



# Structural Analysis of the Xinhua Information Agency in the 21st Century

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## Abstract

A media company or mass media is a communication channel dedicated to informing its audience about current facts and events. People need to be informed about political, social, economic, local, international, and other events. This information can be used to make business and governmental decisions, to influence the way we see the eyes of the environment we live in, and to allow us to remain cognizant of what is happening in the world. The investigation of the structural and commercial strategies applied by Xinhua during the last 20 years allowed us to reach the main objective of this study, which could reveal a company with a long history of more than 90 years, able to evolve and adapt to its environment, to changes in the media and to new technologies, so as to be able to compete internationally with other institutions in the world. This research has enabled us to find some data of great value to academics in terms of technological breakthroughs generated by media, information agencies and Internet communication technologies.

## Keywords

New, News Service, Media, The Influence of Digital Media on China, Xinhua News Agency, The Impact of Digital Media in China, Other services Provided by Xinhua News Agency, Xinhua News Agency Locations Around the World, Company Financing New Technologies in the Agency

## 1. Introduction

The need for information dates to the origins of civilization, and today news agencies and media must have as table source of information that allows them to keep abreast of every relevant event that concerns their audience, which is why they must be up to date in terms of the content and tools they use, as a way to ensure that communication is updated in a significant way and meets a huge demand.

In this sense, the management of media companies must focus on two basic aspects, the first of which is the speed of information. Since media companies must cover current events as quickly as possible, the race against time is fundamental and most important. On the other hand, media companies should focus on the development of technology, because technology both makes communication more effective and saves time in the transmission and impact of information.

As a result, media companies are very likely to develop a management strategy to make adaptation to the digital environment apriority. Media must adapt to the channels of technological development so that the information consumers want reaches them in the right way, and so people have developed and adapted to every media that has arisen throughout history, from print to radio, television, and now, with the rise of the Internet, digital media.

Today, media is able to gain greater visualization through digital technology, and this is thanks to the develop-

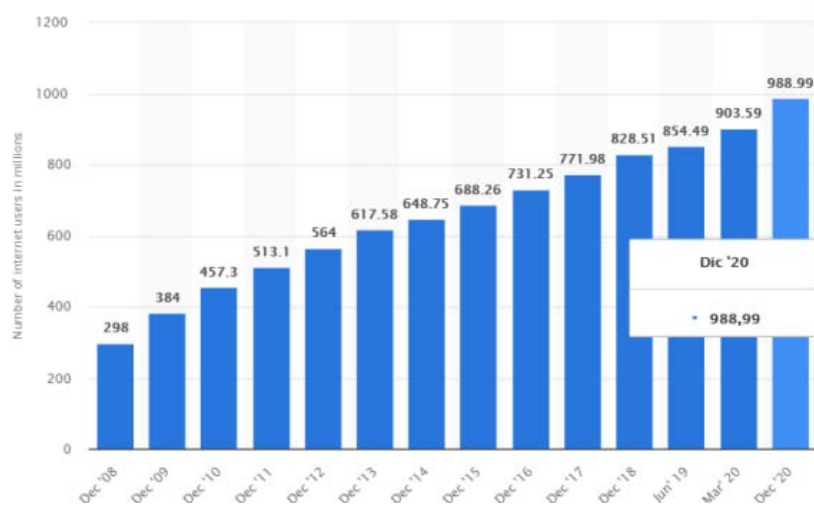
ment of mobile devices. It allows users to access information and manage it from almost anywhere. It also enables greater information reach as a way to find information in real time. This allows these media to be accessed worldwide, which means that their messages not only reach more people within a specific territory, region or country, but they can also be disseminated globally.

This study focuses on one of the most important news media in China, the channel through which the international media receives official news from China. The Xinhua News Agency is the news media used by the Chinese government to inform and publicize events within China and to inform the world about events in China. Therefore, understanding how this means of communication works and comparing it with international media will allow us to identify its characteristics and the impact of this means of communication in processing information and disseminating it to other national and international media.

## 2. The influence of Chinese digital media

The growth of Internet connectivity has made life increasingly convenient, allowing users to connect to access more information, communicate from different media and platforms, and be entertained among many other features, which has led to a growing demand for people to connect to the Internet and stay connected. "According to a study by the Chinese government, China now has 802 million active Internet users. And that's equivalent to 57.7 percent of the Chinese nation's population. By comparison, the United States has an estimated 300 million Internet users, or 78.2 percent of the U.S. population." (Azad et al., 2020).

