

# Game Live as Rich Medium and Rebel: Analysis on the Influence of China's Game Live on Video Games

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**Abstract:** In recent years, the game live industry develops rapidly. The influence of game lives on video game is worth studying. This paper analyzes the influence of China's video game lives on video game from two perspectives: video game live as a rich medium and video game live as a rebel. Video game live is a kind of rich medium; they play an important role in attracting users, expanding influence, improving user loyalty and improving their own media attributes. As a rebel, video game lives are conducive to the diversified development of the video game industry, and can improve the dominant position of game users in the video game industry system. However, there are still some shortcomings in video game lives, such as imperfect industry norms, frequent uncivilized behaviors, and legal issues related to copyright.

## 1. Introduction

Game live refers to live video streaming which broadcasts in network platform and takes video games as the main content. At present, the main contents of China's game live include official game live broadcast, daily game live broadcast and original variety show derived from the game, such as Werewolf Killing and Panda Kill. The broadcaster who live on the game platform is called as the anchor. China's game live broadcasting industry is mainly hosted by professional electronic sports players, non professional Internet celebrity game users, grassroots game users, star game users and so on. With the game live market entering a mature period, China's game live industry chain has become more and more perfect. At present, China's game live broadcasting industry chain is mainly composed of two industry chains: professional content production and user-made content. Parties involved in the industry include event organizers and IP licensors who have the copyright; event content producers, entertainment variety producers, host broadcasters and E-sports clubs who have the right of content production; game live broadcasting platforms who have the content broadcasting right; sponsors who have the advertising casting right; brokerage companies who have the right to manage non personal hosts' brokerage activities, as well as game live users who have the right to watch. In addition, the Public Security Department, the Internet Information Office, as well as the Sports Department and the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television supervise the content of game lives. On the whole, the video game live industry chain in China has become increasingly perfect. But there are still some problems in supervision, content production and other aspects.

## 2. The Influence of Video Game Live as the Rich Medium on Video Games

According to the concept of Media Richness Theory proposed by Daft and Lengel in 1984, the richness of media information represents the capacity of a channel to transmit information and contents. The richness of media can affect users' choices, the process of communication and the results of their tasks. There are four factors influencing the media richness: the immediacy of feedback, the diversity of clues, personal concern and the diversity of language. Game live broadcast is obviously a rich media. From the perspective of feedback immediacy, the game live anchor and audiences have real-time interaction; audiences can use bullet screens, rewards and

other methods to complete the feedback according to the content provided by the anchor. From the perspective of the diversity of clues, the game live has three clues: the host's explanation, audiences' comments and the evolution of the game. From the perspective of personal concern, game lives have very rich contents and types, which can provide each audience with game live content that meets their interests. From the perspective of language diversity, game live broadcast has many language forms, such as body language, voice, texts, image information and so on. Therefore, referring to factors that affect the media richness, game live can be called a rich medium.

Game live as a rich medium is a bridge between game users and video games. Game live greatly improves the richness of video game information and has important impacts on video games.

### **2.1 Video Game Lives Provide Short Video Promotional Materials for Video Games**

With the continuous development of the game industry and the disappearance of demographic dividend, it is difficult for new users to enter the game industry. In this context, using social media to expand the user base becomes an important way of video game distribution. Social media gather contents through topics to promote video games, among which short videos come from game lives are important contents that can attract audiences. The contents of short videos include teaching game playing, wonderful explanation of the host and brilliant moments in the game competition. The short video game in social media can not only spread among social media users in the game, but also attract the attention of potential game users through topics.

### **2.2 Game Live is Conducive to the Re-Tribalization of Game Users**

Marshall McLuhan summed up the cultural process of human beings as “Tribalization - non Tribalization - re Tribalization”. In the process, the Internet provides important help for “re Tribalization”. Game live uses the richness of information and opens a new platform of re Tribalization for game users. Before the live broadcast, main game user tribes include the “team tribe” and the “community tribe”. The characteristics of the “team tribe” are high organization, low openness and high concentration; “community tribe” has low organization, high openness and low concentration. As live audiences, game users form a “live tribe” in the broadcasting room. Compared with the “team tribe” formed in the game, the “live tribe” is highly open; compared with the “community tribe” formed in the game forum or social media, the “live tribe” has high degree of concentration and organization. High openness is reflected in the fact that the game live room is an open platform, which can be accessed by any user; high organization is reflected in that “live tribe” is essentially a fan organization of a certain anchor or game, which generally has a unified name. The high concentration is reflected in that members of any “live tribe” choose to join the tribe based on their interests in a certain game or a class of games. Re Tribalization based on live broadcast platform plays an important role in enhancing the loyalty of game users.

### **2.3 Game Live Creates Kol for Video Games**

KOL (Key Opinion Leader) plays an important role in brand marketing. In the field of video games, especially in the field of online games, their influence on game users is also very important. The game KOL links the game user group with the official through the live broadcast. On the one hand, they produce contents that users are interested in through the live broadcast platform and improve the influence of the game; on the other hand, they use live broadcast contents to explain game rules, skills and other related information, which can help game users to better understand the game and improve players' activeness. For example, players generally believe that they can learn game playing skills through watching game live. In a survey of game users of Honor of Kings among college students in Shandong Province, 41.75% of 388 interviewees think that their purpose of watching game live is to learn game playing experience. Video game lives can create KOL for video games. These leaders can generally establish influence matrix and are active in various social media platforms such as Weibo, Wechat and QQ. They do not only display themselves, but also increase the influence of video games.

