

The Spread of Internet Buzzwords from the Perspective of Communication Science from 2017 to 2021

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Abstract. This paper first uses domestic scholars' research on Internet buzzwords to understand the specific connotation, classification forms, dissemination laws, and multiple features of Internet buzzwords. Then, the paper explains the reasons for the creation of Internet buzzwords from five aspects: creation by Internet users; participation in media products; guidance by opinion leaders; guidance by policy guidelines; and the fission of modal theory. Then the paper analyze the impact of Internet buzzwords on today's society from both positive and negative aspects and propose corresponding solutions. Internet buzzwords are new cultural forms that are closely related to us and are mirrors of social life, and the analysis of Internet buzzwords is conducive to the healthy development of the online environment.

Keywords: Internet Buzzwords; Internet Users; Dissemination Phenomenon.

1. Introduction

In recent years, with the popularity of the Internet, the number of China's Internet users has exceeded 1 billion, of which 975 million are online video users, accounting for 94.5% of all Internet users [1]. Self-media platforms such as Auto Quicker, TikTok, and Weibo have given birth to online buzzwords such as "YYDS", "meta-universe", and "emo". These Internet buzzwords have become an extension of youth subculture in cyberspace and have the communication characteristics of being easy to spread, easy to understand, and highly condensed. Through innovative expressions and recreations of words, Internet buzzwords have been given new connotations of the times, becoming the common language of daily interactions; a vent for Internet users to confide in the Internet; and a mirror reflecting the cultural life of contemporary society, showing the cultural confidence of contemporary China. At the same time, the phenomenon of "information cocoon" and "digital divide" has emerged due to the youthfulness and simplicity of Internet buzzwords, which has prompted all age groups to think about how to adapt to the phenomenon of Internet buzzwords.

2. Domestic Scholars' Research on Internet Buzzwords

2.1 Meaning of Internet Buzzwords

Internet buzzwords are products of the Internet era. Regarding network buzzwords, domestic scholars do not have a unified and authoritative definition, and they believe that network buzzwords are titles with conventions and wide influence. Network buzzwords, according to Li Bowen and other scholars, are high frequency words that are disseminated in cyberspace and given meaning in specific times and language environments [2]; Chen Zexing believed that network buzzwords are popular words in the network language that usually revolve around the topics of social life and major social hot events and are used more frequently by social people as network subjects when they collect, publish, and exchange information in the network. Yin Xubiao stated that network buzzwords are words with certain event pointers summarized through hot events on the Internet [3]. Today's scholars convey a similar perception that network buzzwords are interesting words at high frequency extracted by network subjects from social hot topics.

According to Laswell's "5W" model, the author analyzed the network buzzwords and their dissemination rules, and found that they have unique advantages in five aspects: communication subjects, content distribution, mode of dissemination, audience, and effect.

①Subjects of communication: In the era of professional content production and user content production, ordinary users and professional journalists have become the subjects of content communication. They supplement the connotation of Internet buzzwords, enrich the variety of Internet buzzwords, and promote the development of Internet buzzwords through the re-creation of words.

②Spread content: Internet buzzwords are summarized from hot events and social phenomena and are a true reflection of social reality. The dissemination content of Internet buzzwords carries the policy background and emotional demands of an era and becomes a channel for Internet users to understand society.

③Scholar Li Ya put forward the characteristics of de-layered interactive communication [4], which is manifested in two aspects: firstly, the communication mode has changed from the original interpersonal communication to group communication and mass communication, and niche culture has successfully "broken the circle". Secondly, along with the development of digital technology, new media has broken through the limitations of traditional media, and the emergence of Internet buzzwords has become more diversified, from the initial TV news and variety shows to the mixed cut and ghost videos on TikTok and Auto Quicker.

④The communication audience has changed from the original intellectual group and urban white-collar workers to the general public, and the scope has gradually expanded. At the same time, there is also a duality of transmission and reception, in which the general public is both the recipient and the transmitter in the transmission process.

⑤Effect: With the expansion of civil rights to speak, Internet users' judgments on social events can, to a certain extent, guide the direction of public opinion and promote the development of news events.