In the last 12 years, the Chinese population with Internet access has grown at an astronomical rate.



Source: Statista, (2021)

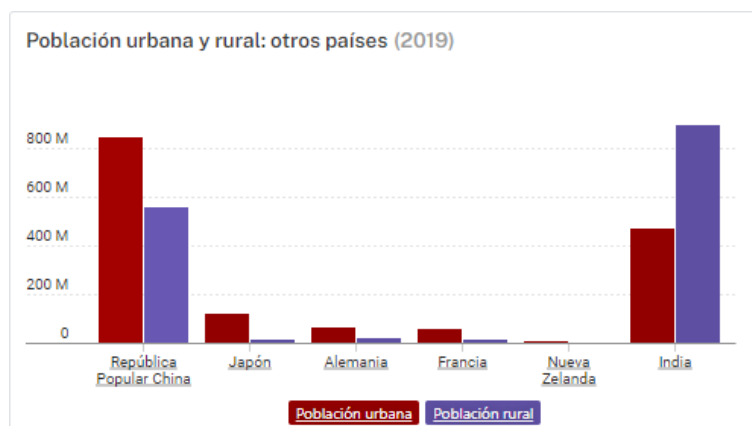
**Figure 1. China Internet users from December 2008 to December 2020 (millions).**

With nearly 989 million Internet users by 2020, China is the world's largest Internet community, but its Internet penetration rate is quite low (59.3%) compared to other countries with smaller populations but greater connectivity, due to the fact that China still has a large rural population that does not have access to the Internet due to lack of infrastructure (Thomala, 2021).

According to Thomala (2021), China lags far behind neighboring countries such as South Korea and Japan that have more than 90% Internet usage, but overall, China is still the largest market by number of connected users.

"While China doesn't yet have the same market penetration, it has the potential for much greater growth. What's even more interesting is the incredible acceptance of mobile devices in China. 98% of Chinese who use the Internet do so via mobile devices. This compares to only 73% in the US. This makes social media in China more immediate and dynamic, with mobile device users able to find the latest recommendations, reviews and advice on platforms such as WeChat and Weibo" (Azad et al., 2020).

In this sense, the impact of social media, the use of the Internet, mobile devices and everything related to digital media has a huge upside, which is why the market in China is very focused on the digital approach.



Source: Data Commons (2021) Data from [datacatalog.worldbank.org](https://datacatalog.worldbank.org) 2 China's rural population is second only to India's rural population, due to the huge percentage of the population living in China's large cities, more than 800 million Chinese in urban areas, and nearly 590 million Chinese citizens in rural areas, some of which have Internet access and many of which do not.

**Figure 2. Urban and rural population in China and other countries (2019).**

However, not all is good, as in some cases young people become addicted to using the tools provided by the Internet, digital media, social media and new technologies, leading them to spend far more time in the digital sphere than in their daily lives. Therefore, while sharing important information and becoming media as an excellent medium for entertainment, business and many other activities, irresponsible use of these media can have a negative impact on consumers (Azad et al., 2020).

The development of Internet connectivity is so important for Chinese people and tourists that free WI-FI connections are being developed in different facilities and consumer places, such as in hotels in big cities and tourist towns. They provide consumers with on-site connectivity and are even capable of faster connections via Ethernet. At the same time, places like restaurants, cafes and resting places also offer free WI-FI to their customers (Song, 2021).

Thus, like many parts of the world, China has expanded Wi-Fi Internet access as a complement to consumer demand, from cruise ships on the Yangtze River, high-speed trains, and other modes of transportation, which gives users greater connectivity, access to information, and continuity of connection (Song, 2021).

### 3. Xinhua News Agency

Xinhua is one of the oldest news agencies, with a history of almost 90 years, and its official headquarters in Beijing and offices in different cities around the world, including Madrid, Barcelona, Hong Kong, Moscow, Cairo, Brussels, New York, Mexico City and Nairobi (AEEPP, 2017).

It is one of the most influential media in China and a news agency that provides information to mainstream media worldwide.

Xinhua is considered by international communication scholars to be one of the most influential newspapers in China (Beaudoin, 2007). Moreover, they regard Xinhua and "official propaganda" as synonymous (Cheng & Pot-seng, 2010).

