

Strategies and Countermeasures for High-Quality Development of the Cultural and Creative Media Industry in the Context of the Digital Economy (Postprint)

Authors: Gao Mengtong

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Abstract

[Purpose] The integration of culture and technology represents the developmental pathway for the media industry to achieve digital transformation. The infusion of technological innovation can accelerate the creation of new scenarios and expand new spaces for the high-quality development of the media industry. **[Method]** This article analyzes the evolutionary trajectory of the cultural and creative media industry from its emergence through development to gradual maturation, and elucidates the mutually reinforcing relationship between digital technology and the cultural and creative media industry, along with their integration trends. **[Results]** The ecosystem of the cultural and creative media industry is gradually maturing, with continuous expansion of industrial space, ongoing optimization of structural transformation, and new impetus being added to urban renewal; however, challenges such as insufficient industrial scale, scarcity of professional talent, and weak international competitiveness persist. **[Conclusion]** At the current stage, the cultural and creative media industry should promptly establish a digital operation network, promote the formation of a batch of cultural and creative media technology industrial parks to leverage industrial cluster effects, optimize talent acquisition and management, build well-positioned renowned brands, and enhance international influence and discourse power.

Full Text

Preamble

Cultural and Creative Media Industry High-Quality Development Strategies under the Digital Economy (Hebei Academy of Social Sciences, *Economic Forum Magazine*, Shijiazhuang, Hebei 052100)

Abstract

[Purpose] The integration of culture and technology represents the developmental pathway for the media industry to achieve digital transformation. Injecting technological innovation can accelerate the creation of new scenarios and expand new spaces for high-quality development of the media industry. **[Method]** This article analyzes the evolutionary trajectory of the cultural-creative media industry from its emergence through development to gradual maturation, and explains the mutually reinforcing relationship and convergence trends between digital technology and the cultural-creative media industry. **[Results]** The cultural-creative media industry ecosystem is gradually maturing, with expanding industrial space and continuously optimized structural transformation, injecting new momentum into urban renewal. However, challenges remain, including insufficient industrial scale, scarce professional talent, and weak international competitiveness. **[Conclusion]** At the current stage, the cultural-creative media industry should urgently layout digital operation networks, promote the formation of cultural-creative media technology industrial parks to leverage cluster effects, optimize talent recruitment and management, build well-positioned renowned brands, and enhance international influence and discourse power.

Keywords: Cultural-creative media; Emerging industries; Digital operations; Industry-city integration

The media industry possesses both cultural and technological attributes, serving as both a leader in cultural construction and a promoter of technological advancement. With content at its core and technology as its means, collaborative and innovative industrial development represents the proper path for media transformation at this stage. The 2023 Government Work Report emphasized: “Solidly advance deep media integration. Enhance international communication effectiveness. Strengthen and innovate internet content construction.” According to research data from the Media Blue Book project team at Tsinghua University’s School of Journalism and Communication and statistics from the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, China’s total media industry output value reached 2,971.03 billion yuan in 2021, hitting a new record with a growth rate increase of 5.14 percentage points. Five market segments—including internet advertising, internet marketing services, mobile data and internet business, online gaming, and short-form video and e-commerce—each generated revenue exceeding 100 billion yuan [1], with mobile data and internet business alone achieving 640.9 billion yuan in revenue.

In today’s era of overwhelming voices, media must adhere to the essence of communication, remember their responsibilities, and embrace the philosophy of “openness, inclusiveness, and innovation leadership” to adapt to the breadth, depth, speed, and integration of current socio-cultural development, thereby creating media platforms that serve with heart and soul. Furthermore, media must accelerate the “five-chain integration” of industrial chains, technology chains,

innovation chains, talent chains, and international communication chains to promote collaborative innovation in derivative and related industries, and enhance international discourse power by creating content brands that meet public demand.

1. Theoretical Analysis

1.1 Emergence: Dual-Drive of Cultural Soft Environment and Technological Hard Power

The cultural-creative media industry has emerged against the backdrop of economic globalization as a new type of industry centered on creative cultural content marketing [2]. Its development and utilization of communication media resources have spawned numerous new products, markets, and opportunities. For the cultural-creative industry, the product itself is a media product, with marketing communication representing a crucial component [3]. From a media perspective, as an intermediary organization, media platforms do not directly produce physical products but rather integrate various production factors to provide services for creating certain products [4], with content being fundamental to communication. Quality cultural-creative media products not only generate substantial profits but also enhance the media carrier's social influence and communication power. Without innovative content, creative communication loses its meaning and value [5].

