

Narrowing the Gap between Professionalism and Popularity: An Empirical Investigation on Community Question Answering

TREO Talk Paper

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Abstract

The ubiquity and inexpensiveness of Web 2.0 services have transformed the landscape of how popular science is published and spread online. For science popularization, the gap between professionalism and popularity has been a rooted problem that people are always trying to solve. Through second-hand data analysis, scenario-based survey study and a lab experiment, this study investigated how to alleviate the professionalism-popularity paradox using various textual devices, trying to help contents to gain professionalism as well as popularity, thereby popularizing professional science in a more efficient way.

Our empirical results indicate that structural means as using choppy paragraph structure, semantic means as employing humor can enhance text-based comprehensibility, therefore enhance content popularity. However, while choppy paragraph structure have no impact on content professionalism, humor actually negatively affect professionalism. In addition, semantic means of displaying confidence, using citation and illustrating with cases can increase text-based credibility, which significantly enhance online popularization professionalism. Among them, displaying confidence and illustrating with cases significantly enhance content popularity at the same time. Our study contributes to the literature on science popularization, knowledge management and user-generated content (UGC). It also offers important practical implications to science writers, managers of online knowledge community, as well as the public readers.