

## **A Brief Analysis on the New Medium of Knowledge Payment from the Perspective of Information Dissemination**

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**Abstract:** As McLuhan said, “the medium is message”, we are in the era of information explosion which must be driven by new media. This paper will analyze the possibility of discourse expression generated by information and the necessity of the existence of new media in the era of knowledge payment from the perspective of information dissemination.

### **1. Era of delayed information dissemination: Master the information dissemination model rather than the information itself**

#### **1.1 History of information dissemination**

The information created by human beings is constantly enriched in forms and continues to grow in amount. In an era when the population mobility is slow and the information is spread by word of mouth and with documents as carriers, although the amount of information is growing, the process is rather slow. In China, Four Books and Five Classics and the texts derived from them have occupied the mainstream of knowledge for 2000 years; in the western countries, the Hebrew traditional religious literature has also occupied an equally important dominant position. The Five Classics Doctorates, Neo-Confucians and Puxue scientists as well as the scholastic philosophers have spent much of their time on the classics, but it is just some tinkering work for the classic literature.

Both the Four Books and Five Classics and the Bible are regarded as naturally formed truth. “It is a direct intuition to understand this truth, not any hard process of critical analysis.” Human beings connect themselves with the things of nature and form a unified symbolic relationship with nature. This means “the pre-destruction of the rationally critical exploration... It is a sacrilege to analyze the symbol just like trying to analyze the Holy Trinity.” Similarly, Confucius did not dare to compare himself to the saints-although his disciples and later rulers violated his will- vigorously advocating a concept of “passing on the ancient culture without making innovation”. The scholars who follow this tradition dare not come up with new theories. Even if they have, they must repeatedly emphasize that they are only expounding the views of saints. Will the Eastern scholars’ elucidation of the views of the saints or the Western scholastic philosophers’ repeated discussion of a certain issue in the Bible really produce new knowledge? Setting this issue aside, at least the amount of information has increased. Intuitively, the type of books and the total amount of words have increased. However, the increase in information does not mean easier access to information. The information carrier is too expensive. Although word of mouth is always an option, it is very necessary to rely on books if knowledge (a kind of information with special value) wants to settle down. As the books that are purely copied by humans are very expensive, people who are worried about their livelihoods cannot afford to the books, so it is impossible for them to gain knowledge.

#### **1.2 Carriers in the development of information dissemination**

Human beings are always striving to lower the price of information. An important purpose of Chinese font evolution is to match the materials for book production and meet the economic principles of saving time and effort, thus improving the efficiency of recording information. For example, when lettering on bamboo slips, clerical script is easier than seal character; when writing on paper, regular script is faster than clerical script; from an economic point of view, simplified

Chinese is obviously superior to traditional Chinese. The reason why papermaking and printing are great is that Cai Lun and Bi Sheng have greatly reduced the cost of book printing, which not only makes more people gain knowledge cheaply, but also provides a stable civil service system with a large amount of knowledge for the feudal dynasty monarchs that have continued for thousands of years. At the same time, the knowledge dissemination in the Western countries is still limited to the expensive parchment. It was not until the advent of the Gutenberg printing that changed this situation. Information has shown its strong power in Europe. According to Anderson Benedict, cheap books and newspapers printed in national languages are so important to the birth of the nation's imagined community that they have determined the political pattern of modern Europe.

However, the right to produce information was firmly held in the hands of a small number of literate intellectuals for a long period. The price fall in knowledge has only made it convenient for civilians to become intellectuals. Neither the written classical Chinese nor the European "aristocratic" Latin is civilian language. Low literacy rates and labor exploitation in the civilian population have led to low activity in thinking. For those who are forced by life to stop thinking, the instinct to survive and give birth outweighs the lofty cause of producing information. They may be more willing to be the destination of information flow (information sinks) than the relay station where information is re-encoded and re-started. In other words, it is not intellectuals who deprive them of the right to participate in the information production, but they have to give up this right.

### **1.3 Theorization of information dissemination: the information production is defined as a model**

According to Baudrillard's view, the information production is defined as a special restatement: "The essence of the medium is the model (Modèle)... is a restatement of a symbol/form. It obtains an elucidation in a model and is controlled by a code." It means that the precondition for information production is to master at least one model and apply this model to manipulate the code. Only with this ability can people participate in the production of information. According to this view, learning to read is to master a model (writing), to master a theoretical system or worldview and also master another model (discourse). The latter is a deeper model that determines how the character is organized to express specific ideas. Low literacy rates lead to low activity in thinking, keeping most people out of the professional field of information production. Even in the Han Dynasty when Confucian Classics prevailed, the number of students who were keen on interpreting the classics (that is knowledge reproduction based on the classical literature) was always controlled between 4,000 and 10,000. It is not even as big as a medium-sized college in today. Ordinary people other than the students in imperial college, the Five Classics Doctorates and members of the royal family do not have the qualification to discuss these important issues (which involve the legality of the royal power). However, learning to read also means accepting a culture embedded in the language as a whole. Writing is not arbitrary. The students who study Confucian classics, the Five Classics Doctorates and the members of the royal family cannot but respond to the sacredness of the Confucian classics.

