has reached 300%, effectively realizing the organic coordination and value symbiosis between institutional resources and individual creativity.

5. Building a technology empowerment system from "Experience-Driven" to "Intelligence-Driven"

The efficient operation and continuous evolution of the omni-media communication ecosystem are always inseparable from the systematic empowerment and in-depth infiltration of cutting-edge technologies. In the complete chain from data insight, precise reach to immersive experience and boundary blurring, technical elements are reshaping the content production methods and information transmission channels of international communication with unprecedented depth, injecting unprecedented precision and communication efficiency into "goodwill communication" ^[14].

In terms of data insight and precise reach, the national public service platform for data elements launched by People's Data has demonstrated strong empowerment value, processing up to 12.86 million data items per day, building an accurate and three-dimensional user profile for international communication. Audience insight based on massive data analysis enables communicators to keenly grasp the focus of attention and interest trends of international audiences, thereby achieving precise matching and effective reach of communication content.

Immersive experience and boundary blurring have greatly enhanced the emotional appeal and scene penetration of communication through the innovative application of cutting-edge technologies. The Guangdong "LIVE Guangdong" international image slow-live platform relies on the professional team of Guangdong Radio and Television to conduct 24/7 uninterrupted, uncommented, immersive 4K ultra-high-definition live broadcasts of the entire Guangdong region, meticulously creating an endless "real documentary of Guangdong". The platform is gradually building a slow-live network covering the whole province, planning to complete 500 live broadcast points by 2027, comprehensively presenting the style of "100-Billion-Project" model villages and towns as well as urban landmarks. This original and unmodified real presentation breaks down cultural prejudices and cognitive barriers in the most intuitive way, allowing international audiences to witness a real and three-dimensional China beyond language and geographical limitations. As a commentator from Nanfang Daily put it: "In international communication, authenticity is the most powerful weapon to break prejudices."

6. Creating a cross-border collaboration ecosystem from "Isolated Operation" to "Open Symbiosis"

The in-depth characteristic of the omni-media communication ecosystem lies precisely in its inherent open character and collaborative mechanism. This ecosystem breaks through the "information island" dilemma of

isolated operation of various subjects in traditional international communication, and through an institutionalized cross-border collaboration network, builds a communication community with complementary resources, co-created values, and shared achievements, elevating international communication from scattered individual behaviors to an organic systematic project.

In terms of the linkage between internal and external institutions, cross-field cooperation has become an important path to expand communication channels. The strategic cooperation between the Ya'an International Communication Center in Sichuan and the Lang Lang Foundation successfully created the cultural event "When National Treasures Meet National Treasures" piano concert. The MV "Giant Panda" created therefrom was enthusiastically recommended by international piano master Lang Lang himself and spread across the entire network, with related topic clicks exceeding 20 million times. This in-depth cooperation with top international artists cleverly leverages their international influence and artistic professionalism, significantly enhancing the social attention and cultural influence of communication content. Meanwhile, the one-stop foreign information service platform City News Service (CNS) meticulously built by Shanghai Daily has transformed the concept of "everyone engages in external publicity" into vivid practice through in-depth grassroots penetration into communities, parks, enterprises, and campuses. This communication model, rooted in the social fabric, promotes international communication from the responsibility of professional media to a conscious action jointly participated by the general public.

7. Establishing an evaluation mechanism from "Traffic-Oriented" to "Goodwill Index System"

The continuous evolution and improvement of the omni-media communication ecosystem always rely on a scientific and systematic evaluation system and a dynamically evolving operational mechanism. Guided by the concept of "goodwill communication", the evaluation criteria of international communication are undergoing a profound transformation from single traffic indicators to multi-dimensional value measurement—qualitative indicators such as communication depth, emotional resonance, and value recognition, together with quantitative data such as communication breadth, constitute the core dimensions of the new evaluation system, and based on this, a dynamic closed-loop system with self-optimization capabilities is built.

In terms of effect evaluation, it is necessary to establish a comprehensive evaluation index system covering three dimensions: cognition, emotion, and behavior. In the cognitive dimension, in addition to traditional basic indicators such as readership and coverage rate, more attention should be paid to the depth of audience understanding and information retention; in the emotional dimension, the focus should be on evaluating changes in international audiences' emotional tendencies towards China's image, value recognition, and psychological goodwill; in the behavioral dimension, the frequency of audience interaction and participation, willingness to share content, and actual behavioral changes caused thereby can be examined.

