

# Strategies of Chinese State Media on Twitter

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## Abstract

How do state-controlled broadcasters reach foreign publics to engage in public diplomacy in the era of social media? Previous research suggests that features unique to social media, such as the ability to engage in two-way communication with audiences, provide state-controlled broadcasters new opportunities for online public diplomacy. In this paper, we examine what strategies were used by four Chinese state-controlled media outlets on Twitter to reach foreign publics as the Chinese Communist Party worked to expand its public diplomacy and international media outreach efforts. We find that all outlets increased the volume and diversity of content while none engaged in interactive, two-way communication with audiences, and none appeared to artificially inflate their follower count. One outlet, China Global Television Network, made outsized gains in followership, and it differs from the other Chinese outlets in that it was rebranded, it disseminated a relatively lower share of government-mandated narratives pertaining to China, and the tone of its reporting was more negative. These results show that during a period when Chinese state-controlled broadcasters gained followers on Twitter, outlets made limited use of features unique to social media and instead primarily used social media as a broadcast channel.

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## **A Supplemental Information Appendix**

### **A.1 Additional Information on Data and Methods**

#### **A.1.1 Chinese Media Outlet on Twitter**

Name	Link	English	Verified	# Followers	Subsidiary	Level
CGTN from China Media Group	<a href="https://twitter.com/CGTNOfficial">https://twitter.com/CGTNOfficial</a>	Yes	Yes	13M	No	Ministerial
Xinhua	<a href="https://twitter.com/XHNNews">https://twitter.com/XHNNews</a>	Yes	Yes	12M	No	Ministerial
People's Daily	<a href="https://twitter.com/PDChina?">https://twitter.com/PDChina?</a>	Yes	Yes	6.6M	No	Ministerial
China Daily	<a href="https://twitter.com/ChinaDaily">https://twitter.com/ChinaDaily</a>	Yes	Yes	4.1M	No	Vice-Ministerial
Global Times	<a href="https://twitter.com/globaltimesnews">https://twitter.com/globaltimesnews</a>	Yes	Yes	1.8M	No	Vice-Ministerial
CCTV from China Media Group	<a href="https://twitter.com/CCTV">https://twitter.com/CCTV</a>	Yes	Yes	1M	No	Ministerial
China Org	<a href="https://twitter.com/chinaorgcn">https://twitter.com/chinaorgcn</a>	Yes	Yes	1M	No	
China News	<a href="https://twitter.com/Echinanews">https://twitter.com/Echinanews</a>	Yes	Yes	630.4K	No	Vice-Ministerial
CGTN America	<a href="https://twitter.com/cgtnamerica">https://twitter.com/cgtnamerica</a>	Yes	Yes	288.4K	Yes	
Yicai Global	<a href="https://twitter.com/yicaichina">https://twitter.com/yicaichina</a>	Yes	Yes	235.7K	No	
Guangming Daily	<a href="https://twitter.com/Guangming_Daily">https://twitter.com/Guangming_Daily</a>	Yes	Yes	227K	No	Vice-Ministerial
FHM	<a href="https://twitter.com/FHM">https://twitter.com/FHM</a>	Yes	Yes	165.9K	No	
CGTN Africa	<a href="https://twitter.com/cgtnafrica">https://twitter.com/cgtnafrica</a>	Yes	Yes	147.6K	Yes	
Hunan Television	<a href="https://twitter.com/hunantvchina?lang=en">https://twitter.com/hunantvchina?lang=en</a>	Yes	Yes	55.9K	No	
CGTN Europe	<a href="https://twitter.com/CGTNEurope">https://twitter.com/CGTNEurope</a>	Yes	Yes	16.9K	Yes	
South China Morning Post	<a href="https://twitter.com/SCMPNews">https://twitter.com/SCMPNews</a>	Yes	No	973.6K	No	
Xinhua Sports	<a href="https://twitter.com/XHSports">https://twitter.com/XHSports</a>	Yes	No	875.2K	Yes	
Shanghaiist	<a href="https://twitter.com/shanghaiist">https://twitter.com/shanghaiist</a>	Yes	No	225K		
Visit Beijing	<a href="https://twitter.com/VisitBeijingcn">https://twitter.com/VisitBeijingcn</a>	Yes	No	137.4K		
China Xinhua News Sci-Tech	<a href="https://twitter.com/XHscitech">https://twitter.com/XHscitech</a>	Yes	No	98.4K	Yes	
