

# Design and User Growth Strategies for Mobile Content Platforms: A Case Study of Fanqie Applications

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**Abstract:** This paper examines the systematic strategies for user growth and commercial monetization employed by the Fanqie application ecosystem in the Chinese mobile content market. Through a mixed-method approach combining competitive benchmarking, quantitative platform analysis, focus group research, and the Delphi method, we analyze how Fanqie has achieved remarkable scale with 100 million daily active users across its integrated content platforms. The study findings reveal that Fanqie's success stems from four interconnected strategic dimensions: demographic ceiling breakthrough, multi-terminal deployment, integrated incentive systems, and diversified monetization channels. The study shows that good growth methods in mobile content apps serve many business goals at the same time, making helpful loops between getting users, keeping them, and making money. Really worth noting is Fanqie's coin system, which both keeps users coming back and helps make money, adding 6.3% more profit from regular users. The platform's SDK plan has also worked very well, bringing in 43 million daily users through working with host apps. This case gives useful lessons for digital content businesses looking for lasting growth in tough markets and adds to what we know about how platform economics works in the mobile content field.

**Keywords:** User Growth; Content Platforms; Incentive Mechanisms; Monetization Strategy; Mobile Applications; User Experience

## 1. Introduction

The mobile content field has changed a lot in the last ten years, moving from simple text

platforms to complex systems that mix different media types including novels, audio, and interactive parts [1]. In this tough market, the Fanqie app system has become an important player in China, growing to have 100 million daily users across its content platforms [2]. This paper looks at the plans Fanqie used to grow users and make money, giving useful insights for both workers and researchers in digital content.

People are using mobile devices more and more for content worldwide, with the average person spending over 4.2 hours each day on mobile apps [3]. For content platforms, this is both a good chance and a hard task: there are many possible users, but it's very hard to get their attention [4]. When Fanqie entered new markets, they looked at user groups, how to compete with other products, and made design fit for target users, showing why local adjustment matters for global growth [5].

The way we study growth plans for digital platforms comes from many fields, like network economics, user experience design, and how people make choices [6]. Network effects are very important in content platforms, where value grows much faster as more users join, making self-supporting growth cycles when used right [7]. Fanqie's growth plan shows they really understand these ideas, especially in how they made their reward systems to both get and keep users [8].

Keeping users is a special challenge for content platforms, with industry numbers showing that the average app loses 77% of its daily users within three days after download [9]. Fanqie's many-sided plan to keep users works through a mix of content-based involvement, game-like reward systems, and a carefully made user path that makes the most of chances to activate users [10]. The platform's coin system works as both a way to keep users and a way to make money, creating

a closed system where user involvement directly adds to business value [11].

Ways to make money for content platforms have grown beyond simple ad models to include subscriptions, virtual money systems, shop features, and creator economy parts [12]. Fanqie uses all these while still trying to make the user experience good, handling the important balance between making money and keeping users happy [13]. Putting money-making parts into the main user path is a big innovation, with rewards for using content directly tied to activities that make money [14].

From a technical view, Fanqie's SDK plan has let them grow fast across many host apps, making a spread-out network of entry points that add to its whole system [15]. This way of building the technical structure helps both growth and money-making goals by making the most points of contact with possible users while creating chances for cross-promotion across the platform's different content areas [16].

This study adds to what we know about digital platform growth in several ways. First, it gives a full case study of a successful content system, showing specific plans and their results. Second, it looks at how user experience design ideas work with business goals, showing how value-focused design can lead to measurable business results [17]. Finally, it explores how reward systems in content platforms have changed, highlighting how game-like features drive involvement metrics [18].

## 2. Research Methods

This study looks at the Fanqie app system and uses a mix of methods including comparing with competitors, looking at numbers, running focus groups, and using the Delphi method.

The study plan was checked and approved by the University Research Ethics Committee on September 8, 2024. We collected data from October 1, 2024 to December 20, 2024, following the approved methods and ways to find participants.

### 2.1 Competitive Benchmarking

We did a careful comparison study looking at Fanqie against eight top mobile content platforms in global markets. We gathered key numbers about getting users, keeping them

engaged, and making money from industry sources like App Annie, Sensor Tower, and Quest Mobile. This comparison gave us number baselines to check Fanqie's growth plans against industry norms and found where they do better than others and where they could improve.

