

## Live Streaming –A New Breakthrough for Deep Media Convergence Postprint

**Authors:** Bai Linmiao, Liu Chang

**Date:** 2023-10-08T00:00:00+00:00

### Abstract

In recent years, webcasting has risen abruptly, exerting influence across various industries through its interactive and convenient characteristics, with particularly profound implications for the media sector. The functional revolution in media engendered by webcasting has propelled numerous individuals from backstage to frontstage, from margins to center stage, thereby facilitating information dissemination for hundreds of millions of internet users. Against this backdrop, this article examines the development trends of new media and analyzes the innovative developmental pathways for webcasting in news information dissemination from a future communication perspective, aiming to provide references for the further convergence and innovation of traditional media.

### Full Text

## Live Streaming: A New Breakthrough for Deep Media Convergence

**Bai Linmiao, Liu Chang**

Wenzhou Business College, Wenzhou, Zhejiang 325000

**Abstract:** In recent years, live streaming has emerged as a powerful force, influencing various industries through its interactive and convenient features, with particularly profound impacts on the media sector. The functional revolution in media driven by live streaming has propelled countless individuals from backstage to center stage, from periphery to core, bringing unprecedented convenience to information dissemination for hundreds of millions of internet users. Against this backdrop, this paper examines the development trends of new media and analyzes how live streaming can innovate and develop in news communication from the perspective of future communication, aiming to provide references for further integration and innovation of traditional media.

**Keywords:** Live Streaming; Media Convergence; Future Communication; Circle-breaking Integration

**CLC Number:** G206

**Document Code:** A

**Article ID:** 1671-0134(2022)05-108-03

**DOI:** 10.19483/j.cnki.11-4653/n.2022.05.033

Human expression has evolved from the era of text to images, and now video increasingly dominates people's lives. In *Being Digital*, Nicholas Negroponte predicted that digitization would become the future mode of human existence. Live streaming has not only transformed people's lifestyles, consumption patterns, and production methods but has also subverted the communication mechanisms, value models, and profit structures of traditional media [1]. Live streaming represents a new breakthrough for deep media convergence, offering fresh opportunities for the transformation and innovation of traditional media.

## 1. The Connotation and Characteristics of Live Streaming

Live streaming represents the organic integration of broadcasting technology and popular culture, possessing both the ritualistic quality of television broadcasting and the diversity, interactivity, and fragmentation characteristic of online media [2].

### 1.1 The Meaning of Live Streaming

According to the *Regulations on Internet Live Streaming Services*, live streaming refers to activities that continuously transmit real-time information to audiences through video, audio, graphics, and text via the internet. This model breaks through the pattern of professional organizations producing and unidirectionally disseminating information to audiences, empowering users to conduct real-time live broadcasts and interact during the process. It enables audiences to transform from passive content recipients into active information publishers at any moment. Live streaming generally possesses three fundamental attributes: information content production, social interaction, and user rewards. Content production forms the foundation of live streaming, social interaction represents its advantage, and user rewards serve as its important driving force. These three attributes determine the close relationship between anchors and audiences, distinguishing it from traditional television broadcasting. Television broadcasting represents elite discourse and concentrated manifestation of public events, whereas live streaming embodies civilian and universal participation, focusing less on constructing and interpreting mainstream ideology and more on audience experience in daily life.

### 1.2 Characteristics of Live Streaming

**1.2.1 Multi-directional Interactive Immersive Experience** The most significant feature of social media is strong user interaction and high sticki-

ness. Live streaming platforms, in particular, focus on real-time interaction between users and anchors, building a bridge for communication and engagement. This multi-directional interaction is unmatched by other media forms. In traditional media, audience feedback is delayed, whereas in live streaming, real-time comments enable immediate interaction with anchors or other viewers, satisfying their need for feedback. Simultaneously, the medium creates a virtual “sense of presence,” resembling an emotional experience co-led and participated in by multiple parties, which also fulfills audiences’ companionship needs. In the live streaming media ecosystem, graphical avatars replace physical presence, technological development expands bodily functions, and the body shifts from “presence” to “absence,” replaced by a series of symbolic signs. The fluctuating numbers in each live room have become symbols of the audience. For example, watching “mukbang” streams has become a way for many to decompress. Anchors not only comment on food but also chat with fans in the live room, who reciprocate through gifting and joining fan clubs. This satisfies the four elements of Randall Collins’ s Interaction Ritual Chain theory: two or more people gathered in the same place, setting boundaries for outsiders, focusing attention on common objects or activities, and sharing common emotional experiences [3]. Audiences are no longer passive information receivers; they have the choice to stay or leave the live room. Live streaming breaks the solemn and serious constraints of traditional broadcasting formats, achieving an emotional-level cross-screen interaction.