Caixin Media	<a href="https://twitter.com/caixin">https://twitter.com/caixin</a>	Yes	No	87.6K		
SCMP Sport	<a href="https://twitter.com/SCMP_Sport">https://twitter.com/SCMP_Sport</a>	Yes	No	82.7K		
CCTV-9	<a href="https://twitter.com/cctv_world">https://twitter.com/cctv_world</a>	Yes	No	45.2K		
Sina Sports	<a href="https://twitter.com/SinasportsChina">https://twitter.com/SinasportsChina</a>	Yes	No	42.1K		
Xinhua News North America	<a href="https://twitter.com/XHNorthAmerica">https://twitter.com/XHNorthAmerica</a>	Yes	No	35.4K		
ShanghaiEye	<a href="https://twitter.com/ShanghaiEye">https://twitter.com/ShanghaiEye</a>	Yes	No	32.3K		
China Culture	<a href="https://twitter.com/Chinacultureorg">https://twitter.com/Chinacultureorg</a>	Yes	No	24K		
ChinaStock Express	<a href="https://twitter.com/ChinaStock">https://twitter.com/ChinaStock</a>	Yes	No	20.1K		
Time Out Beijing	<a href="https://twitter.com/BeijingTimeOut">https://twitter.com/BeijingTimeOut</a>	Yes	No	6905		
Qiushi	<a href="https://twitter.com/QiushiJournal">https://twitter.com/QiushiJournal</a>	Yes	No	6601	No	
Economic Observer	<a href="http://twitter.com/eobserver">http://twitter.com/eobserver</a>	Yes	No	6426		
Economic Daily	<a href="https://twitter.com/CE_ChinaEconomy">https://twitter.com/CE_ChinaEconomy</a>	Yes	No	6248	No	
Voice of the People	<a href="https://twitter.com/VoiceofPD">https://twitter.com/VoiceofPD</a>	Yes	No	4167		
City Weekend Shanghai	<a href="https://twitter.com/cityweekend_sh">https://twitter.com/cityweekend_sh</a>	Yes	No	3569		
Shenzhen Daily	<a href="https://twitter.com/szdaily1">https://twitter.com/szdaily1</a>	Yes	No	2664		
BJNEWS	<a href="https://twitter.com/BJNewsWorld">https://twitter.com/BJNewsWorld</a>	Yes	No	1725		
Youth China	<a href="https://twitter.com/YouthChina">https://twitter.com/YouthChina</a>	Yes	No	1002		
China Today	<a href="https://twitter.com/ChinaToday_com">https://twitter.com/ChinaToday_com</a>	Yes	No	470		
CNC World	<a href="https://twitter.com/CNC_World/">https://twitter.com/CNC_World/</a>	Yes	No	295		
Phoenix Weekly	<a href="https://twitter.com/PhxChineseWeek">https://twitter.com/PhxChineseWeek</a>	Yes	No	62		
China Plus News	<a href="https://twitter.com/ChinaPlusNews">https://twitter.com/ChinaPlusNews</a>	Yes	No	5		
GMW.cn	<a href="https://twitter.com/GMW_Online">https://twitter.com/GMW_Online</a>	Yes	No	2		
New China	<a href="https://twitter.com/XinhuaChinese">https://twitter.com/XinhuaChinese</a>	No	Yes	1.3M		
CGTN Français	<a href="https://twitter.com/CGTNFrancais">https://twitter.com/CGTNFrancais</a>	No	Yes	981.2K	Yes	
CGTN Arabic	<a href="https://twitter.com/cgtnarabic">https://twitter.com/cgtnarabic</a>	No	Yes	666.8K	Yes	
CGTN en Español	<a href="https://twitter.com/cgtnenespanol">https://twitter.com/cgtnenespanol</a>	No	Yes	578.7K	Yes	
China News Services	<a href="https://twitter.com/CNS1952">https://twitter.com/CNS1952</a>	No	Yes	483.6K		
Southern Weekly	<a href="https://twitter.com/NanZhou">https://twitter.com/NanZhou</a>	No	No	230.8K		
TVB Jade	<a href="https://twitter.com/tvbcom">https://twitter.com/tvbcom</a>	No	Yes	132.8K		
CGTN Russian	<a href="https://twitter.com/cgtnrussian">https://twitter.com/cgtnrussian</a>	No	No	87854	Yes	
Caijing	<a href="https://twitter.com/Caijing">https://twitter.com/Caijing</a>	No	No	35.8K		
China Newsweek	<a href="https://twitter.com/chinanewsweek">https://twitter.com/chinanewsweek</a>	No	No	31.9K	Yes	
Xinhua Myanmar	<a href="https://twitter.com/XHMyanmar">https://twitter.com/XHMyanmar</a>	No	No	12.5K	Yes	
iFeng	<a href="https://twitter.com/ifeng_news">https://twitter.com/ifeng_news</a>	No	No	988		
Caijing	<a href="https://twitter.com/CaijingZj">https://twitter.com/CaijingZj</a>	No	No	436		
Dragon Television	<a href="https://twitter.com/dragonv?lang=en">https://twitter.com/dragonv?lang=en</a>	No	No	190		
China Youth Daily	<a href="https://twitter.com/ChinaYouthOL">https://twitter.com/ChinaYouthOL</a>	No	No	133	No	
Xinmin Weekly	<a href="https://twitter.com/xinminweekly">https://twitter.com/xinminweekly</a>	No	No	12		

