

Symbiotic Strategies and Development Paths of Long and Short Video Platforms

Siying Dan

*University of Shanghai for Science and Technology, Shanghai, 200000, China
2924350016@qq.com*

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Abstract: With the development of Internet technology and people's higher pursuit of spiritual and cultural content, long- and short-form video platforms have become an important force in online audiovisual communication. However, there are frequent copyright conflicts between the two. Through typical cases, the article discusses the symbiosis strategy of long and short video platforms, and proposes strategies such as perfecting the principle of safe harbour, and promoting reforms with the help of AIGC, with a view to achieving a win-win situation for long and short video platforms, users and producers, and promoting the prosperity and progress of the video industry.

1. Introduction

As an important force in online audiovisual communication, short and long video platforms are an important position for users to obtain cultural and entertainment content. With the rapid rise of short video platforms, short videos have influenced and changed the pattern of video communication in all aspects. The development of short and long video platforms in competition has become a major feature of video platforms in the past decade.

Under the perspective of entertainment law, there are many cases of infringement of long and short video platforms, some of which have great social impact, the most common of which, is the case of copyright infringement of long video platforms suing short video platforms for re-creation videos. However, the "China Internet Development Status Statistical Report" shows that over the past two years, influenced by factors such as the international economic environment, long and short video platforms have shifted from competition to cooperation, gradually achieving mutual promotion and common prosperity of the industry. [1]. This paper will combine some typical cases to deeply analyse the symbiosis status of long and short video platforms, explore the opportunities and challenges they face, and propose corresponding symbiosis strategies and development paths. Through the study, it aims to provide theoretical support and practical guidance for the healthy development of long and short video platforms, and promote the prosperity and progress of the film and television industry.

2. Current status of the development of each of the long- and short-term video platforms

Long and short video platforms have shown their own advantages in the process of development, but there are also shortcomings that limit their development. The content of long video is often more in-depth and well-produced, but the production cost is high and the cycle is long, so "reduce costs and increase efficiency" has become a major requirement for the development of long video. With its communication characteristics of "short, new, light, fast and active", short video has rapidly broken through the time and space limitations and gained geometric progression, but it has also been questioned by the quality and lack of value.

Here's a specific look at the current state of each of the long and short video platform developments.

2.1 Development status of long video platforms

(1) Echelon development with obvious head effect

In recent years, China's long video industry has been developing steadily and rapidly, and the concentration from the industry as a whole is very high and shows a ladder-like distribution. The first echelon is a comprehensive video platform represented by Tencent video, IQiyi, Youku video, etc., supported by Tencent, Ali, Baidu and other large Internet companies, the platform content investment is high, and the source is rich. The second echelon is watermelon video, bilibili and other platforms, there is a unique content ecology, both in the field of long video development, as well as in the field of medium video, short video development. The third echelon consists of Huawei Video, Sohu Video, Migu Video and Xiaomi Video [2].

This model is bound to lead to competition and bias in resource allocation, thereby intensifying the competition among various long-video platforms. But at the same time, it also encourages major platforms to actively explore high-quality content, enhance their own competitiveness, and promote the forward development of the film and television industry.

(2) Long video to short video convergence

The decline in both the number and volume of long videos is the most intuitive indicator that long videos are becoming shorter. Data from the 2024 Drama Market Report released by Lighthouse Professional shows that 266 dramas with single episodes of 15 minutes or more will be uploaded by four major long-video platforms in 2024, a year-on-year decrease of 10.1% and a continuation of the trend of volume reduction [3].

From the product point of view, long and short dramas are very different, but from the point of view of changes in creative thinking and the flow of the team behind the scenes, the boundaries between the two are becoming increasingly blurred in 2024. For the originally competitive long and short videos, this trend can obviously help long and short videos to resolve conflicts, through the flow of personnel, shooting mode and other initiatives to blur the boundaries between the two, long video to short video closer, long and short videos towards cooperation is inevitable.

2.2 The current development status of short-video platforms

According to a research report issued by Jingyun Intelligence AI Matrix System, China's short video market size reached 376.52 billion yuan in 2022 and is expected to reach 106.08 billion yuan by 2025, showing that the short video industry still has huge growth potential and commercial value. China's short video user scale has exceeded one billion, with a usage rate as high as 94.8 per cent, and users' demand for short videos is increasingly diversified, with a preference for entertainment, education, lifestyle and other areas [4].