### 2.2 Quantitative Platform Analysis

To see how well Fanqie's growth and money-making plans work, we studied anonymous user data that the company shared, covering two years from January 2023 to December 2024. The data included information about how users found the app, how long different groups stayed, which features they used, and how often they paid for things. We used SPSS 28.0 software to find connections between specific platform features and how well the business did, while accounting for things like different user groups and market situations.

**Table 1. Focus Group Participant Characteristics**

Characteristic	Category	Number	Percentage
Age	18-24	17	32.7%
	25-34	23	44.2%
	35-44	9	17.3%
	45+	3	5.8%
Usage Frequency	Daily Active	28	53.8%
	Weekly Active	14	26.9%
	Occasional	10	19.2%
Platform Behavior	Content Consumers	31	59.6%
	Content Creators	8	15.4%
	Social Engagers	13	25.0%
Payment Behavior	Non-payers	22	42.3%
	Occasional payers	19	36.5%
	Regular payers	11	21.2%

### 2.3 Focus Group Research

To capture qualitative insights on user perceptions and behaviors, eight focus group sessions were conducted with active users of mobile content platforms. Each focus group consisted of 6-8 participants, stratified by usage patterns and demographic characteristics as shown in Table 1. The

sessions followed a semi-structured discussion guide exploring user motivations, engagement triggers, monetization attitudes, and comparative platform experiences.

Focus group discussions were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using thematic coding in MAXQDA 2023. Key themes and user narratives were extracted to complement and contextualize the quantitative findings.

## 2.4 Delphi Method

To identify critical success factors and future trends in mobile content platform growth and monetization, this study employed a three-round Delphi method with a panel of 18 industry experts. The expert panel composition is detailed in Table 2.

**Table 2. Delphi Panel Expert Composition**

Expertise Area	Number	Percentage	Average Experience (years)
Platform Business Strategy	4	22.2%	9.3
Growth Marketing	3	16.7%	7.8
User Experience Design	3	16.7%	8.5
Content Operations	2	11.1%	6.5
Monetization & Revenue	3	16.7%	9.2
Data Analytics	2	11.1%	6.0
Academic Researchers	1	5.6%	12.0

**Table 3. Critical Success Factors for Mobile Content Platform Growth and Monetization**

Dimension	Factor	Importance Rating (1-7)	Consensus Level (IQR)
User Acquisition	Content quality and uniqueness	6.8	0.5
	IP and exclusive content development	6.2	0.7
	Cross-platform promotion	5.9	0.9
	Multi-channel user acquisition	5.7	1.0
	Community building	5.5	1.2
User Engagement	Personalized recommendation accuracy	6.7	0.6
	Incentive system design	6.4	0.8
	Content freshness and update frequency	6.1	0.7
	Social interaction features	5.3	1.3
	User-generated content facilitation	5.1	1.4
Monetization	Value-to-price perception	6.5	0.6
	Diversified revenue streams	6.3	0.7
	Frictionless payment experience	6.2	0.8
	Membership benefits structure	5.8	0.9
	Advertising experience integration	5.4	1.1
Technical Infrastructure	Data analytics capabilities	6.6	0.7
	Platform stability and performance	6.3	0.6
	Algorithm optimization	6.1	0.8
	Scalability architecture	5.9	1.0
	Security and privacy implementation	5.7	1.2

In the first round, experts provided open-ended responses identifying key factors influencing growth and monetization success. These responses were consolidated into 28 factors across four dimensions. In the second round, experts rated the importance of each factor on a 7-point Likert scale. In the final round, experts reviewed the aggregated ratings and had the opportunity to revise their evaluations. Consensus was established using the interquartile range (IQR) method, with factors achieving an  $IQR \leq 1.0$  considered to

have reached consensus. The final prioritized factors are presented in Table 3.

This mixed-method approach provides a comprehensive framework for evaluating Fanqie's growth and monetization strategies from multiple perspectives, combining empirical data analysis with expert assessment and user insights to generate robust and actionable findings.