In China, the agency has a print format and media in several different languages, as well as an extensive digital presence for all major countries and regions of the world.

With more than 10,000 staff members in more than 170 representatives worldwide, the agency delivered more than 4,500 news articles in more than 11 languages, covering more than 200 countries worldwide.

"It has more than 20 daily newspapers and a dozen magazines, printed in eight languages. It delivers more than 4,500 daily in various languages (Chinese, English, Spanish, Arabic, Russian and Portuguese). Its website, Xinhuanet, has 16 editions for China, Europe, Africa, North America, Spain, Portugal, Germany), is published in 11 languages and covers 200 countries (AEEPP, 2017).

This news agency is an organization that collects, writes and distributes world news from China or world events to newspapers, periodicals, other media such as radio and television, government agencies and other subscribers. In this way, this agency publishes news and provides information to subscribers. All media outlets rely on this organization for most news from China, even those few that also have extensive news gathering resources of their own.

(Xin, 2012).

Xinhua is headquartered in Beijing and has 33 branches in all Chinese provinces, autonomous regions, municipalities directly under the Central Government, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and Macau Special Administrative Region, as well as a correspondent in Taiwan Province (Xin, 2012).

The news agency started to establish its main official headquarters in 2000 and until 2013 it was established in all major regions of the world, collecting information from those places and relaying it to Chinese and international media in other parts of the world, becoming an information link between Chinese society and those citizens and countries interested in events in China and the world.



Source: Retrieved from stepmap.com (2013)

**Figure 3. Xinhua News Agency locations around the world.**

With a multilingual, multimedia, multi-channel, multi-level and multi-functional news distribution system, Xinhua News Agency can provide a range of information products to a wide range of customers, including different types of news and financial information in the form of text, pictures, exclusive photos, audio-visual content, and the ability to transmit via mobile devices, using new technologies and in a large number of different languages.

Nationally and internationally, the agency distributes information to different media, but it also has a national print media of its own, combining more than 20 newspapers and magazines, which have a circulation of more than 10 million copies per day (AEEPP, 2017).

#### 4. Chinese Service:

- Overseas Service Chinese News

"These services include 'Focus on China,' 'Economic Insights,' 'Cultural Perspectives,' and 'Social.'" All About Chinese Abroad and a series of engaging columns that publish an average of more than 300 articles a day.

- Asia-Pacific Chinese News Service

"The service publishes an average of more than 300 articles per day, focusing on domestic news in China, world events and news related to the Asia-Pacific region."

Source: China Chamber of Commerce, (2020)

Due to the large population of China, spread all over the world, this newsletter will present professional content in Chinese to the media and readers in the Asia-Pacific region and within China.

#### 5. Overseas Service News:

- Xinhua News Agency English Newsletter

"This important and popular English-language news service publishes an average of about 400-500 articles per day, updated 24hours a day through editorial offices in Beijing, Hong Kong, Cairo, Nairobi and New York."

- Asia Pacific English News Service

"The service publishes an average of more than 500 articles perday, focusing on domestic news in China, world events and news related to the Asia-Pacific region."

Source: China Chamber of Commerce, (2020)

English-language newsletters and news services are focused on media based in China, Asia and the Pacific, where there is a large number of English-language print media, and these services enable them to report and deliver content to English-language publishers and media in these regions, including cities such as New York in the United States and Cairo, Nairobi and other areas in Africa and the Middle East.

Depending on the regions in which they operate, they offer different services, adapted to the conditions in which they operate and based on the demand for content and format. As a result, news organizations show a wide range of adaptability and segmentation in the services they offer according to region, offering a volume of content in different languages according to region, making the content they produce, the information they disseminate and the data they present to the world more specialized.