Name	Link	English	Verified	# Followers	Subsidiary	Level
China Discipline Inspection and Supervision News	Not on Twitter	/	/	/	No	
China Economic Weekly	Not on Twitter	/	/	/	No	
Farmers' Daily	Not on Twitter	/	/	/	No	
People's Political Consultative Conference Daily	Not on Twitter	/	/	/	No	
PLA Daily	Not on Twitter	/	/	/	No	
Reference News	Not on Twitter	/	/	/	No	
Rule of Law Daily	Not on Twitter	/	/	/	No	
Science and Technology Daily	Not on Twitter	/	/	/	No	
Securities Times	Not on Twitter	/	/	/	No	
Study Times	Not on Twitter	/	/	/	No	
Women of China	Not on Twitter	/	/	/	No	
Workers' Daily	Not on Twitter	/	/	/	No	
China Reading Weekly	Not on Twitter	/	/	/	Yes	
China Securities Journal	Not on Twitter	/	/	/	Yes	
Economic Information Daily	Not on Twitter	/	/	/	Yes	
Global People	Not on Twitter	/	/	/	Yes	
Outlook Weekly	Not on Twitter	/	/	/	Yes	
People's Daily Overseas Edition	Not on Twitter	/	/	/	Yes	
People's Forum	Not on Twitter	/	/	/	Yes	
Red Flag Manuscript Magazine	Not on Twitter	/	/	/	Yes	
Securities Daily	Not on Twitter	/	/	/	Yes	
Semi-Monthly Talk	Not on Twitter	/	/	/	Yes	
Study Abroad Magazine	Not on Twitter	/	/	/	Yes	
The Educator Magazine	Not on Twitter	/	/	/	Yes	
Xiaokang Magazine	Not on Twitter	/	/	/	Yes	
Xinhua Daily Telegraph	Not on Twitter	/	/	/	Yes	
Anhui Television	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Bedahuang Television	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Beijing Television	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Bingtuan Television	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Chongqing Television	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Cross-Strait Television	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Gansu Television	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Guangdong Television	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Guangxi Television	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Guizhou Television	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Hebei Television	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Heilongjiang Television	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Henan Television	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
HKSTV	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Hubei Television	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Jiangsu Television	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Jiangxi Television	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Jilin Television	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Liaoning Television	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Macau Asia Satellite Television	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Macau Lotus Television	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Nei Mongol Television	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Ningxia Television	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Phoenix Television Chinese	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Phoenix Television Hong Kong	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Phoenix Television InfoNews	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Phoenix Television Movies	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Qinghai Television	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Sansha Television	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Shandong Television	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Shannxi Television	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		

Name	Link	English	Verified	# Followers	Subsidiary	Level
Shanxi Television	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Shenzhen Television	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Sichuan Television	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Southeast Television	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Stars Television	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Tianjin Television	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Travel Channel	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Xiamen Television	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Xinjiang Television	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Xizang Television	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Yunnan Television	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Zhejiang Television	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Agriculture Television	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Beijing Daily Messenger	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Book Town	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Bosom Friend	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Boxing and Fight	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
CCTV-10	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
CCTV-11	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
CCTV-12	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
CCTV-13	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
CCTV-14	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
CCTV-15	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
CCTV-2	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
CCTV-3	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
CCTV-4	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
CCTV-4	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
CCTV-4	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
CCTV-5	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
CCTV-5+	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
CCTV-6	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
CCTV-7	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
CCTV-8	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
CCTV-9	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
CGTN-Rediscovering China	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
CGTN-русский	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
China Business Journal	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
China Comment	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
China Newsweek	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
China Pictorial	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
China Times	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Chinese National Geography	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Dushu	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Duzhe	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Elite Reference	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Fiction Monthly	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
International Herald Leader	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
King of Fairy Tales	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Mangazine	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Maxim	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Mengya	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Modern Media	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Modern Weekly	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
National Geographic	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
New China TV	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
New China TV Spanish	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
New Express	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Oriental Outlook	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
People's Literature	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		

Name	Link	English	Verified	# Followers	Subsidiary	Level
PLA Pictorial	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Popular Cinema	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Psychologies	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Puzhi	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Ray Li	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Reference News	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Sanlian Life Week	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
SEEC	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Self	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
SMEG	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
So Rock	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Southern Metropolis Daily	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Southern Metropolis Weekly	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Southern People Weekly	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
The Stories	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
The Bund	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
The First	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
The outlook magazine	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Titan Sports	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Window of the South	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
Woman Friend	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		
China National 3D Channel	Not on Twitter	/	/	/		

### A.1.2 Data

We collected tweets for the following eight accounts: four state-affiliated media outlets from China, two state-affiliated media outlets from other non-Western countries, and two independent media outlets from Western countries. We only analyzed the tweets between January 23, 2013, and January 23, 2020. The detailed number of tweets analyzed for each outlet is listed in the Table S1, alongside the availability of the followership data.

Table S1

<b>Account</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Number of Tweets Analyzed</b>	<b>Follower Data Available From</b>
CGTN	China	110,265	6/21/16
China Daily	China	101,654	3/15/17
People’s Daily (China)	China	80,555	3/15/17
Xinhua	China	156,203	6/21/16
Al Jazeera	Qatar	162,402	12/3/16
RT	Russia	281,448	6/21/16
BBC Breaking	UK	25,771	6/20/16
CNN Breaking	US	47,381	6/11/16

### A.1.3 Model and Performance

To classify whether each tweet contains a specific narrative suggested by the CCP or is a piece of soft news, we train and compare binary classification models—Naive Bayes, SVM, and logistic regression—with the different features and their various combinations: unigrams, bigrams, TF-IDF weights, and word embeddings for each of the four Chinese outlets. Table S2 presents the complete list of combinations of model specifications. For each outlet and each label, we select the model with the best performance, which is measured by the F1 score. The detailed model selection and performance are listed in the Table S3.