President Xi Jinping has repeatedly emphasized on multiple occasions the need to promote the creative transformation and innovative development of excellent traditional Chinese culture. Under this cultural impetus, waves of creative enthusiasm themed around inheriting traditional Chinese culture have surged continuously: cultural-creative products frequently “break circles,” covering all aspects of daily life including food, clothing, utilities, travel, and entertainment; “Cultural-creative +” resonates and coexists with primary, secondary, and tertiary industries, fostering prosperity in emerging business formats and providing new ideas for empowering traditional industries; the “dual swords combination” of cultural-creativity and technology expands appreciation space for strategic emerging industries such as digital creative industries and related services. The deep integration of cultural-creativity and technology has shifted the industry's focus from physical positions to virtual platforms, with cultural-creative products gaining more diverse forms of expression through technological empowerment. According to National Cultural Heritage Administration data, in 2020 alone, national museums developed over 124,000 types of cultural-creative products, generating actual revenue exceeding 1.1 billion yuan [6]. On the consumption side, the cultural-creative market under the new generation of information technology is characterized by scenario-based consumption. Leveraging technologies such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, Internet of Things, and digital finance, along with new media platforms, digital scenarios like digital museums and cloud-based Great Wall tours have been launched. In this context, “Cultural-creative + Technology” has anchored new orientations for the media

industry to explore digital scenarios, digital marketing, and digital retail. In the internet era of rapid technological development, where everything is interconnected, the industry's powerful ability to express and transmit information, coupled with massive data and rich application scenarios, has established new coordinates for the integration of content creativity and technological innovation in the media industry.

1.2 Development: Coexistence of Opportunities and Challenges Under Cultural-Creative Media and Technology Integration

The cultural-creative media industry possesses tremendous development potential, with obvious cluster-driven effects. The media industry promotes deep integration between the digital economy and the real economy, creating a “catfish effect” that boosts digital economic development [7]. Cultural-creative media-related industries in the digital economy field include digital media equipment manufacturing, wearable smart device manufacturing, broadcasting and film equipment wholesale, digital publication retail, animation and gaming, and other digital content services, occupying important positions in China's digital economy landscape. Digital media industries, with their advantages of zero pollution, low consumption, high efficiency, easy dissemination, and diversified forms, have created substantial value and brought new opportunities for the digital transformation of cultural-creative media. Cultural-creative media groups have focused on product development applying big data, artificial intelligence, software, and information technology, achieving a series of results.

However, the cultural-creative media industry remains underdeveloped domestically, facing several problems. First, media groups operate under dual public service and enterprise attributes with cross-management systems. External competitors lack local information accumulation, making service quality difficult to guarantee. The media industry involves broad market domains with large group-linked volumes, where a single move affects the whole body, requiring massive investment for transformation. Second, there is a lack of specialized management and professional economic analysis institutions [8], with many groups being small-scale, slow-growing, having weak digital economic foundations, scarce professional talent, insufficient core technology R&D, and weak market competitiveness. Finally, how to use digital technology to achieve deep integration of creativity and media, combining content with traffic, represents a typical challenge facing the media industry.

1.3 Maturation: Cultural-Creative Media Industry Ecosystem Moving Toward Maturity

The cultural-creative derivative chain has comprehensively expanded, forming a smart media ecosystem pattern. The media industry ecosystem has gradually expanded, extending from government services to technical services, multidirectionally unfolding around digital platform strongholds. Media groups have established strategic layouts by building proprietary databases, data monitoring

stations, cloud computing and big data experimental centers, and forming technical teams responsible for R&D and big data analysis. Data utilization makes news reporting and other media content more persuasive while improving information circulation efficiency. Media enterprise value orientation has become more stable, emphasizing employee ideological value and capability training. By building consensus among employees, strengthening value guidance, and leveraging the invisible guiding role of core values, media groups have established talent teams with unified goals and aligned paces [9]. Some enterprises have established one-on-one mentorship mechanisms with academia, building industry-academia-research integration platforms to absorb large numbers of talent reserves from universities while inviting experts from research institutes to provide guidance on laboratory projects.