As a result of the response, it has also answered the question that is set aside previously: those people who pass on the ancient culture without making innovation repeatedly interpret the same content and try to make harmony between specific words and sentences, resulting in an "awkward thing". As time goes on, the new heterogeneous content that may oppose this awkward thing is incorporated into it by re-encoding, trying to avoid the conflicts between the heterogeneous information and this awkward thing. As a result, the volume of this awkward thing is getting bigger and bigger and mixed with the ideas and theories of various genres, but these views from different sources can coexist harmoniously in the same system. In this information production model, knowledge is the model itself. Any information can be interpreted (decoded) in the same model and become part of it (re-encoded). For the intellectual class, the most important thing is to master the model while the specific information is secondary. Therefore, the truly effective information has not greatly increased.

## **2. Information explosion era spawns the new medium of knowledge payment: efficient information source directly reaches information sink**

### **2.1 Information explosion era: information source and information sink cannot be matched efficiently**

However, the information society where we live is a striking contrast. Nowadays, “information explosion” is a very old-fashioned concept. At least people are no longer as enthusiastic as they were at the turn of the century about this new concept. This does not mean that information explosion as a real phenomenon has disappeared from our lives; on the contrary, it has turned into the more real anxiety. When white-collar workers in cities pay for knowledge products without hesitation, they may not realize that they have been caught in “information anxiety.” On one hand, they are worried that information they have acquired is not enough and that the quality is not good enough. On the other hand, although the information cost is greatly reduced, the capitalist labor exploitation has taken up too much time, so they have to pursue more efficiency way to obtain information, namely purchasing refined opinions or key information. The result of the information explosion is that the mental work of refining ideas is left to professionals.

With the ability to read and understand, everyone can extract some ideas from a book, or more Abstractly, extract the key information from some intertwined information. But if people pay money to get knowledge, then knowledge must help people gain more money or at least have some positive effects on the buyer, which is in line with the law of investment-return criteria. Therefore, “useful knowledge” has become the mainstream in the knowledge payment market. No one is willing to spend money in understanding the profound implications contained in a novel, but “how to save space with storage”, “how to manage time” or “how to read a book quickly” may become the popular knowledge products.

### **2.2 Information explosion era spawns knowledge payment**

Knowledge payment can be understood as a new medium. It goes beyond the dual definition of containers and equipment in the past - containers and equipment that carry information are already applied to medium. Whether it is the cellphone or PC that is used to accept knowledge products, or the form of audio and video where information is presented with pictures and text, these are all techniques that have been used skillfully and no new technology emerges in them. Knowledge payment is new because they have labeled information naked as a commodity. The act of buying information has existed since ancient times. Information is an important commodity in business, politics and war. In Mao Dun’s novel of *Midnight*, the comedown landlord class sacrificed his daughter to exchange for the “inside information” from the financial capitalist in order to engage in speculative business. As a result, he obtained wrong “inside information”, made a wrong decision and eventually went bankrupt.

However, for ordinary people who do not participate in commercial speculation, information is not very important or not so important to the point of special purchase. The purchase of knowledge products is different from that of educational services. According to Baudrillard’s ideas, the ultimate goal of educational services is to enable buyers to master a particular model to process massive amounts of information.

Therefore, the knowledge payment service is a postmodern form of media evolution. It is a tireless pursuit of information efficiency to promote effective information into commodities or to promote people to buy effective information. The reason why knowledge payment is the postmodern form of media evolution is that the media has undergone a long period of evolution. This series of evolutions has contained a consistent purpose which is to improve the efficiency of information dissemination. The media evolution includes the purpose of improving the efficiency of information dissemination. However, this is not to say that improving efficiency is the purpose of the media evolution.

Knowledge is like a balloon and will expand as time goes by. But before the emergence of rigorous science, no matter in China or in western countries, all disciplines are chaotically included under the same name, that is, truth. Erudite people have the power to express their views and

opinions on all things under the same framework. The Neo-Confucians in Song and Ming Dynasties tried to construct the ontology through the “dao” and “qi” and believed that everything is subject to the same law, which has reflected the ambition of “great unity.” However, with the birth of science, knowledge has been divided into precise disciplines. In the beginning, many disciplines had a common founder. As the time goes by, researchers have found that it is quite difficult to master all the knowledge of a particular subject. It is at best to achieve mastery in a more specialized area.

With the subdivision of the discipline, the original all-encompassing “awkward thing” shrank sharply, retreated to the corner of history and became theology and philology in parallel with other disciplines. Everyone agrees that specific information needs to be dealt with by specific professionals: based on the skepticism or reservation, the respect for technical knowledge usually coexists with the practical attitude towards the Abstract system. When people need expert’s advice, they generally choose to trust experts, although they are dubious. This is the basic attitude of modern society to experts.

### **2.3 The sustainable development of knowledge payment stems from public's desire for professional knowledge.**

The mass media has contributed a lot to the acceptance of expert systems. The newspaper, radio show and TV show will invite experts from time to time to make professional comments on certain immediacy phenomena. The emergence of experts and professional knowledge is accompanied by related issues. This is enough for some people, but not enough for others. However, mass media with a public nature will not spend a full page or 3 hours of programming time to teach certain knowledge to cover a small part of needs, unless it is profitable or it is the advertiser's request. In addition, if the potential demanders miss out on these programs, the information will become a noise that passes into the void.

## **3. Conclusion**

When the efficiency of information dissemination and the explosive growth of information do not match, it will be a natural thing for new media to emerge. This new medium has a common purpose with all previous media, that is, to improve the efficiency of information dissemination: according to the information theory, when the information directly reaches the information sink from the source, the more efficient the channel, the less noise it will be reduced. The emergence of knowledge payment products allows consumers to purchase knowledge directly from experts, which is in line with the information theory.

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