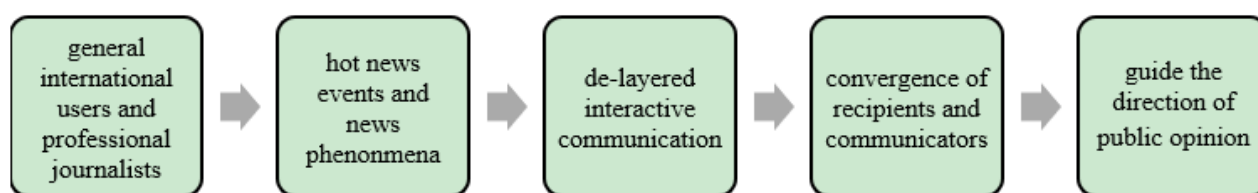


Figure 1. Analysis of the dissemination process of Internet buzzwords under Lasswell's "5W" theory

2.2 Classification of Internet Buzzwords

In response to the proliferation of Internet buzzwords, scholars have categorized them into four categories: harmonic form, synthetic form, new use of old words as well as borrowed forms [5]; Zhao Yiyue divided them into news events, netizens' own creation, dialect derivation, and cultural entertainment according to their sources, and into types such as acrimonious, emotional catharsis, and spirit of the times according to their emotional orientation [6]. After integrating the relevant literature, the author found that other domestic scholars basically agree with the above views.

2.3 The Development Law of the Spread of Internet Buzzwords

Internet buzzwords are a dynamic process of change from emergence to outbreak, and some scholars have summarized the development and dissemination laws of Internet buzzwords from the development process of Internet buzzwords. Li Biao proposed that the life cycle of network information dissemination can be divided into six stages: latency period, outbreak period, spreading period, repeated period, remission period, and long tail period [7]; Wang Hao stated that according to the length of the latency period, outbreak period, and spreading period in the life cycle of network buzzword dissemination, network buzzwords can be divided into "accumulative" and "emergent" according to the length of the latency, eruption, and spread periods in the life cycle of Internet buzzwords [8]. Using the Baidu index as a research tool, this paper observed the development of the

term "meta-universe" and found that stage A is the latency period, stage B is the outbreak period, stage C is the spread period, stage D reaches the peak of dissemination, stage E is the recurrence period, and stage F G H is the remission period and long tail period, which is in line with Li Biao's view. Meanwhile, by observing the length of the latency, outbreak, and spreading periods of the term "meta-universe", according to Wang Hao's view, the Internet buzzword "meta-universe" is consistent with the "accumulative" Internet Figure 2.

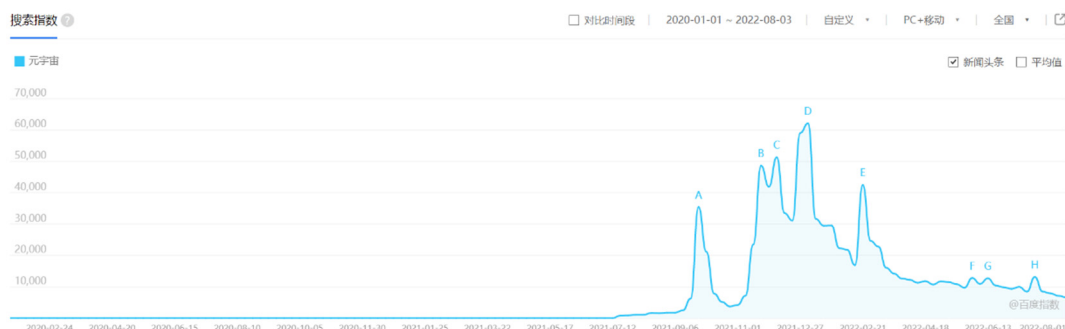


Figure 2. The development pattern of "meta-universe" in "Baidu index"

2.4 Characteristics of Internet Buzzwords

As an emerging online language, Wang Xiaoning argues that Internet buzzwords has the characteristics of condensation, fast dissipation, and integration compared with traditional languages [9]; Chen Yanman hold the opinion that it is a unique linguistic phenomenon with multiple styles, reflecting the characteristics of being frank and natural, highly condensed, rich in meaning, and meaningful in harmony [10]. Based on the research of domestic scholars, this paper advocates that Internet buzzwords have five characteristics: high generality, easy transmission, wave fading, emotional expression, and group aggregation.