Technology changes communication patterns, and new connections between media and audiences are forming. The digital transformation of the media industry does not replace traditional media but rather uses new technology to reconstruct new communication networks. Boundaries between media and related industries are gradually weakening with higher integration, using community effects to establish new relationship models between media and audiences. Breaking temporal and spatial limitations, media-audience connections have become closer, shifting from “one-to-many” to “many-to-many” communication where audiences can access information from multiple media channels and information can reach large audiences. For example, a news item on Weibo can be forwarded multiple times to audiences in different circles; because each person understands information differently, the communication effects also vary.

2. Analysis of “Cultural-Creative Media + Technology” Integration Trends

2.1 Significant Regional Disparities: Beijing’s Dominance in the North, Jiangsu and Zhejiang Leading in the South

China’s digital media-related industries mainly include five categories: news and publishing; broadcasting, television, film and recording production; telecommunications, broadcasting television and satellite transmission services; information transmission, software and information technology services; and software and information technology services [10]. As of December 2022, according to data from Qichacha on listed companies, Guangdong Province had the most registered listed companies in these five categories (153), followed by Zhejiang (61), Beijing (56), Sichuan (54), Jiangsu (28), Shandong (25), Fujian (22), and Shanghai (14). Capital concentration is highest in Beijing, Zhejiang, Jiangsu, Hunan, Guangdong, Anhui, Shandong, Shanghai, Jilin, Fujian, and Sichuan. Most are concentrated in southern China, represented by established listed companies such as Shanghai Oriental Pearl New Media Co., Ltd. (established 1990), New Guomai Digital Culture Co., Ltd. (established 1992), Shenzhen Coship Electronics Co., Ltd. (established 1994), and Visual China Group Co., Ltd. (established

1994). Beijing, Zhejiang, Guangdong and other provinces and cities have quantitative advantages that create significant gaps with other regions. These areas have faster-developing emerging technology industries, with obvious cluster effects from cultural-creative industry parks and technology industrial parks that exert strong pulling effects from leading enterprises. In contrast, lagging regions have dispersed resources such as technology and professional talent, with impeded investment and financing flows. Even in regions with several strong established media groups, the digital transformation process remains slow, with insufficient release of core industry radiation effects, making it difficult to achieve industrialization and scale.

[Figure 1: see original paper] Regional Distribution of China' s Major Digital Media-Related Industries in 2022

2.2 From Vision to Reality: Continuously Creating New Scenarios, Business Forms, and Spaces

New Scenarios. Applications such as “Media + Big Data,” “Media + Geographic Information,” and “Media + Artificial Intelligence” have constructed new government service scenarios for cultural-creative media. The new production relationship composed of “data + algorithms + computing power” is driving profound changes in media business forms. County-level media convergence centers have become a vital force in modernizing the national grassroots governance system and capabilities. Local governments have collaborated with major local media to build integrated media platforms encompassing “government affairs + business + services.” New scenarios such as AI virtual anchors, robot writing, and 5G slow live streaming have unleashed people’ s enthusiasm for content production, with explosive growth in video, gaming, and international current affairs content data on media platforms.

New Business Forms. Digital cultural-creative media, supported by technology and centered on creative content, innovates more online-offline integrated digital product consumption business forms, greatly enriching product display formats. For example, the China Cultural Media New Cultural-Creative Collection Platform uses blockchain technology to provide content production method transformation from network cultural digital resources to digital assets based on intellectual property traceability and confirmation [11], promoting the dissemination of cultural-creative digital collections.

New Spaces. The “Cultural-creative Media + Technology” concept has three prominent perspectives: creative, technological, and life [12]. Trends show increasingly personalized and life-oriented design, where culture as a design element needs to combine with daily life to bring spiritual enjoyment and attract consumers. Digital technology application in the media industry endows products with 趣味性 and new vitality, bringing audiences immersive and interactive experiences. Cultural-creative media without technological sense will gradually be marginalized despite being interesting.