## **2.4 Video Game Lives Enhance the Media Value of Video Games**

As a digital media product, video game not only has the function of game, but also has the property of media. Video game lives play a role in improving the media properties of video games, making it an important promotion platform for other brands, and enriching the form of game implant advertising. The implant advertising forms in the game live broadcast include the implant advertising (text and picture) in the game itself, the implant advertising (text, picture, sound and physical form) in the official event, the implant advertising (picture, text and sound) in the daily live broadcast, and the implant advertising (text, image and sound) in the derivative variety show. Among them, the original variety column derived from the game produced by the official event live broadcast and live broadcast platform can provide rich advertising implantation space for other brands, which can be comparable to the important platform of embedded advertising in traditional media: TV. Moreover, the frequency and intensity of these advertising are far more than those of the text and picture advertising in the past. Through this, video game lives enhance the value of video games as a kind of media.

## **2.5 Video Game Lives Enhance Narrative Richness and Improve the Story Appealing of Video Games**

The story of video games is an important factor that attracts game users. Video game lives can enhance the story appealing of video games by enhancing narrative richness. From the perspective of story clues, the video game itself has two story lines: one is the story line set by the game world view, and the other is the story line developed with the user's playing and the game process changing. Both of the two clues are presupposed and predictable. The video game live adds two narrative lines to the video game. One is the story line established by the host's narration and the user's response, and the other is the story line established by audiences' bullet screen communication. These two story lines are random and interactive. From the perspective of the story, game users can turn from the subjective perspective to a collaborative and objective perspective; independent game have more contents after being watched through the game live platform. For non social games, game live can also construct the social attributes of the game for users in the process of watching other people's video. From the perspective of character image, the live broadcast of the game transforms the character image in the game, especially the hero image, into the image of professional player or anchor; it combines the imagination space with the reality space, and enhances the sense of reality. Video game lives enhance the story appealing of video games by enriching perspectives, plots and images. They can improve the randomness, interactivity and authenticity of the game, thus enhancing the attraction to game users.

## **3. The Influence of Video Game Lives as Rebel on Video Games**

### **3.1 Video Game Lives Help to Keep the Diversity of Video Games**

According to the *2017 China Game Industry Development Report* jointly released by the Information Center of China Culture and Entertainment Industry Association and China Entertainment Think Tank (Entbrains) on November 28, in terms of product types, the mainstream game types in the market remain stable. The market share of role-playing and leisure puzzle games is more than 50%, and the strategy games rank third. In 2017, more than 16000 new mobile games were launched. In the first half of 2017, the top three types of mobile games were: 31% for leisure, 27% for role playing and 14% for strategy. The maturity of the game industry system leads to the convergence of game types and destroys the diversified development of games.

In this context, video game live, as a rebel in the electronic game industry system, provides a communication platform for non mainstream games and users. In the game live platform, there are not only popular types of game lives, but also classic and non popular games, such as mine sweeping, Contra and Gluttonous Snake. The game live platform provides a living space for non mainstream games and a platform for non mainstream game users to communicate, which is conducive to the diversified development of games.

### 3.2 Game Lives Keep the Dominant Position of Game Users

Video game seems to be born with original sin. The violence in the game, the negative impact of the game on teenagers and other issues have always been the focus of attention. According to Dallas Smythe's Audience Commodity Theory, the audience does not only spend time and money to realize the use value of media products, but also indirectly pay the advertising value of products to the media for advertisers, but they themselves "do not get the reward for this kind of labor in time". In video games, game users spend money to buy games and spend time to play games. They are sold by game manufacturers for two times, and need to watch game placement ads passively. Game users have been playing a passive role in the system of game and video game industry, and have become "game workers" under the system of digital capitalism. But game live transforms them into active audiences and supports game users to "resist". Although the "resist" seems not so powerful, it is still worthy of attention. In the game live broadcast, audiences still spend time watching the live broadcast and spend money to reward. They are sold for the second time to watch the implant advertisement. However, in these links, the audience has certain initiative. For example, they can choose whether to reward or not; they can express their opinions in the form of bullet screens. The economic beneficiary of game live broadcasting is no longer just the game manufacturer; the host also becomes the beneficiary. It is worth noting that the host itself is also composed of game users. Therefore, ordinary users of video game lives can get the initiative; heavy users can get material and spiritual benefits. From this point of view, video game lives improve the dominant position of game users in the electronic game industry system.

### 4. Conclusion

Video game lives provide rich information of video games, which helps to improve the influence, media properties and user loyalty of video games. On the one hand, the development of game live has injected new vitality into the video game industry, which is conducive to the healthy, sustainable and diversified development of the video game industry. On the other hand, it also meets the needs of different types of game users, and provides a good platform for game users to transform from commercialized audiences to active audiences. But there are also some problems in the game live, which are worthy of attention and reflection. First is the frequent occurrence of chaos, which affects the overall image of the video game industry. The field of live broadcasting has attracted a lot of capital. Many anchors are willing to default and change jobs under the inducement of money; disputes between major live broadcasting platforms continue. Second, uncivilized language and behaviors are frequently seen in live broadcast. Third, irrational behaviors of live audience caused by the age and other reasons are frequent. Fourth, the head brand in the game live industry chain have the core contents. At present, content, the most important link in the live broadcast, is still controlled by head brands with strength. Behind these brands, there are capital giants. In the future, the game live broadcast platform may be vertically integrated. The impact of the integration on the game users is unknown. Fifth, there are many legal problems in the game live to be regulated. It is necessary for relevant departments to formulate specific policies to regulate reasonably and improve the social responsibility awareness of the industry; the society should do a good job in guiding game users, especially young users. Different forces need to make joint efforts to promote the positive impact of video game lives on the video game industry and game users, and protect the sound and healthy development of the video game industry.

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