3. Reasons for the Creation of Internet Buzzwords

3.1 User Perspective: Internet Users Recreate to Give Emotional Appeal

As a channel for the "post-90s" and "post-00s" Internet natives to express their emotions and convey their feelings, the Internet platform has added original power to the development of Internet buzzwords. Among the Internet buzzwords in 2021, "躺平" expresses the emotional anxiety of the younger generation's lives full of pressure and is also a reflection of youth subculture. According to the following chart, individuals can easily find that most of the Internet buzzwords expressing emotional tendencies reflect the emotional demands of young people, showing their dissatisfaction with their current situation, expectations for the future, and attitudes towards social opinions.

Table 1. Total Internet buzzwords with emotional tendencies in recent years

Year	Emotionally inclined words
2021	YYDS; 破防; 绝绝子; 躺平; 伤害性不高, 侮辱性极强; 我看不懂, 但我大受震撼
2020	奥利给, 好家伙
2019	柠檬精; 好嗨哟; 雨女无瓜; 996
2018	杠精, 佛系, 皮一下
2017	你的良心不会痛吗? 扎心了, 老铁, 还有这种操作? 油腻

In addition to the creation of Internet buzzwords as an outlet for emotion, Internet users also recreate popular languages, refreshing the scope of Chinese expression and broadening the possibilities of language. Take "破防" as an example. The original meaning of "break defense" is to break down the defense. It is mostly used in the game to break through the opponent's defense and

make him lose his defensive ability. But after the netizen's re-creation, the original word count is compressed and the meaning is changed to the emotional impact after encountering something or seeing some information, the inner depths are touched, and the psychological defense is broken. The re-creation of language by Internet users has given birth to a unique cultural genealogy in the Internet era, challenging the issue of language regulation in the network ecology and showing a unique brand of the times.

3.2 Media Environment: Self-Media Platforms Help Promote Hot Words

With the development of the web 3.0 era, the production of content has changed from portals to personal portals, i.e., user-to-user dissemination has been generated, and content production has developed to an era where professional and user content coexist [11]. In self-media platforms such as TikTok and Auto Quicker, users generate video material with pan-entertainment and wide dissemination by processing the original videos and giving them new connotations. Take the 2019 online buzzword "好嗨哦" as an example. Before it was widely spread, it was only used as a verbal phrase in people's daily lives, mostly referring to the tone of voice to express inner emotions. However, its eponymous Internet song was adapted by short video artists and supplemented by a very magical performance, which made many people compete to imitate it and broaden the original scope of dissemination. "XX" has become a popular Internet buzzword from the original verbal language, fully reflecting the processing and promotion of the original material by short videos and other media products, and with the help of the self-media platform to spread the radiation, to help increase the heat of the Internet buzzword.

3.3 Key Figures: Online Opinion Leaders Enhance Communication Effectiveness

Numerous self-media platforms have cultivated a group of online opinion leaders with a fan base who provide their own insights on key issues and guide public opinion. Jiang Ke mentioned in the law of network buzzword communication that Chrisma communication, originally meaning the reverence for religious prophets and war heroes, later evolved into a kind of idol communication in cyberspace, and the study found that the participation of famous people in the communication process would lead to a geometric increase in the communication effect and produce a grand communication effect [12].

In recent years, the short video program "Anchor Talking" was launched by the China Central Television, in which the hosts deliver mainstream voices in layman's language in the form of short videos of a few minutes, combined with the news hotspots of the day. The hosts use short videos in the form of short minutes to convey the mainstream voice in popular language, such as "打call" and "强国有我." By adopting and quoting the Internet buzzwords, the official media gives them a positive meaning, which is different from the previous serious news with grand and obscure narratives, and is more interesting, making people more willing to accept them.

In addition to the official online opinion leaders, there are also grassroots netizens who exist for the people. They attract the attention of netizens through funny and interesting short videos and have high user viscosity, becoming the key node for the spread of Internet buzzwords. Internet buzzwords such as "奥力给" and "集美" are the results of grassroots weblebrities as Internet opinion leaders spreading on the Internet.