2.3 Clear Business Models: Industry Chain Value Chain and Business Models Taking Shape

The cultural-creative media industry chain is similar to the cultural-creative industry chain, including content production, channel distribution, and derivative segments. The upstream consists of an incubation layer centered on original content such as news reporting and advertising, along with artists and capital. The midstream is the production and operation layer focused on short videos, variety shows, and broadcasting. The downstream involves dissemination, promotion, marketing knowledge, and derivative product transactions through individual or platform power. The “revenue-sharing” model typically distributes terminal income upward at certain ratios, reflecting participants’ contribution levels and bargaining power differences in corresponding segments. Traditional media have achieved remarkable results in advertising revenue, knowledge payment income, and copyright income, while digital media industries have added operator service income, and cultural-creative design brings value-added service charges and peripheral product income.

2.4 Empowering Urban Renewal: “Cultural-creative Media +” Accelerating Industry-City Integration

Urban renewal projects feature long cycles and complex business formats, requiring the establishment of multi-partner relationships among media, government, and citizens. Under the goal of building smart cities, cultural-creative media empowers cultural tourism, museums, architecture, transportation, and other industries to promote industry-city integration and jointly build future cities.

“Media + Cultural Tourism.” By creating a new model of “Cultural Tourism + Media + Internet,” immersive promotion and marketing activities for all-for-one tourism are carried out [13], strengthening local tourism brand awareness and influence to attract tourists for both online immersive tours and offline physical visits. For example, the “Jiangnan Beyond the Great Wall · Magical Ningxia” event hosted by the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region Department of Culture and Tourism in Shanghai aroused Shanghai tourists’ interest in traveling to Ningxia.

“Media + Museum.” Museum exhibition design has evolved from solely stimulating senses through visual images to engaging audiences’ visual, auditory, tactile, olfactory, and gustatory senses through new media equipment. Common methods involve seamlessly integrating multimedia devices with physical artifact displays in exhibition halls, such as large-screen projection television or film screening, automatic slide demonstrations, electric sand tables, and sound effect design.

“Media + Building Economy.” Multimedia devices create business negotiation and roadshow spaces, such as outdoor ultra-large LCD screens aligned with architectural design layouts, building LCD televisions in elevator waiting areas,

and elevator interior frame advertisements to meet modern business clients' aesthetic needs and business expansion requirements.

“Media + Transportation.” According to relevant statistics, in 2022, national rail transit completed 19.302 billion passenger trips, with urban rail transit remaining in a rapid development phase during the three years after the 14th Five-Year Plan [14]. The cross-boundary integration of “Media + Transportation” fully captures passengers' scattered attention, orienting advertising toward transportation travel user needs and using interactive creative experiences to shorten distances with users. For example, 58.com collaborated with *Honor of Kings* to place “King' s Canyon Passage” advertisements in subway stations, conveying 58.com' s business advantage of “always having good jobs with rising salaries.”

3. Countermeasures for High-Quality Development of Cultural-Creative Media Industry

3.1 Building Digital Creative Media City Networks

First, optimize digital new infrastructure supporting facilities. “New infrastructure” possesses dual attributes of fixed asset investment and innovation-driven foundational element construction. For key infrastructure such as 5G base stations, data centers, and cloud computing centers, appropriate advanced deployment should be made to provide early-stage foundations for future deep applications. Fully leverage the 保障性 role of government funds in early-stage construction, gradually explore market-oriented investment models [15], and motivate diverse participation from enterprises, institutions, and individuals to promote the transformation of the industry investment and financing chain from government-driven to market-led. Second, expand media business and accelerate media technology penetration into the tertiary industry. Build integrated media matrices by uniting multiple new media platforms including Weibo, WeChat, mobile apps, and live streaming to construct proprietary media systems, laying solid foundations for improving media communication power and cross-industry development of cultural-creative industries [16]. Integrate new media industry chain upstream and downstream resources, expand new businesses and platform upgrades, and actively establish connections with smart city renewal to optimize business structures.