Table S2: Model Features

<b>Model</b>	<b>Feature</b>
Logistic Regression	unigram
Logistic Regression	unigram, word vectors
Logistic Regression	unigram, TF-IDF
Logistic Regression	unigram, TF-IDF, word vectors
Logistic Regression	unigram, bigram
Logistic Regression	unigram, bigram, word vectors
Logistic Regression	unigram, bigram, TF-IDF
Logistic Regression	unigram, bigram, TF-IDF, word vectors
Logistic Regression	bigram
Logistic Regression	bigram, word vectors
Logistic Regression	bigram, TF-IDF
Logistic Regression	bigram, TF-IDF, word vectors
Naive Bayes	unigram
Naive Bayes	unigram, TF-IDF
Naive Bayes	unigram, bigram
Naive Bayes	unigram, bigram, TF-IDF
Naive Bayes	bigram
Naive Bayes	bigram, TF-IDF
SVM	unigram
SVM	unigram, word vectors
SVM	unigram, TF-IDF
SVM	unigram, TF-IDF, word vectors
SVM	unigram, bigram
SVM	unigram, bigram, word vectors
SVM	unigram, bigram, TF-IDF
SVM	unigram, bigram, TF-IDF, word vectors
SVM	bigram
SVM	bigram, word vectors
SVM	bigram, TF-IDF
SVM	bigram, TF-IDF, word vectors



Table S3: Model Performance

<b>Label</b>	<b>Account</b>	<b>Best Model</b>	<b>F1 Score</b>
<b>Soft News</b>	CGTN	Logistic Regression: unigram, bigram, word vectors	0.80
	People's Daily	Logistic Regression: bigram, word vectors	0.84
	Xinhua	Logistic Regression: bigram, TF-IDF, word vectors	0.82
	China Daily	Logistic Regression: bigram, word vectors	0.84
<b>Narrative</b>	CGTN	Logistic Regression: unigram, TF-IDF, word vectors	0.77
	People's Daily	SVM: bigram, TF-IDF, word vectors	0.77
	Xinhua	SVM: unigram, bigram, TF-IDF, word vectors	0.75
	China Daily	Logistic Regression: unigram, TF-IDF	0.72

### A.1.4 Interrupted Time Series Analysis

We consider the implementation of China “Going Global” effort as a result of Xi’s emphasis on international communication capacity building. We model the change in posting patterns from accounts which might be impacted by this new mandate as follows:

$$Y_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1(T) + \beta_2(X_t) + \beta_3(X_tT) \quad (\text{S1})$$

In Equation S1,  $Y_t$  is the number of daily followers added at time  $t$ .  $T$  is the number of days since the implementation of the “Going Global” efforts. If the date is before the implementation,  $T$  is negative; otherwise,  $T$  is positive.  $X_t$  is a dummy variable representing the adoption of any actions to fulfill Xi’s instruction of increasing international communication capacities and  $X_tT$  is an interaction term.  $\beta_0$  represents the baseline at  $t$ .  $\beta_1$  shows the change growth associated with a one unit change in time (the unit of analysis is days), representing the growth trend before any effort to increase international communication capacity.  $\beta_2$  captures the immediate level change and  $\beta_3$  captures the trend, or slope, change following changes in actions taken by outlets relative to the previous trend.

In other words, ITSA is a segmented regression model. Segmented regression simply refers to a model with different intercept and slope coefficients for the pre- and post-intervention time periods. It is used to measure activity prior to China’s “Going Global” initiative, the immediate change following this effort, as well as the change in the slope or trend in the post period. In order to address serial autocorrelation in our data, we use a first order autoregressive (AR1) model in our analysis instead of the standard OLS ITSA model (Bernal, Cummins and Gasparri 2017). If the activities of the “Going Global” campaign worked, we should see an increase immediately in  $\beta_2$ .