3.4 Social Reality: Social Hotspot Guidelines Provide Content Sources

According to Li Mengqing's research, the social functions played by Internet buzzwords are mainly focused on "issue reinforcement," "public opinion expression," and "personality expression." The discussion of social hot topics has provided room for the development of Internet buzzwords. Take "双减" as an example. The policy of "double reduction" was introduced in July 2021 to effectively reduce the excessive burden of homework and out-of-school training on students in compulsory education, which triggered discussions among netizens at once. Internet users expressed their views

on the "double reduction" policy through various channels, and Internet buzzwords became the epitome of expressing major national policies. Also, they have transformed from the initial entertainment language to the language of public discourse and, at the same time, have built the discourse system and identity of the times, becoming the window for people to understand society and the times.

3.5 Memetics Theory Innovation

Modal fission propagation is an innovative development of Internet buzzwords, which makes the type of Internet buzzwords richer and more comprehensive. Richard Dawkin, the earliest proponent of the modal theory, pointed out that language imitation is characterized by prolificness, fidelity of reproduction, and longevity. Later, scholar Li Mingyu supplemented the theory of modality by proposing the idea of "word modality". His argument points out that the part that can be created is called the "mode slot" and the stable part is called the "mode mark". This argument has led to the widespread dissemination of online terms with similar modalities [13].

Take the following figure as an example. When the word mode is "XX people", the network buzzwords such as "打工人", "工具人", etc. are extended from it. The modal theory enables the network buzzwords to be constantly recreated, and the target objects are more specific and have the characteristics of a group, which adds the degree of group awareness and group cohesion.

Table 2. Examples of Internet buzzwords related to word models

word mode	Word Basis	Slot	Example
XX人	人	XX("打工")	打工人, 尾款人
XX自由	自由	XX("车厘子")	车厘子自由, 财富自由
XX精	精	XX("柠檬")	柠檬精, 杠精, 蛇精

4. The Multiple Influences of Internet Buzzwords

Internet buzzwords are a reflection of the spiritual outlook of an era and a region as well as a repository of people's emotions for a period of time. Along with the development of Internet buzzwords, positive phenomena such as the expansion of Internet discourse, Internet supervision, and citizen participation have emerged in today's society. At the same time, there are also negative phenomena such as the network vulgar culture and the network digital divide. The paper will describe the social impacts of Internet buzzwords from both positive and negative aspects.

4.1 Channels for Expressing Emotions

According to the theory of "use and satisfaction", the audience is purposeful, and the audience is exposed to the media to satisfy their own needs. Through short videos, Internet users express their inner thoughts to meet their own needs. In today's society, there are social problems such as highly competitive pressure and large number of job finders, which intensify the contradiction between people's desire for a better life and other real needs, and they are in need of channels to express their emotions. For example, "给力" "奥利给" such words are the promotion of social positive energy network buzzwords, they can stimulate the whole society to be virtue and kind. But at the same time, there are also words like "摆烂" "废柴", which mock at the pressure of competition and relieve psychological pressure through self-deprecation and flirtation.

4.2 Role of Public Opinion Monitoring

At the same time, the development of online self-media has made the era of "everyone is a media" come, people can grasp the right to speak, express their views on hot events, and play a supervisory role on hot events. Internet buzzwords are the distillation and summary of hot topics in society, and netizens comment on hot events and put forward suggestions and expectations for future development. From "我爸是李刚" ten years ago to "反腐" and "打老虎" nowadays, we can see the impact of the

formation of Internet buzzwords on social opinion and people's increasing pursuit of fairness. Since the outbreak of the new epidemic in 2020, Internet buzzwords such as "cloud supervisor", "infrastructure maniac" and "dynamic zero" have emerged, reflecting the ownership spirit of citizens who are concerned about national issues. The buzzwords have been “云监工”“基建狂魔”“动态清零” since the outbreak of the new crown epidemic in 2020, reflecting citizens' ownership of national issues.

4.3 Spoofing Tendency of Internet Culture

Liang Xinyi proposed the term "spoof subculture," which refers to the vulgarized and pan-entertaining processing of short videos on the Internet to express freedom of expression and to satisfy people's selfish desires [14]. The spoofing subculture has existed from ancient times to the present, but in the Internet era it mainly reflects the characteristics of under-aged and vulgarized Internet users. Liang Xinyi points out that spoof subculture is a kind of pan-entertainment, a kind of reliance on mutual spoof communication in online communities, and a channel to release emotions nowadays.