Despite the strong development of short video platforms and their many breakthrough achievements, they are currently encountering a number of challenges. Specifically, there are some major problems in the current development of short video platforms, as listed below:

(1) High quantity, mixed quality and lack of professionalism

Short videos are mainly user-based content creation, belonging to the typical UGC model, which is able to create a large amount of content at a relatively low cost and quickly, but at the same time, it also faces problems such as uneven quality and insufficiently professional content. In order to pursue the click rate and attention, some short videos often ignore the depth and breadth of the content, resulting in a large number of low-quality, homogeneous content flooding the platform. This not only affects the user's viewing experience, but also restricts the healthy development of the short video industry.

(2) There is a category of short video content that has become popular in recent years - online short dramas, with short episodes and tight plots that quickly catch the eye of users. It is usually initially free, paid form, the platform will push the short drama to the user, the user in the free to watch the first few episodes, the plot often progresses to the twist, the conflict, if you are still interested in wanting to continue to watch, you need to pay to buy, the price is mostly in a few dollars to tens of yuan ranging.

Most of the plot of the short drama is linked to keywords such as "fantasy novel", "revenge" and "rebirth", which can satisfy the users' desire for "satisfying" psychology. "Therefore, when short dramas first appeared, many users were willing to pay to watch them, and the idea of short dramas gradually gained popularity. But from the second half of 2023, "Hongguo short drama" and other free short drama online viewing platforms appear, breaking this mode of paid viewing. These free short drama platforms are profitable through advertising implantation, brand cooperation and other methods, reducing the viewing cost of users and further promoting the innovation and development of short video content. The rise of free short drama platforms not only enriches the entertainment life of users, but also brings new growth points for the short video industry.

In contrast to the decline of paid short dramas, Hongguo Short Drama, which mainly focuses on free, has taken on a huge audience of short dramas and become a core consumption platform for short dramas in the past year. According to QuestMobile's New Media Ecology Inventory 2024 released at the end of the year, the MAU of Hongguo short drama in November has exceeded 140 million. From its launch in August 2023, to 36,857,000 MAU in January this year, to 120 million in September, Hongguo has grown into a billion-dollar app in just one year [3].

(3) The domestic market for short videos is nearing saturation and is actively exploring overseas markets.

Affected by factors such as the slowdown or even decline in the growth of short video user scale, changes in user structure, strengthening of policy regulation, and aesthetic fatigue caused by a large amount of homogenised content, short videos have gradually become saturated in the domestic market, and attempts have been made to actively explore the overseas market to alleviate the saturated situation in the country and to seek for a new point of interest growth.

Jiemian Entertainment had reported the trend of short dramas going overseas to Southeast Asia and North America at the end of 2023, when Liu Jinlong, the head of overseas of Jiuzhou Culture, said that the domestic short drama market had tended to be stable and saturated after a few years of high-speed development period. And the current situation of overseas short drama is the domestic short drama once, in the beginning stage, overseas short drama is retracing the path taken by the domestic short drama in the early days [3].

Overseas short drama market has become a new development direction for short video platforms due to its huge blue ocean space, predictable user demand, low cost and strong willingness of users to pay. Through content localisation and technology empowerment, short video platforms are

gradually establishing regular localisation services for short dramas to increase user retention and payment rates, laying a solid foundation for sustainable development in overseas markets. This trend not only helps short video platforms expand their international influence, but also provides new ways and possibilities for the overseas dissemination of Chinese culture.

3. The contradiction and conflict between short video and long video development

3.1 Infringement of long videos by short videos

The infringement behaviour of short videos on long videos can be divided into two categories, which mainly depends on whether the short videos have added original expressions in the process of using the long videos. If it is only "carrying", "cutting", without adding original expression, it belongs to the simple copying and dissemination behaviour; if it is commentary, film reviews, etc., it belongs to the "re-creation" with added original expression. The scholar Ma Lihong emphasised that "carrying" and "cutting" infringes on the right of long video right holders to disseminate information network, while "secondary creation" may infringe on the right of long video right holders to adapt their works. The "re-creation" may infringe on the right to adapt the work of the long video right holder [6].

There are many cases about re-creation infringement. One of the more typical is the case of "The Worm Valley" re-creation video and platform being sued for infringement[5]. Although the final result of the "The Worm Valley" infringement case is a high sentence, the purpose is to safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of the plaintiff, and the film and television comprehensive industry to play a deterrent, warning effect, but after this case, there are still many long video platforms sued short video platform infringement cases, infringement has not been effectively curbed, so the contradiction between long and short video in this regard is still urgent to be resolved.