## A.2 Additional Results

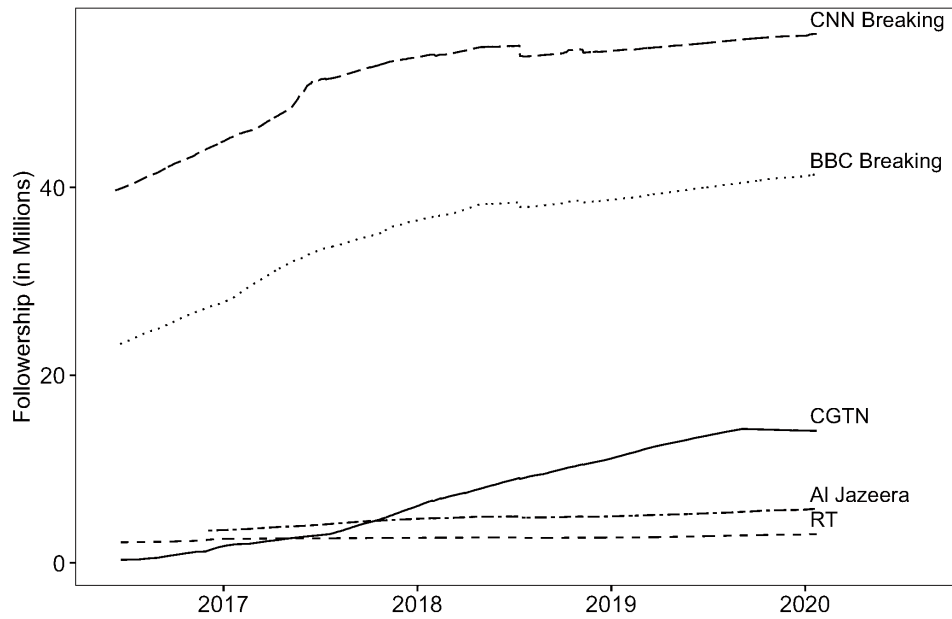
### A.2.1 Audience Size

To contextualize the audience size of CGTN and its rapid growth in follower base, Figure S1 compares the number of followers for CGTN with that of RT, Al-Jazeera, BBC Breaking, and CNN Breaking based on Social Blade data. Before 2017, CGTN did not accumulate a substantial amount of followers and was much less visible than RT and Al-Jazeera based on the size of its followers. However, in 2017, CGTN audience size surpassed that of RT and Al-Jazeera. Since 2017, CGTN has experienced steady growth in followership, reaching approximately 13.5 million by the latter half of 2019, which means its audience size remains limited compared to that of BBC Breaking and CNN Breaking.

We also analyze audience size by collecting the entire list of followers for CGTN, RT, BBC June 30, 2020 (see Figure S2). Twitter does not provide the exact date and time at which one account began following another account, but we can infer an earliest possible following date because an account’s list of followers is ordered according to date and Twitter metadata on follower objects come with a creation timestamp. This is an approximation of follower growth, but we can see the same pattern between Figure S1 based on historical daily followers from Social Blade and this Figure S2, which is that starting in 2017, CGTN grew quickly, surpassing RT in followership.

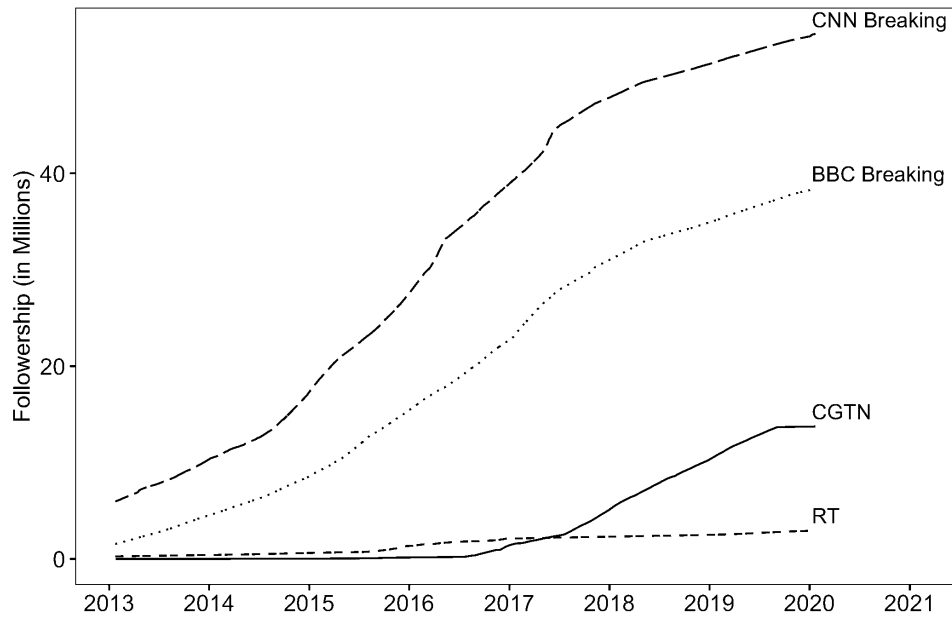
Since the number of followers for *People’s Daily* and *China Daily* remained low after

Figure S1: Daily Historical Followers (Social Blade Data)



Note: The line types in the figure are CGTN (solid), BBC Breaking (dotted), RT (dashed), and CNN Breaking (long-dash).

Figure S2: Estimated Number of Followers (Twitter Follower List)



Note: The line types in the figure are CGTN (solid), BBC Breaking (dotted), RT (dashed), and CNN Breaking (long-dash).

2017 and because we do not have Social Blade data on prior to 2017 for these two outlets, we excluded them from the analysis. The trend changes for CGTN goes from 0.01 in the

Table S4: Interrupted Time Series Analysis

	DV: Daily Follower Growth				
	CGTN	Xinhua	RT	CNN	BBC
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Baseline Daily Follower Growth	9,990.83*** (1,562.28)	16,956.72*** (3,176.53)	791.06** (342.52)	30,247.87*** (5,190.31)	36,615.09*** (3,008.27)
Baseline Trend	13.01** (6.62)	12.29 (13.46)	-2.36 (1.45)	17.42 (21.47)	44.38*** (12.72)
Level Change	11,903.23*** (1,746.69)	-11,642.03*** (3,563.03)	-976.44** (383.80)	-22,304.88*** (5,850.25)	-23,133.10*** (3,375.23)
Trend Change	-33.23*** (6.79)	-18.13 (13.77)	3.70** (1.49)	-23.85 (22.01)	-55.09*** (13.01)
Observations	1,182	1,182	1,182	1,192	1,183

Note:

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

prior period to -0.01 in the post period, showing that as CGTN gained more followers, its ability to incrementally gain more followers slowed.