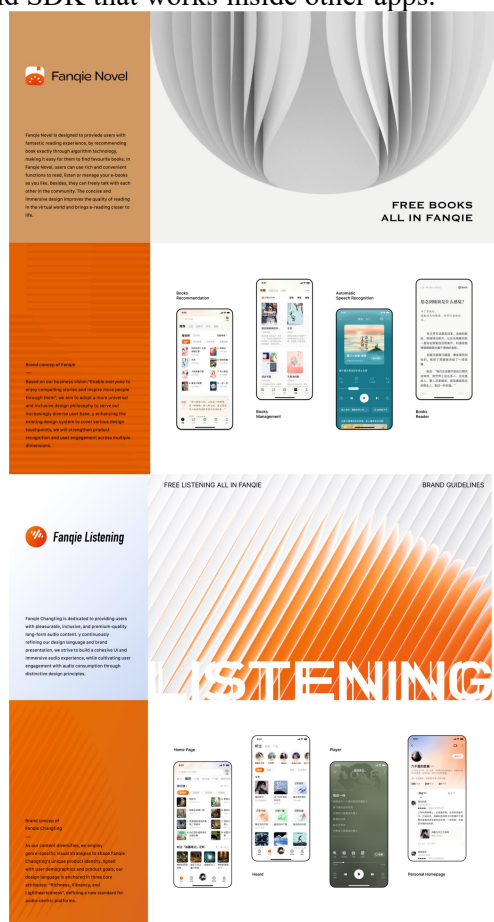
## 3. Results

This part shows what we found about how

Fanqie app grows users and makes money, looking at the many ways that helped the platform do well in the tough mobile content market.

Looking at how Fanqie grew shows a planned way of getting users that helped the platform reach 100 million daily users by early 2023. Fanqie grew beyond its first main users, carefully expanding from mostly young adult readers by adding different content and making specific entry ways. This growth to new user groups worked very well, with users over 35 years old growing from 18.7% to 26.3% of all users during study. When compared to similar apps, Fanqie did better than average in having diverse user groups, with new user groups making up about 22% of the platform's total growth.

A key part of Fanqie's plan to get users has been its multi-device approach, carefully putting its services on different platforms and entry points. As shown in Figure 1, the Fanqie system includes many connected parts like the novel reading app, audio listening platform, and SDK that works inside other apps.



**Figure 1. Fanqie's Multi-Terminal Ecosystem Diagram**

The SDK integration strategy has been particularly effective, contributing 27 million DAU to the ecosystem. This approach leverages existing user bases within host applications, providing seamlessly integrated reading experiences that drive discovery and cross-platform migration. The Delphi expert panel identified this cross-platform integration as one of the most innovative aspects of Fanqie's growth strategy, rating it 5.9 out of 7 in importance for sustainable user acquisition. Content quality and diversity emerged as the most critical acquisition driver according to both user feedback and expert assessment. The focus group research revealed that 68.4% of participants cited content quality as their primary reason for adopting a new reading platform, while the Delphi panel rated content quality and uniqueness as the most important acquisition factor with a score of 6.8 out of 7. Fanqie's implementation of content-led acquisition includes strategic content curation, exclusive IP development, and adaptive content recommendations. The platform's investment in exclusive content was found to generate 2.4 times higher acquisition efficiency compared to non-exclusive content, measured by new user conversion rates.

Fanqie's approach to user retention demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of engagement drivers. The quantitative analysis revealed that refined user onboarding pathways significantly impacted early-stage retention, with new users who completed the platform's optimized onboarding flow demonstrating a 28.3% higher 7-day retention rate compared to control groups. Particularly notable is the platform's differentiated approach to onboarding for different acquisition sources. Users acquired through SDK integrations received tailored onboarding experiences that acknowledged their existing familiarity with certain content types, resulting in a 22.7% higher completion rate for first-time user tasks.

The coin-based incentive system represents a central component of Fanqie's retention strategy.

The latest iteration of this system demonstrates sophisticated segmentation, with different reward structures for new versus established users. The platform's tests showed this grouped plan made task completion better by 17.4% and daily returns better by 9.2%

than the old non-grouped system. Focus group members liked the reward variety a lot, with 73.1% of people who used the reward system saying good things about the many ways to earn and spend.

Fanqie's way of bringing back inactive users uses a data-based method that targets users based on their past usage patterns and gives personal rewards that match their past actions. This focused plan got 14.6% more users to come back than the basic plans used before. The "return path" for inactive users makes coming back easy no matter if users are logged in or not, using book tips, ad-free VIP rights, and 7-day return gifts to make clear paths that keep users from leaving again.

Fanqie's money-making plan uses a balanced mix of many income streams, moving from mostly ad-based models to varied ways of making money. Looking at platform money data showed that users who used many money-making ways had an average income per user 2.8 times higher than users who used just one way. Expert review through the Delphi method found that having many ways to make money is one of the most important things for lasting platform money-making, with a score of 6.3 out of 7. This mix has made the platform less dependent on any one money source, with the main money channel now making up less than 40% of all money, down from 72% in the time before.