## 6. News services in other languages and different regions

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• French News Service</li> </ul> <p>"This French-language service publishes an average of 160 texts and about 50-70 photos per day, focusing on national news from China, world events, and news related to French-speaking countries and regions."</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spanish News Service</li> </ul> <p>"The service publishes an average of 240 articles and about 50-70 photos per day, focusing on national news from China, world events and news related to Spanish-speaking countries and regions."</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arabic News Service</li> </ul> <p>"The Arabic service publishes an average of 200 texts and 20 photos per day, focusing on domestic news in China, world events and news related to Arabic-speaking countries and regions." The service also targets market demand in the Middle East, publishing an average of one to two special reports and features per day."</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Russian News Service</li> </ul> <p>"Russian Service" publishes an average of 100 texts and about 30 photos per day, focusing on national news from China, major world events and news related to Eastern European countries, Russia and other CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) member states.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• China Africa English News Agency</li> </ul> <p>"This increasingly important service publishes an average of 400-500 articles per day, focusing on domestic news in China, world events, and especially news related to African countries."</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Portuguese News Service</li> </ul> <p>"The service publishes an average of 45 stories per day, focusing on domestic news in China, world events and news related to Portuguese-speaking countries."</p>

Source: China Chamber of Commerce, (2020)

## 7. Other services provided by Xinhua News Agency

The agency provides different forms of information, including text, audiovisual images, which are disseminated through various channels to major publishers and media in China and around the world, providing specialized services ranging from sports photography and economic information to information on events related to the Silk Road.

The main special services offered by the agency include the following.

- Overseas Photography and Mapping Services
  - General Wired Photography Services
  - Sports Photography Services
- Audio and video services
- Foreign Economic Information Products
  - China Economic Information Service (Chinese)
  - China Economic Information Service (English)-CEI
  - Oil, gas and petrochemicals in China
- Xinhua Silk Road Products
  - Weekly Belt and Road
  - Xinhua Silk Road Database
- Research or Consulting Source: China Chamber of Commerce, (2020)



## 8. History of Xinhua News Agency

The news agency has a long history of reporting in China, starting in November 1931, and has evolved from the beginning to the end, adapting to the changes in the management of the press as Chinese politics have evolved. According to the Spanish Association of Periodical Editors (2017), “The agency was born 86 years ago, in November 1931, when it was called the Red China Agency (New Red China Agency), and in 1937 it adopted its current name, Xinhua (Newhua). After the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, Xinhua became a news agency of national character” (AEEPP, 2017).

Its foray into the digital world began with the creation of Xinhua in 1997 and has since become the foundation of a digital and online news service provided by Xinhua News Agency. The service is responsible for distributing news and collecting information on a global scale. The agency has three main names and its digital domain names are: xinhuanet.com, xinhua.org y news.cn.

The company's growth in digital media has enabled it to establish a presence in different countries and become one of the leading information media for digital networks.

Xinhua is the leading news website in China and one of the most influential websites in the world. Xinhua is ranked 160th out of 108 million global websites worldwide. This ranking places Xinhua third among the world's news sites, behind the BBC and CNN, but well ahead of Reuters, the Associated Press and AFP. Xinhua's mission is to “propagate China and report the world” (Cheng & Potseng, 2010).

Currently, China News Service maintains contact with international media, sending news announcements and press releases on major political, social, scientific and technological developments and events in China.

## 9. Company financing

The company currently has a hybrid funding system based on resources received from commercialization of information and state subsidies, however, prior to this change, it was funded by the Chinese government, which created a high dependency on and state influence over the Chinese Ministry of Information.

“Xinhua has yet to fully achieve financial its political independence from state subsidies” (Xin, 2012). The commoditization process that Xinhua has undergone over the past four decades has led to a mixed financing model. In 2016, more than 50% of Xinhua's annual revenue came from Xinhua itself, with the rest coming from state subsidies (Xin, 2016). And this mixed financing model has been widely adopted by Chinese state-owned media over the past 40 years (Xin, 2018).

However, the news agency has developed a financial strategy that allows it to partially decouple itself from the Chinese government, which allows it to compete more with international institutions around the world. By going public and opening it up to investors, Xinhua was able to access some of its capital through this channel, which allowed the agency to be managed as a profit-seeking company, increasing its value and enabling it to increase the resources it could manage.

This aspect of commercialization is based on Xinhua's independence from the main Xinhua News Agency, and thanks to this funding model and its worldwide presence through its different international headquarters, Xinhua has established its own staff and digital development (Xin, 2018).

According to Cheng and Potseng (2010), this type of management puts the agency at the top of the heap internationally. And because of the volume of news and the size of its news network, it sets it apart from other news agencies.

## 10. Digital Presence

Xinhua has an extensive digital presence and information management, providing information in more than 200 countries in major languages including Chinese, English, Spanish, French, Russian and Arabic, with more than 80 million visitors per day (Cheng & Potseng, 2010).