### A.2.2 Authenticity of Audience Data

Figure S3 compares the proportion of followers who have no timeline—i.e., no public posts—for CGTN (solid black line), BBC (dotted gray line) and CNN (dashed gray line) based on the account join date of the following account. Figure S3 shows that few accounts that joined Twitter and followed CGTN prior to 2017 had no timeline (average 9% on CGTN compared to 28% for CNN and 30% for BBC from 2013 to 2016). Starting in July 2017, the proportion of accounts that joined Twitter and followed CGTN with no timeline increased to 24% for CGTN (for comparison, the rate was 32% for CNN and 37% for BBC).

Figure S4 shows the proportion of accounts with CAP above 0.95 among followers of CGTN, BBC, and CNN.

### A.2.3 Engagement

Figure S5 presents median engagement, measured by the number of likes, replies, and retweets for each tweet before and after the “Going Global” campaign.

### A.2.4 Content Change

Figure S3: Proportion of followers without timeline for CGTN (black) and BBC (dotted gray), and CNN (dashed gray)

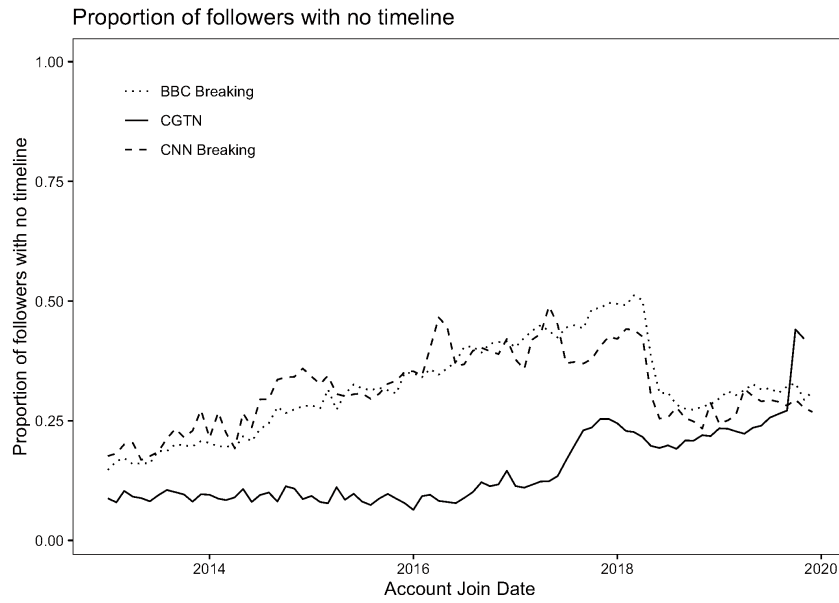


Figure S4: Complete Automation Probability; gray shading indicates 95% confidence intervals.