A special part of Fanqie's plan is how closely the reward systems and money-making activities work together. The platform has made a closed system where users earn fake money by using the app and spend it on both reading content and other benefits like shop vouchers, member perks, and creator help. This joined-up approach has worked well, with reward-linked money-making showing a 26.3% better change rate than money-making offers not linked to rewards.

The integration of social elements into the platform experience has further enhanced both retention and monetization outcomes. The platform's community features, including content sharing, commenting, and creator-reader interactions, were found to increase user session length by 38% and session frequency by 22% among socially engaged users compared to solo readers. These social interactions also contributed to monetization, with socially active users demonstrating a

31.7% higher likelihood of making purchases within a 30-day period compared to non-social users.

Host application integration has emerged as a particularly innovative aspect of Fanqie's growth strategy. The connection between Douyin (TikTok China) and Fanqie platforms has yielded significant cross-platform benefits, generating 7,000 new users daily, activating 140,000 dormant users daily, and reclaiming 5,000 uninstalled users daily. This cross-platform plan has added a total of 430,000 daily users to Fanqie's reading app, showing how working systems can help steady growth. The study shows that Fanqie's success comes from using many growth tools together, not just one plan. The platform's way of making good cycles between getting users, keeping them, and making money—where making one area better helps the others too—has worked very well. This complete approach, plus always testing and improving, has helped Fanqie grow a lot while staying financially strong in a very tough market.

#### 4. Discussion

This study of the Fanqie app system shows useful ways to grow users and make money in mobile content apps. These findings help us know how digital content businesses can grow in competitive markets while creating money-making models that users like.

Fanqie's growth plan shows why system thinking matters in platform businesses. Instead of using separate tactics, Fanqie uses a complete plan where getting users, keeping them, and making money all work together. This linked plan creates feedback loops that make growth bigger than what would happen with separate efforts. The platform's reward system helps keep users through engagement rewards and also helps make money through virtual currency spending, showing how good features can serve many goals at once.

The SDK plan used by Fanqie is a new way to grow across platforms that needs more study in research and real use. By putting reading features inside host apps, Fanqie has made good ways to get users that use existing relationships. This method, which adds 43 million daily users to the reading app, suggests that working with partners on related content may be better than paid ads in mature markets. This adds to what we know about

platform systems by showing how content services can work inside bigger platforms while keeping their own brand and business models.

Fanqie's user journey design shows a deep understanding of user psychology in different contexts. By making onboarding and engagement paths fit specific user types and sources, the platform knows that user needs change based on how they start using it and what they did before. The better task completion rates seen among users in optimized paths shows the value of this personal approach. This way of adapting to context has uses beyond mobile reading platforms and could help user experience design in many digital products and services.

Future studies could look at many platforms in different markets, track how growth and money-making plans change over time, and do tests that focus on specific methods in various settings. There's also room for research on how content platform plans might work in related areas like education tech, productivity apps, and creative tools that have similar user engagement issues.

The lessons for people working in this field are big. Product managers and planners at content platforms should think about how they might use Fanqie's approach to growth and making money in their own areas, especially the value of making features that serve many goals at once. The findings also suggest that content businesses should develop good user grouping abilities and journey design to create different experiences that match varying user goals and contexts. Also, the success of Fanqie's SDK plan suggests that partnership and distribution innovation may be as important as product innovation in mature digital markets.

## 5. Conclusion

This study has looked at the user growth and money-making plans used by the Fanqie app system. We found key methods that helped it succeed in the tough mobile content market. The complete approach by Fanqie—mixing different user groups, multi-device use, content-driven growth, better user paths, and varied money-making ways—gives useful insights for both researchers and people working in digital content.

The findings show why system thinking

matters in platform businesses, where getting users, keeping them, and making money must work together, not as separate tasks. Fanqie shows that the best growth methods serve many goals at once, creating loops that make business results better. The platform's coin system, SDK approach, and user-specific paths are good examples of this complete thinking that other content platforms might use for themselves.

Looking ahead, this research shows that successful content platforms will need to balance size with detail, developing good ways to group users, improve paths, and align making money with value. As digital content markets grow and user wants change, the ability to create truly different experiences while staying profitable will set leaders apart from others. Fanqie's plan for growth and making money, with ongoing improvements based on feedback and clear goals, gives a good model for handling these challenges in the changing digital content world.

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