In terms of mechanism construction, the dynamically optimized closed-loop system is based on continuous data feedback and content iteration. The Douyin account of China Tax News closely tracks hot topics in the fiscal and taxation field, fully uses big data technology to analyze user demand characteristics, and realizes data-driven, precise topic selection and planning. Its series of short videos, such as "At What Age Will You Retire? Comparison Table of Delayed Statutory Retirement Age for Male Employees," that successfully reached target audiences with precise content positioning, with a single video playback volume exceeding 14 million times. This content optimization mechanism, based on data insight, enables communicators to adjust strategic directions

in a timely manner and respond more accurately to changes in audience needs ^[15].

The ecosystem's self-evolutionary capacity is an important symbol to measure the maturity of the omni-media communication ecosystem. With the in-depth advancement of communication practice and dynamic changes in the external environment, a healthy communication ecosystem should have inherent capabilities of self-renewal and self-optimization. Guangdong's four major international communication platforms have given full play to the demonstration and leading role of "flagship stores", striving to build a three-dimensional communication pattern of "1 (provincial platform) + 21 (cities and prefectures) + N (various provincial and municipal departments and media)", continuously incubating and cultivating more urban "chain stores" of "IP", "INFO", "LIVE", and "GO" types.

8. Conclusion

Building an omni-media communication ecosystem is the systematic implementation and institutionalized presentation of the "goodwill communication" concept in international communication practice. Through the synergistic effect of five innovative mechanisms—platform structure, content production, technology empowerment, cross-border collaboration, and evaluation evolution—it provides solid support for the global expression, regional adaptation, and personalized reach of Chinese stories. In this organic ecosystem, international communication has transcended the traditional responsibility boundaries of professional institutions and transformed into a collective action jointly participated by all sectors of society; as demonstrated by Guangdong's international communication practice, by building a new communication ecosystem of "everyone is a medium, always online, everything with dedication, everywhere visible", we can enable the international community to see and love the real, three-dimensional, and comprehensive modern China through the Chinese window. Only such an ecosystem can make China's image show a modern style that is both dignified and affable on the international stage.

Funding

2024 Special Research Project on International Communication of China Federation of Radio and Television Associations, "Goodwill Communication: New Reflections on Enhancing the Affability of China's Image" (Project No.: 2024C006)

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

- [1] Gao H, 2025, Algorithm Governance: Compliance Dilemmas and Innovative Paths of Social Media Platforms. *News Trend*, 2025(5): 32–34 + 52.
- [2] Wang L, 2021, Guiding Online Public Opinion and Improving Risk Prevention and Control Systems—Reflections on Online Public Opinion Guidance and Risk Prevention and Control. *Journalism Front*, 2021(6): 84–87.
- [3] Wang B, 2015, Public Opinion Forms and Deliberative Democracy Under Big Data. *Chinese Social Sciences Today*,

2015(11): 41–47 + 157.

- [4] Song J, 2023, Research on the External Communication Power of Digital Publishing in the Intelligent Media Era——Based on the Perspective of Platform Economy Under “Dual Circulation,” thesis, Kunming University of Science and Technology.
- [5] Mo Y, 2021, Research on Social Media Privacy Protection in China——Centered on the Fluid Nature of Privacy, thesis, East China University of Political Science and Law.
- [6] Song Z, 2025, Dual Decoding of Workplace Narratives and “Taiwan-style” Symbols. *Chinese Journalist*, 2025(09): 110–112.
- [7] Yi X, Pan L, 2019, Research on Brand Interactive Communication in the Social Media Environment——A Case Study of Xiaomi Company. In: *The First International Forum on Cultural Brand Communication of the Grand Canal of China*. Jiangsu Federation of Philosophy and Social Sciences, Yangzhou University.
- [8] Ouyang K, 2023, Research and Application of Entity Relationship Extraction Technology, thesis, Hunan University of Technology.
- [9] Mo X, 2021, Research on Temporal Network Representation Learning Based on Deep Neural Network Models, thesis, Southwest University.
- [10] Yang H, 2019, Research on Image and Video Shooting and Editing Technology Based on Deep Learning, thesis, Shanghai Jiao Tong University.
- [11] Gu J, 2020, Research on Hot Topic Evolution Analysis, thesis, University of Electronic Science and Technology of China.
- [12] Li Y, 2024, Research and Application of Unsupervised Cross-modal Hash Retrieval Based on Modal Semantic Reconstruction, thesis, Chongqing Normal University.
- [13] Wang L, 2025, Reflections on Improving Archive Services in the Public Cultural Service System, thesis, Hebei Normal University.
- [14] Gu J, 2020, Research on Hot Topic Evolution Analysis, thesis, University of Electronic Science and Technology of China.
- [15] Li L, Li X, Wu G, et al., 2026, A Grammar-Guided Network-Based Multimodal Evaluation Object Sentiment Classification Method, CN114722797A.

Publisher's note

Bio-Byword Scientific Publishing remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.