Spoofing subculture is a kind of culture that is willing to denigrate others in order to express one's emotions, which can lead to social disorder and negative social value orientation. The spoof subculture makes rumors appear out of thin air, and sometimes the phenomenon of "rumors open their mouths, and rumors run out of legs." The emergence of children of a young age staging clips of dirt on self-media platforms, as well as the defamation of other people's reputations, is not conducive to the spread of social culture, and may even be illegal and criminal.

4.4 The Trend of Widening Knowledge Gap

In the current development of the Internet, the gap between different circles of knowledge is widening. Take "YYDS" as an example. The younger generation of Internet natives translate it as "always dropping God", but the famous actor Yu Hwei understands it as "always single".

Yuan Yue divides the knowledge gap into three categories: the attitude gap; the generation gap between groups; and the generation gap between old and new buzzwords. The attitudinal gap is reflected by the different emotional expressions of netizens towards social hotspots; the group generation gap is reflected by the different understanding of Internet buzzwords by older people and younger people; and the generation gap of old and new buzzwords is reflected by the inappropriate understanding of the endless Internet buzzwords [15]. In a word, due to different ages, different cognitive levels, and different circles, people's understanding of Internet buzzwords is biased, and the gap in knowledge between people is widening. In this process, artificial intelligence and big data push single-channel messages, which are prone to the phenomenon of "information cocoon" and polarization of opinions.

5. Deep Thoughts on the Spread of Internet Buzzwords

5.1 Digging Deeper into the Depth of Self-Media Thinking

In the era of "traffic-oriented" to attract attention, there are self-media platforms selling anxiety to create public opinion topics. In response to the phenomenon of "funeral culture" and "poor culture" on self-media platforms, self-media should focus not only on the sickness of netizens but also on the reasons for their emotions, and provide solace and answers to their emotions. Self-media should play the role of guiding public opinion, calmly analyze its social impact, dig deeper into its meaning, and call for or lead community groups to act rationally and objectively.

5.2 Clarifying the Boundary of Netizen Supervision

In response to the phenomenon that netizens' supervision causes obstruction of judicial order and rumors, netizens should properly exercise their rights and obligations on the network platform. In the era of "everyone is a media", the relevant network security departments should stipulate the rights

and obligations of netizens, enhance the sense of responsibility of netizens in cyberspace, and fulfill the corresponding obligations while netizens have the right to speak, do not fabricate false information out of thin air, and grasp the boundary of network supervision. Cyberspace is not a place outside the law and needs to be taken seriously by netizens.

5.3 Unleashing the Media Agenda Setting

In response to the phenomenon of spoofing subculture, the official media should adopt agenda-setting to guide public opinion. The official media can use some positive and positive Internet buzzwords, such as "破圈" and "后浪"; for some negative xxxx, they can change the original meaning and give a positive and optimistic meaning, such as "fight" or example, the original meaning of "worker" refers to high pressure, low labor income, difficult working conditions, etc., but it can be quoted by People's Daily to give it a positive meaning of "becoming the master of life through one's own efforts" [16]. As the "gatekeeper" of news events, the media should seriously deal with vulgarized and pan-entertaining Internet buzzwords, so that they can really become witnesses to the changes of the times and be used in people's daily lives.

5.4 Bridging the Digital Divide

In response to the phenomenon of knowledge divide mentioned above, "digital poverty alleviation" is carried out at the material level, i.e., the government influences the local Internet ecology by changing the regional digital ecology, so that more people can enjoy the right to access the Internet [17]; At the intergenerational communication level, "knowledge feed-back" is advocated, i.e., the emerging Internet buzzwords are told by the children's group to the father's group, so that the children and the father's generation are connected. Internet buzzwords are a sign of the development of the times, and it is important to narrow the knowledge gap as much as possible and feel the unique charm of "word media."

6. Summary

With the emergence of diverse self-media platforms, the contents and forms of Internet buzzwords are constantly replenished, changed, and developed, and have their own unique rules of communication development. The production of Internet buzzwords is not only limited to news but has also expanded to many media products; the dissemination stage of Internet buzzwords has also changed from the initial single form to a composite form. Internet buzzwords influence people's lives and social changes in various ways and record the changes of the times with the characteristics of condensation and vulgarity. However, there are still phenomena of vulgar spoofing and knowledge gaps that need to be filled. Internet users should consciously promote the standardization, popularization, and practical development of network buzzwords, promote positive social energy, reflect the reality of social life, truly become a mirror of social life and promote the healthy development of cyberspace.

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