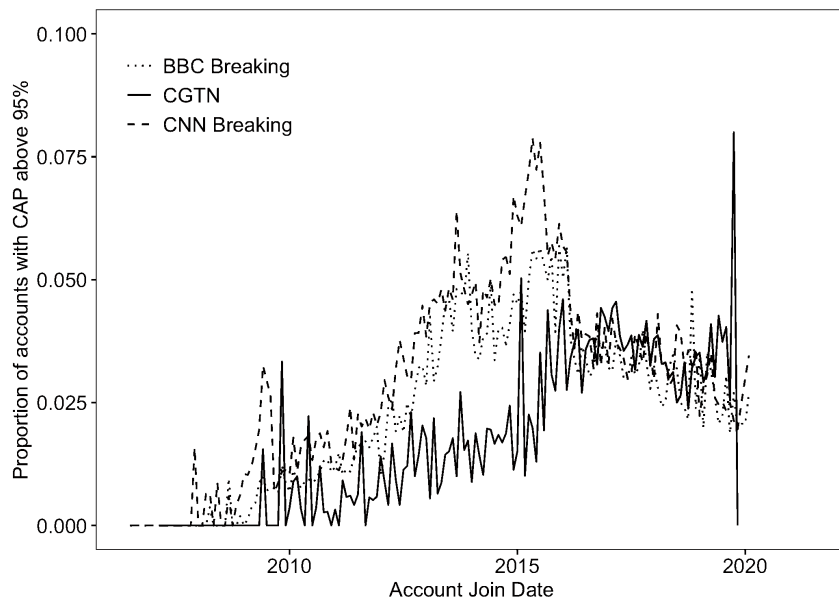


Figure S5: Engagement of tweets

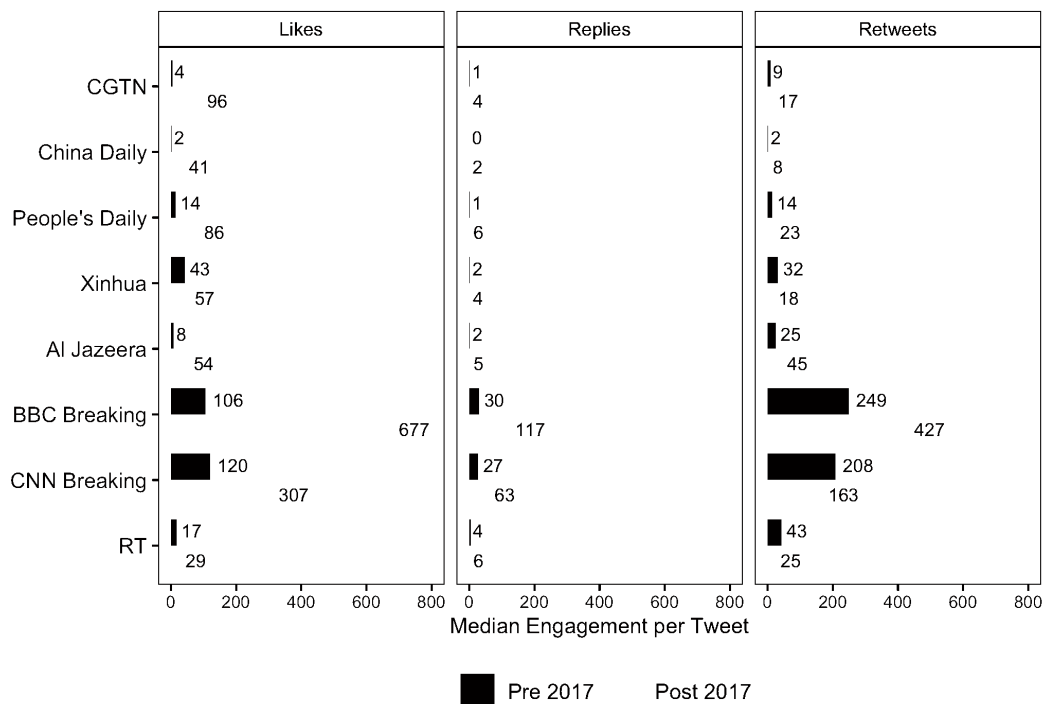


Table S5: Interrupted Time Series Analysis of Tweets with Narratives by Outlet

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>			
	Percentage of Tweets with Narratives			
	CGTN	Xinhua	People's Daily	China Daily
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Baseline Percentage Tweets with Narratives	22.73***	43.05***	44.33***	40.33***
Baseline Trend	-0.005*** (0.001)	0.01*** (0.001)	-0.002*** (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)
Level Change	13.84*** (1.88)	-2.69** (1.23)	9.86*** (1.36)	5.93*** (1.27)
Trend Change	0.01*** (0.003)	0.01*** (0.002)	-0.01*** (0.002)	0.01*** (0.002)
Observations	2,340	2,418	2,306	2,429

Note:

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

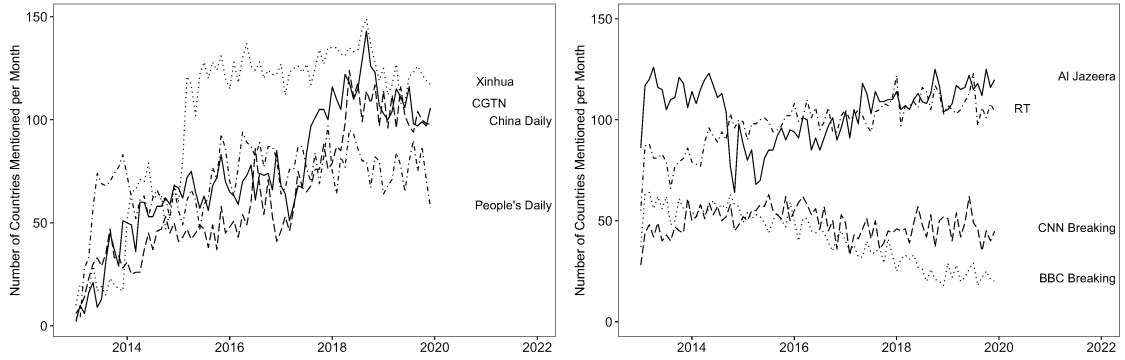
Table S6: Interrupted Time Series Analysis on Soft News Tweets

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>			
	Percentage of Tweets with Soft News			
	CGTN	Xinhua	People's Daily	China Daily
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Baseline Percentage Tweets with Soft News	21.49*** (1.00)	34.05*** (0.85)	31.15*** (1.19)	36.41*** (1.00)
Baseline Trend	-0.001 (0.001)	0.01*** (0.001)	0.002 (0.001)	0.01*** (0.001)
Level Change	15.74*** (1.68)	-1.56 (1.46)	-3.87* (2.01)	10.16*** (1.71)
Trend Change	0.01*** (0.003)	-0.01*** (0.002)	0.01*** (0.003)	-0.03*** (0.003)
Observations	2,340	2,418	2,306	2,429

*Note:*

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

Figure S6: Country Coverage



(a) Number of Country Covered by Chinese Outlets by Month (b) Number of Country Covered by Non-Chinese Outlets by Month

Note: The line types in (a) are CGTN (solid), Xinhua (dotted), People's Daily (dot-dash), and China Daily (long-dash) and in (b) are Al Jazeera (solid), BBC Breaking (dotted), RT (dot-dash), and CNN Breaking (long-dash).