The company has three main portals, and they have been consolidated into a single portal that, thanks to technological advances, can identify from which part of the planet a user is connecting and assign a language appropriate to the location of the connection. In this way, the news company shows a strong interest in its readership and the regions where it is located, which at the same time demonstrates the company's strong news network..

In these three portals, we find:

Xinhuanet.com

It is the official news portal and provides information by different categories:

News: China, World, Business, Culture, Education, Sports, Technology, Health & Entertainment.

Regions: Asia and the Pacific, Americas, Europe, Africa, World Organization and North America.

Xinhua.org

This is the official website of the agency, and it will be redirected to the English news page. Therefore, it is designed for international news consumers.

News.cn

This is a Chinese news page related to Xinhua News Agency, presenting information in Chinese, a page suitable for domestic consumers but not for international consumers.

## 11. Social Media

The site also has social media in the Western world through which it promotes its news and related information published worldwide. It has official pages, but also pages published in different languages and regions, by different topics, differentiating the subjects according to the interests of the readers.

### ● FACEBOOK:

On this social media, the news agency has two main certified accounts, the first is Xinhua News @Xinhua9 and the second is Xinhua Sports @xhsports.



Source: Facebook.com

**Figure 4. China Xinhua News Agency.**

Rated 4.7 out of 5 by 1,417 users, this page presents the latest news information in the international context and in the Chinese context, offering various types of news, the page offers translations in the available languages, depending on their region, through Facebook's functionality.

A total of 70,579,473 people liked the page and 70,612,019 people followed it. The management of Facebook pages is a very important operation with a large number of users involved, however, its pages received very few interactions, with 200 interactions on posts and also some posts with less than 30 interactions.

This page is well developed, presenting information such as the address of the main office with a map, contact details and a page linked to the Portuguese version.



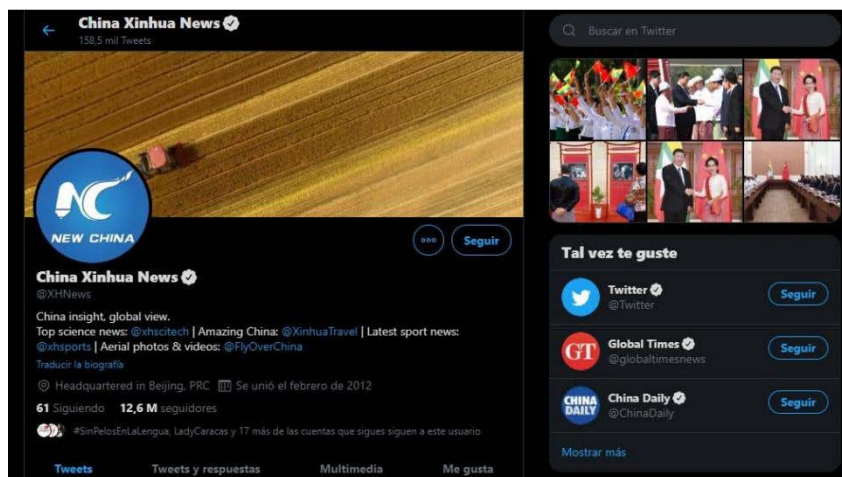
Source: Facebook.com

**Figure 5. China Xinhua News Agency Sports.**

This Facebook page provides news about international sports, especially Chinese sports. It has many fans, with a total of 22,014,972 people liking the page and 22,026,439 people following it. The sports page receives more user interactions than the news page, with an average of more than 300 user interactions.

● **TWITTER:**

When we search on social media, we can find that it is one of the social media with the strongest presence in the West. It is divided by country and region according to importance, showing important connections with countries such as Mexico, Indonesia, Nepal, Germany, Portugal and Romania, and by region according to language, which contains Spanish and has North America and Africa.



Source: Twitter.com

**Figure 6. China Xinhua News Agency.**

The page has 12,616,684 followers, which is not as impressive as the number of followers on Facebook, but still a significant number considering that the network is divided into pages by region and country.

Posts on the page are on a wide range of topics, but there is not much interaction, with many of its posts averaging 20-50 interactions and only a few special news stories with over 300 interactions.

**12. New technologies in the agency**

The Xinhua News Agency has made extensive use of the advances already made in its technological framework, and it has made extensive use of digital technology for its communications. Thus, the information it transmits to the media can come from different parts of the world, and this information is transmitted in the different formats allowed by digital media, speeding up the dissemination process and expanding the means of distribution of this information.