3.2 Building New Technology Industrial Parks to Promote Transformation and Application

First, build industry clusters and technology parks by region. In provinces with resource concentration, strong innovation capabilities, high marketization levels, and developed economies, create first-class cultural-creative media industry clusters. In provinces with weak digital creative development foundations, establish batches of cultural-creative media technology parks and cultural-creative technology product R&D experimental centers to create cultural media products

avored by audiences. For example, Shanghai United Media Group's "Culture + Real Estate" model builds public, functional, and service-oriented media valleys that attract new mainstream media "head enterprises" and cultural media industry investment, integrating into the Yangtze River Delta regional integration development strategy to create first-class media cultural industry clusters. Second, establish external cooperation and exchange mechanisms. Connect with major domestic and international institutions for joint training and establish cooperation mechanisms with world-class media art capitals. Hire renowned domestic and international industry experts for exchange and guidance. Increase the frequency, density, and depth of factor mobility to enhance technological content and added value, leveraging agglomeration effects. Third, shorten the time for scientific and technological achievement transformation and application. Actively explore implementation plans from basic research and applied research to rapid industrial application, strengthening original innovation drivers. For example, China Media Group uses a "technology experiment + program practice" approach to vigorously promote technological innovation application, or uses technology trial operation methods to test actual effects in the cloud.

3.3 Strengthening the Cultivation of Converged Professional Media Talent

First, multi-party collaborative cultivation of converged media talent through "government-school-enterprise" partnerships. Establish industry-education integrated media talent collaborative cultivation mechanisms. Explore comprehensive reforms in new media talent training models, university discipline and curriculum systems, and dual-mentor cultivation both on campus and in industry. Relevant government departments should increase funding for media institutions, strengthen guidance for cultivating professional media talent within the industry. Mobilize diverse participation in talent cultivation through school-enterprise joint platforms such as practical training bases and technological media innovation competitions. Second, cross-regional cooperation leveraging "external brainpower" for mutual resource assistance. The media industry requires various types of talent and can utilize experts from consulting firms and research institutes to participate in decision-making on media research, talent cultivation, decision-making consultation, public communication, and corporate brand management, helping enterprises plan overall strategic decisions scientifically and rationally. For example, Southern Media Group and Jinan University jointly built the Southern Media Research Institute, creating an excellent platform for leveraging "external brainpower."

3.4 Brand IP Shaping + Specialized Communication Integration

First, the primary task for cultural-creative media enterprises is to identify their positioning and establish their brand image. It is not difficult to observe that among enterprises that have sustained growth since their establishment, most are established groups. Besides government support, these enterprises have

been able to adapt to constantly changing market trends and undergo media convergence or digital upgrade transformations, more importantly because they have always adhered to their own brands, upheld integrity and innovation, and insisted on content quality. In the ever-changing trend cycle where one hit product after another “breaks circles,” few ultimately remain in the market. If cultural-creative media enterprises seek long-term upward development, merely following trends in creation will easily lead to market elimination. Therefore, the primary task for enterprises is to build their brand image first. Product forms and formats can change and content can expand, but the essential philosophy must remain consistent to maintain distinct characteristics in the rapidly changing creative market. Second, leverage proprietary technologies from other media platforms to co-create cooperative brands. It is necessary to “leverage” resources comprehensively while also being “smart” about it, forming stable cooperative relationships with major brands to create high-quality brands in the national cultural-creative market, improving the competitiveness, flexibility, and resilience of the cultural-creative media industry. For example, the “Suzhou at Ease” cultural-creative studio deeply excavates broadcasting copyright IP, leverages resource advantages, conducts R&D, procurement, display, and sales of cultural-creative products, forming a complete copyright cultural-creative industry chain and exploring systematic operation of broadcasting copyright content industries [17]. Third, build proprietary specialized communication platforms. Adapt to trends and embrace change by establishing multi-functional communication platforms to create all-media communication and service matrices integrating “newspapers, websites, terminals, micro-accounts, and official accounts,” continuously improving communication power, guidance, influence, and credibility [18]. Deeply cultivate high-quality content supply, continuously optimize customized and high-value content, emphasize social attributes, and constantly improve full-scenario communication channels from work needs to life needs.

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Author Introduction: Gao Mengtong (1994-), female, from Shijiazhuang, Hebei, Master's degree, Research Assistant at *Economic Forum* Magazine, Hebei Academy of Social Sciences, research interests: cultural industries, news media.

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