**1.2.2 “Liquid” Information Dissemination Structure** Zygmunt Bauman’ s concepts of “liquid” and “flowing” in *Liquid Modernity* reveal the public’ s expectation for instantaneous and rapid information, where information production no longer has a stable, singular authority [4]. This “liquid” concept aptly characterizes live streaming features. First, anchor identities are “liquefied.” In emerging digital media culture, audiences are no longer passive recipients but active disseminators who produce and acquire information based on interest. From Bauman’ s “liquid” perspective, the relatively stable authoritative identity of traditional information publishers no longer exists. In live streaming, this manifests as the continuous shifting between opinion leaders and ordinary people. Within their live rooms, anchors become opinion leaders with certain discursive power—the more viewers, the greater the influence. After the broadcast ends, their identity returns to ordinary citizens in real life. Second, professional communities are “liquefied.” Anchors in live streaming are equivalent to hosts in traditional media. The decentralization of information production power enables ordinary people to voice their opinions to the public anytime and anywhere. However, due to the lack of professional training, anchors’ varying professional qualities cause the boundaries between information and information control to liquefy and diffuse. New forms of information production and flow are being created, and the institutional structure of traditional media is being dismantled.

**1.2.3 Non-public Personalized Expression** Unlike unidirectional propaganda and education dominated by power, capital, or intellectual elites, live streaming stands in stark contrast to rigid, serious, orthodox, and rigorous narrative styles. It does not focus on public issues but instead uses daily and life-oriented methods such as rap, performance, banter, and jest to meet diverse audience demands—a form of personalized expression. Live streaming content is close to life and the public; everyone can become an anchor, express their views, and demonstrate their personality. Live streaming audiences exhibit characteristics of circle-based grouping, sharing similar life experiences and resonating with the same content, thereby constructing group identity through live streaming platforms. This expression features informality and civilian characteristics.

## 2. Problems in Traditional Media Live Broadcasting Compared to Online Live Streaming

The operational model of traditional media typically follows “news reporting—distribution—advertising” or “news reporting—advertising,” whereas new media models follow “information dissemination—traffic—monetization.” Traditional dissemination was relatively singular with weak interactivity between disseminators and audiences. Although traditional newspapers, magazines, radio, and television all emphasized service—for example, radio and television opened listener and viewer hotlines and launched lifestyle service programs during specific time slots—most information remained unidirectional.

### 2.1 Insufficient Communication Timeliness

Radio and television, once considered new media, were highly popular. However, compared to today’s internet dissemination, they still face issues of slow timeliness, single communication methods, and narrow communication scope. In the past, radio and television news broadcasts were occasionally conducted, and service programs were scheduled at specific times, but content generally focused on major news events, with occasional television shopping programs. Compared to today’s internet live streaming, traditional media’s communication timeliness is obviously insufficient, making the gradual loss of audiences understandable.

### 2.2 Relatively Single Methods

Among the three traditional media types, newspaper news generally adopts text + image formats. When newspaper journalists cover complex news events, they can only choose single, linear reporting methods. Constrained by layout, newspapers’ information dissemination capacity is limited. Radio news focuses primarily on audio transmission, which is fleeting, difficult to remember and preserve, and lacks visual and vivid imagery. Although television possesses the advantages of audio and visual transmission, it is also constrained by strict time limits, allowing only limited information to be disseminated within designated time slots. Furthermore, restricted by regional reach and news tentacles, viewers

cannot independently choose which television station they want to receive.

### **2.3 Narrow Communication Scope**

In the information dissemination market, traditional newspapers, magazines, radio, and television media's greatest advantage is producing professional news information. News information is naturally the biggest advantage of traditional media due to their professional news gathering, editing, and publishing teams. However, constrained by audience collection scope, distribution, and signal coverage, traditional media has always been limited by time and space, and the information disseminated is also affected by these constraints. This limitation becomes particularly prominent when compared to online new media.

## **3. Development Trends of Media in the Online Live Streaming Era**

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic ushered in a wave of “live streaming for all,” changing users' media consumption habits and creating new characteristics for online communication. Facing these changes, traditional media should adapt to development trends, leverage their advantages to integrate and develop with live streaming, and establish new live streaming thinking based on internet development patterns.

### **3.1 Leverage Content Advantages and Innovate Communication Forms**

In today's era, audiences receive information through diverse channels, with algorithmic recommendations delivering content directly to them. Currently, content recommendation takes two main forms: one where audiences select customized news information types, actively subscribing to preferred news columns and choosing news categories for personalized news services; the other where big data algorithms analyze users' browsing preferences, click rates, viewing duration, likes, and comments to calculate preferred news information types [5].

The sense of presence and interactivity in live streaming attracts viewers, but high-quality content is the fundamental means of retaining audiences. In the current live streaming era, online content varies greatly in quality. Traditional media, with its strict content review mechanisms and “gatekeeper” editors, avoids homogenization, vulgarity, and excessive entertainment in live content, better satisfying user demands for information quality.