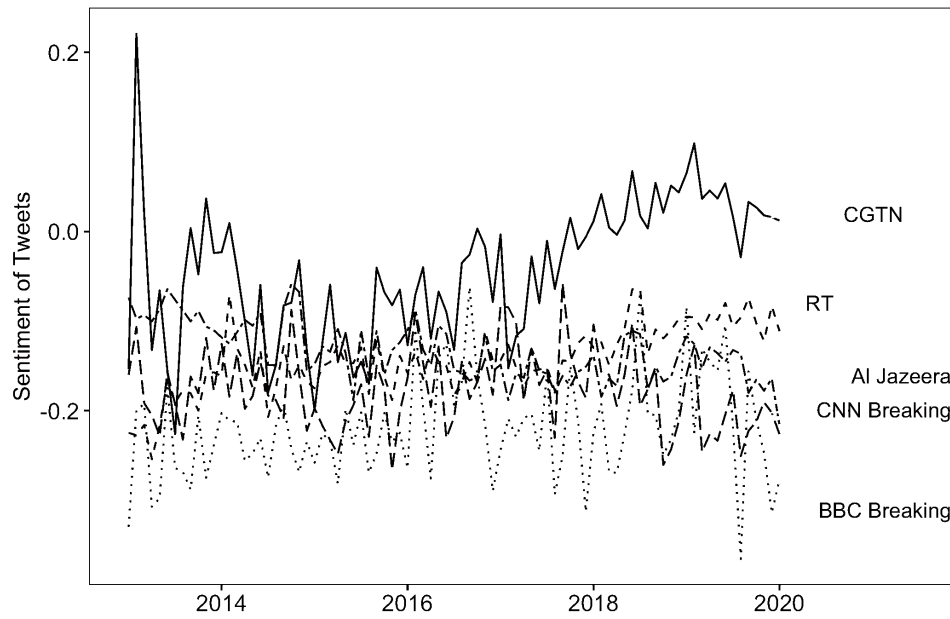
Table S7: Interrupted Time Series Analysis on Country Coverage

	DV: Number of Countries Mentioned (per month)							
	CGTN	Xinhua	People's Daily	China Daily	Al Jazeera	BBC	CNN	RT
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Baseline Country Coverage	68.43*** (10.92)	129.16*** (7.89)	77.15*** (8.70)	62.37*** (12.64)	99.36*** (3.78)	32.52*** (2.85)	35.38*** (3.68)	99.88*** (3.48)
Baseline Trend	0.04 (0.95)	0.44 (0.68)	-0.14 (0.75)	0.59 (1.10)	0.42 (0.33)	-0.93*** (0.25)	-1.37*** (0.32)	-0.17 (0.30)
Level Change	44.43*** (10.55)	5.92 (8.12)	7.27 (9.81)	23.58* (13.08)	7.03 (4.48)	1.35 (3.39)	8.86** (4.41)	9.93** (4.17)
Slope Change	-0.23 (1.17)	-1.01 (0.82)	-0.30 (0.86)	0.19 (1.32)	-0.003 (0.36)	0.43 (0.27)	1.48*** (0.35)	0.06 (0.33)
Observations	44	44	44	44	44	44	44	44

Note:

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

Figure S7: Sentiment of Tweets by Outlet



Note: The line types in the figure are CGTN (solid), Xinhua (dotted), People's Daily (dot-dash), and China Daily (long-dash) and in (b) are Al Jazeera (solid), BBC Breaking (dotted), RT (dot-dash), and CNN Breaking (long-dash).

Table S8: Interrupted Time Series Analysis on Tweet Sentiment

	DV: Sentiment of Tweets							
	CGTN	Xinhua	People's Daily	China Daily	Al Jazeera	BBC	CNN	RT
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Baseline Sentiment	-0.09*** (0.01)	0.08*** (0.01)	0.03*** (0.01)	0.07*** (0.01)	-0.16*** (0.01)	-0.19*** (0.01)	-0.16*** (0.01)	-0.13*** (0.005)
Baseline Trend	-0.0000 (0.0000)	0.0001*** (0.0000)	0.0000* (0.0000)	0.0000*** (0.0000)	-0.0000*** (0.0000)	0.0000** (0.0000)	0.0000 (0.0000)	0.0000*** (0.0000)
Level Change	0.10*** (0.02)	0.003 (0.01)	0.10*** (0.01)	0.13*** (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	-0.02 (0.03)	0.03** (0.02)	0.002 (0.01)
Slope Change	0.0000 (0.0000)	-0.0000** (0.0000)	0.0000 (0.0000)	-0.0001*** (0.0000)	0.0000*** (0.0000)	-0.0000 (0.0000)	-0.0001*** (0.0000)	0.0000 (0.0000)
Observations	2,339	2,416	2,305	2,427	2,431	2,350	2,431	2,431

Note:

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01