The format used by news agencies:

- Email:

Most of the news agency's information management is handled by e-mail. Although e-mail is a simple tool, it can deliver different types of messages and uses an encrypted format, so the following information can be delivered through this channel:

**Text messaging with news content:** Sometimes information is transmitted in the form of briefing notes that describe important data that must be provided in order to inform about changes that have occurred, so text messaging remains the largest source of information today.

**Press releases written by the main people involved, such as events, companies:** A press release issued by a company, government or institution in a region can be efficiently emailed from the news agency to the main media in China and around the world, thus establishing a direct link with the interested party. Promoting their press release will be able to influence more media and the news agency will also provide information to the media it works with.

**Archival images:** Archival images are records held by news organizations of events that have already occurred, but they may be relevant to other events in the future, so that when a media outlet wants information about events that have already occurred, it can relate them to what is happening now. Mail can allow the sending of these saved files, which can be videos, photos, and other types of multimedia files.

Photos of recent events and breaking news since not all media outlets have correspondents in every part of the world, the agency is able to obtain information locally and disseminate it, providing photos of events in all regions of the world, including China.

**Infographics:** Often, messages require a picture or picture explanation, and these elements can be easily delivered to the media via email.

**Charts and statistics:** The news agency's development of statistics and charts gives the media information that has already been processed, enabling them to speed up the publishing process.

Video and audiovisual content that can show images of events, interviews, elaborate reports, and more.

Voice and recording Email allows the transfer of large amounts of data and information, helps to establish more efficient and orderly communication, allows for a history of messages sent and received, and allows for the attachment of different types of data.

- Telephone service:

The news agency also provides a telephone service with updates, announcements and interviews, as well as other content related to this media outlet. Self-completion section.

### 13. Conclusion

This research has enabled us to find some data of great value to academics in terms of technological breakthroughs generated by media, information agencies and Internet communication technologies.

The investigation of the structural and commercial strategies applied by Xinhua during the last 20 years allowed us to reach the main objective of this study, which could reveal a company with a long history of more than 90 years, able to evolve and adapt to its environment, to changes in the media and to new technologies, so as to be able to compete internationally with other institutions in the world.

The company demonstrates significant management of resources, both digital and technological, and has formed a significant information network in more than 200 countries around the world, especially those with which China has political, commercial or economic interests. These are one of the main reasons why the agency has a large international presence and has access to direct sources of information from them. In turn, the company has managed to reach more consumers by distributing information to the media in China and around the world, by providing information directly on its portal, by distributing news on social media and other platforms, by using new ICTs in an effective way, and by using them as part of its business and communication strategy.

An evaluation of the digital aspects of the agency revealed that it has managed to establish a better management of expanding its consumers through its presence on the main social media, which it has managed to complement in different languages and target the development of information portals in different regions. It is an information dissemination strategy that managed to benefit its customers and information consumers, improving its management and the information structure that it has.

After analyzing and comparing the agency with Euronews, one of the leading European news agencies, we found

that digital development was a decisive strategy in the evolution of the company's communication system, a fundamental element in the strategy and development of Chinese communication agencies, which, combined with market strategies, stock exchange listings and the search for alternative financing, have made Xinhua an internationally important communication agency.

It is perfectly understandable that its European rival has a significant news network in its own environment, which allows its rival to have a much larger market in this field. However, its rivals present a smaller international development and a smaller reach, in the sense that it can be pointed out that Xinhua's scope could be much larger due to the large number of Chinese digital consumers. However, Xinhua's international structure and its ability to disseminate news in different languages and portals adapted to the region where it is located, gives it a greater international reach, which makes it more similar to a multinational company, an important advantage it has over the average international agency.

After completing the research objectives and conducting a qualitative analysis through interviews, this study reveals the importance of digital media and technology resources as essential tools. However, it is not linked to the constant development of technology, but rather to the management of existing resources. That is, the changes brought about by technology have made certain sectors more stable, and in many ways, less is more. The fact that tools can be kept running efficiently without requiring more investment, even when connected devices are more powerful, improves the profitability of the company, which, after all, seeks benefits in order to be able to continue operating. Thus, this structure of technology-oriented companies, found in this study, presents an important adaptive strategy that has kept it in the information market for almost 90 years and is expected to do so for a long time to come.

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