3.2 Infringement in the act of "Netdisk"

Micro dramas initially appeared in the form of charges, users could watch the first few episodes for free, and after watching a few episodes, they had to pay to continue watching. At first, most users would still pay for micro dramas, but after being "lured" to pay several times by the plot connection, viewers also realized the unreasonable charging of micro dramas, and gradually developed a consumption mentality. In the end, after a short drama is online, it is difficult to escape the end of the "netdisk- see", leaving only a few net discs to search for pirated copies of some of the audience in the sinking market in the "impulse to consume". Such behaviour constitutes an infringement of copyright. As a network service provider, an online disc platform should establish and maintain a reasonable copyright audit and management mechanism to prevent users from uploading infringing content.

Not only is the short drama infringed, for a long time because the long video platform needs to pay for membership, on-demand, there are a large number of long video resources have been uploaded to the netdisk, which also constitutes an infringement of copyright, is not conducive to the healthy development of the video industry. This kind of piracy has become a common "pain point" for short and long video platforms.

4. How to develop in the future

Although more and more short and long video platforms have reached cooperation, with the development of generative artificial intelligence and other factors, short and long video platforms are destined to continue to conflict, so we need to lay out in advance, think about how to coordinate

the symbiotic development of short and long video, in the competition to find common interests, to achieve the "Coopetition".

Specifically there are a number of development paths that can be learnt from the following:

4.1 Improvement of the safe harbour principle

The safe harbour principle is a protective measure against indirect civil liability [6]. In the Worm Valley case, Douyin argued that it could use the safe harbour principle as a "shield" to escape liability, but many experts believe that the safe harbour principle is no longer compatible with reality and should be improved and adjusted. Zhang Chu, director of the Intellectual Property Research Centre of the China University of Political Science and Law, believes that short video platforms are using artificial intelligence and algorithmic advice to undermine traditional content dissemination, and that the determination of infringement liability depends on whether the platform is "can't" or "won't", and the platform can now use artificial intelligence to detect content infringement. Platforms can now use AI to detect content infringement, making the safe harbour rule obsolete.

4.2 Promoting reforms through the AIGC

The copyright protection mechanism can be improved with the help of AIGC, for example, by using the image and text recognition technology in AIGC, which can automatically detect copyrighted content in videos, including music, images, text, etc., so as to effectively reduce infringement. A copyright management system based on AIGC can also be established, which can automatically track and record the source and use of content, providing powerful evidence for the resolution of copyright disputes. As well as through AIGC technology, a more transparent and efficient copyright trading mechanism can be established to ensure that copyright owners receive reasonable returns while reducing the risk of infringement.

As mentioned earlier, due to the UGC characteristics of short video, it is more difficult to obtain permission from long video copyright holders, therefore, a copyright licensing system can be established with the aid of AIGC, so that second creators can get authorisation in a quicker time through reasonable means to carry out their secondary creations, and consideration can be given to giving the long video copyright holders a certain amount of remuneration or signing some kind of contract.

4.3 Long and short videos license re-creations through a cooperative form

On the basis of long and short videos moving towards co-operation, long and short video platforms should be encouraged to co-operate with the re-creation of head bloggers, so as to achieve multi-party benefit sharing.

When searching for the keyword "movie commentary" on the Douyin platform, some influential top blogger accounts have emerged, such as "Dushe Movie", "Gu Wo Movie", "Bai Ding Talk Movie", and so on. Here is an interesting phenomenon: The avatars of these bloggers are highly similar and can easily cause confusion. Besides, I have also had some thoughts: Have these top film review bloggers already formed a film review industry chain? Can the upcoming films directly collaborate with top bloggers to increase their popularity through promotion, thereby boosting the play count of long videos and generating more revenue?

Therefore, the following development path can be thought out: the long video platform cooperates with the head film and TV drama commentary bloggers, the short video platform implements the push to help increase the traffic, and the resulting advertising revenue is shared by many parties.

4.4 All relevant parties should work together to achieve mutual benefit and win-win results

Through the cooperation between short and long video platforms, a bridge can be built to communicate with multiple parties. The co-operation of short and long video platforms has explored the win-win road for the interests of all parties, including platforms, copyright holders, creators and users, forming a more open and win-win model and mechanism. For users, they can watch clips and commentaries on short-video platforms, and then watch the whole film on long-video platforms if they are interested, which can help them make choices and have a better experience.

5. Conclusions

It has become an industry trend for short and long video platforms to develop in competition and win-win in cooperation. Cooperation between platforms not only helps activate rich content IP resources and maximise the value of high-quality content, but also brings better viewing experience to users. Strategies such as improving the principle of safe harbour and using AIGC technology to strengthen copyright protection can effectively reduce conflicts and promote the common development of both parties. In the future, with the further development of technology and the constant changes in the market, I believe that long and short video platforms will continue to explore more symbiotic strategies and development paths, and jointly promote the prosperity and progress of the film-television industry.

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