Under the live streaming environment, mainstream media content is diversifying. The “Live Streaming +” model is gradually enriching, encompassing not only “Live Streaming + News” but also “Live Streaming + Culture,” “Live Streaming + Public Welfare,” “Live Streaming + E-commerce,” and “Live Streaming + Education.” During the pandemic, major mainstream media's live streaming activities achieved excellent social effects. In January 2020, CCTV's Yangshipin

platform conducted a 24-hour uninterrupted “slow” live broadcast of the construction sites of Wuhan’s Huoshenshan and Leishenshan hospitals, with over 50 million people online “supervising” the construction. This live streaming activity became a phenomenal communication case in China. Yangshipin’s novel slow live format allowed homebound audiences to participate cross-screen in the construction process, with real-time bullet comments achieving universal “presence” and fulfilling audiences’ strong “uses and gratifications” needs throughout the communication environment.

### 3.2 Multi-platform Resonance to Expand Communication Effects

In the all-media context, a large number of mainstream media represented by People’s Daily, Xinhua News Agency, and CCTV News have joined social media platforms, exploring new opportunities in media convergence and enriching their discourse systems to achieve “1+1>2” communication effects through popular methods. In 2019, CCTV’s matrix media had already joined Bilibili, along with numerous mainstream media and government institutions such as Global Times, China Daily, and the Communist Youth League Central Committee, becoming well-known UP hosts with millions of followers. Moreover, mainstream media has also embraced short video platforms. After *Xinwen Lianbo* (News Broadcast) opened its Kuaishou account, it gained over 18.28 million followers within three days [6].

In the face of massive online information, traditional media’s professional, team, and technical advantages are incomparable to self-media, enabling them to stand out on social platforms. Particularly in responding to emergencies, traditional media leverages platform technical support to launch live broadcasts immediately, answering public questions and eliminating public opinion issues caused by time lags. Simultaneously, they acquire private domain traffic on social media, achieving multi-screen interaction from a single source, with television, live streaming platforms, and social media cooperating to achieve 叠加效果 (synergistic effects) and expand the influence of traditional media.

### 3.3 Innovate Communication Thinking and Upgrade “Circle-breaking” Integration

Live e-commerce represents a major attempt by traditional media to “break circles,” reflecting innovative thinking in the live streaming wave. Traditional media and platform media build new content production forms through vertical and horizontal integration, creating a converged media communication format of short videos + cross-screen 联动 (linked) live streaming + e-commerce.

During the pandemic, CCTV News collaborated with Li Jiaqi to launch the “Thank You for Supporting Hubei” live e-commerce event, broadcasting simultaneously on Weibo, Douyin, Kuaishou, and other platforms. The combination of “Zhu Guangquan and Li Jiaqi” was immediately embraced by netizens. Zhu Guangquan used humorous banter to interact with audiences in an equal and

friendly manner, while Li Jiaqi leveraged his professional anchoring expertise and rich experience to promote products. The two “internet celebrities” shared traffic, broke circle barriers, and created over 100 million yuan in sales, generating significant social and economic value. This e-commerce live broadcast represented traditional media’s attempt to transform its approach, shifting from the rigid role of news information disseminator to a “versatile” public service integrated communication entity, demonstrating mainstream media’ s social responsibility and value mission to serve the overall situation.

With the deepening of 5G applications and the forced transformation driven by COVID-19, live streaming has rapidly risen across China like bamboo shoots after spring rain, penetrating various industries including news communication with its high timeliness and strong interactivity. Based on the current state of live streaming and changes in users’ media consumption habits, this paper analyzes the problems and shortcomings of traditional media communication compared to online live streaming, proposing that traditional media in the live streaming era should adapt to development trends, leverage their advantages to integrate with live streaming, and firmly establish live streaming thinking based on internet development patterns. This will make live streaming a new breakthrough for deep media convergence, providing new opportunities for traditional media transformation and innovation.

**References:** [1] Xu Xiangdong. The Development Status, Governance Dilemmas, and Countermeasures of Live Streaming in China[J]. *Jinan Journal (Philosophy & Social Sciences Edition)*, 2018(3): 70-81. [2] Li Xiaojian. Analysis of the Development Path of Live Streaming[J]. *New Media Research*, 2018(6): 117-118. [3] Ma Mengjiao. Research on the Communication Mechanism of Fan Culture Based on Interaction Ritual Chain Theory[J]. *Today’s Media*, 2018(11): 44-46. [4] Peng Lan. “Liquid,” “Semi-liquid,” and “Gaseous” : The Three States of Online Communities[J]. *Chinese Journal of Journalism & Communication*, 2020(10): 31-47. [5] Zheng Shuyue. The Identification and Application of “Public Places” in the Live Streaming Environment[J]. *Journal of Hubei Polytechnic Institute*, 2021(1): 99-104. [6] Zu Wei. *Xinwen Lianbo* Joins Kuaishou and Douyin, Gaining 16 Million Followers in 3 Days[N]. *Beijing Youth Daily*, 2019-8-27(12).

**Author Biographies:**

Bai Linmiao (1981-), male, from Wenzhou, Zhejiang, Director and Senior Reporter, research direction: online news communication.

Liu Chang (1994-), female, from Jilin, Teaching Assistant, research direction: online news communication.

**(Editor in Charge: Tu Dongmin)**

*Note: Figure translations are in progress. See original paper for figures.*

*Source: ChinaXiv – Machine translation. Verify with original.*