

Key Research Postprint: Current Status, Problems, and Innovation Pathways for Traditional and New Media Convergence

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

Abstract

The integrated development of traditional media and emerging media refers to the comprehensive integration of traditional and emerging media across content, channels, platforms, operations, and management through the application of modern information technology. Currently, traditional media has merely achieved integration at the level of hardware platforms and development concepts, while detailed content has not been deeply integrated, resulting in the problem of formalistic integration. This paper analyzes the current status, problems, and key issues in innovative pathways for the integrated development of traditional media and emerging media.

Full Text

Preamble

A Critical Study on the Current Status, Problems, and Innovative Pathways of the Integrated Development of Traditional and New Media

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Abstract: The integrated development of traditional and new media refers to the comprehensive integration of content, channels, platforms, operations, and management between the two through modern information technology. At present, traditional media have only achieved integration at the hardware platform and conceptual level, while failing to deeply integrate detailed content, resulting in a formalistic approach to convergence. This paper analyzes the current status, problems, and critical innovative pathways for the integrated development of traditional and new media.

Keywords: technology application; operational mechanism; communication platform; optimization concept

Classification Code: G206

Document Code: A

Article ID: 1671-0134(2022)04-104-03

DOI: 10.19483/j.cnki.11-4653/n.2022.04.031

Citation Format: Yang Xiaojing. A Critical Study on the Current Status, Problems, and Innovative Pathways of the Integrated Development of Traditional and New Media [J]. China Media Technology, 2022(04).

2. Problems in the Integrated Development of Traditional and New Media

In the era of big data, traditional and new media each present distinct communication advantages and limitations. Traditional media possess strong content production capabilities, professional news communication concepts and operational mechanisms, and high brand recognition. In terms of news creation, traditional media demonstrate considerable advantages in depth, breadth, and quality of news reporting. Emerging media, conversely, feature strong interactivity, rapid dissemination speed, diversified information values, and varied communication formats. The integrated development of traditional and new media under the big data context aims to merge these two forms while preserving their respective strengths, giving full play to emerging media advantages to achieve a development model based on the concept of “resource integration, content compatibility, mutual promotion, and shared benefits.” This integration represents the future trend of media development in China, and Chinese traditional media have already begun exploring this path [1].

2.1 Divergent Operational Mechanisms

Converged media requires the integration of resources, technology, and content from both traditional and new media to form a unified organizational structure and communication system. However, current operations remain fragmented. Departments such as broadcast, television, newspapers, and magazines in traditional media still complete their own news creation and dissemination tasks, while new media have formed a compartmentalized editing and production structure with corresponding distribution systems based on their own needs. The absence of an integrated mechanism prevents traditional media from effectively utilizing the resources, technology, and content of new media, and vice versa. Without establishing new operational mechanisms, true resource, technology, and content sharing, as well as optimized management and integrated development, cannot be achieved in the converged media environment [3].

2.2 Communication Awareness Deficits

In the past, traditional media served as the mouthpiece of Party committees and government departments, meaning that receiving information from traditional media was equivalent to hearing the voice of these authorities. Although audiences provided feedback, overall communication remained primarily one-way and bottom-up. In the internet environment, however, user demands have changed significantly. Users have become accustomed to interacting through online platforms and voicing their opinions. In the converged media context, users now demand two-way communication from traditional media, criticizing current interactivity as overly formalistic. They note that traditional media's internet platforms update slowly and fail to provide adequate user feedback. Without achieving genuine two-way communication, user voices become disconnected from government voices, preventing traditional media from serving as an effective bridge for information flow in the converged media environment [4].

2.3 Product Innovation Challenges

Currently, many users perceive traditional media as suffering from scattered resources, weakened dissemination power and influence, and insufficient innovation capacity and development momentum. New media, meanwhile, exhibits uneven quality in news creation, with some platforms deliberately distorting key information to gain clicks and traffic. This product innovation landscape reveals that traditional media are no longer the sole channel for information reception, as users can access information through multiple channels. This has weakened traditional media's production capacity and public opinion guidance effectiveness, sometimes leaving users unable to obtain authoritative information and causing panic. In the converged media environment, enriching product offerings and re-strengthening traditional media's public opinion guidance capabilities represent critical challenges to overcome.

2.4 Technology Application Issues

Converged media connects platforms used by traditional media with online media platforms, requiring data sharing in operations management, secure access to terminal platform functions, secure business communications, and smooth establishment of business modules. Although converged media platforms have been established, practical application problems often degrade user experience. For instance, users frequently complain about network delays when watching traditional media programs via mobile apps, particularly severe during peak usage. Software crashes also occur during interactions, resulting in poor user experience. Converged media platforms must address these technical application issues to enhance user experience.

2.5 User Retention Problems

Traditional media believe that in the converged media environment, users no longer habitually watch radio and television or purchase newspapers and magazines, preferring instead to receive information through online platforms. As traditional media's primary revenue source is advertising, when user attention shifts from traditional to new media, the value of advertising on traditional media declines [5]. New media, meanwhile, employs various methods to increase platform clicks and attract user resources, creating original products. However, new media product quality is sometimes difficult to guarantee, and products created may not be suitable for distribution on traditional media. Traditional media must therefore re-engage users, establish new profit models, and achieve benefit sharing.

3. Key Innovative Pathways for Traditional and New Media Integration

3.1 Establishing New Operational Mechanisms

Traditional media have completed two major reforms: restructuring the management system and reforming the institutional framework. The management restructuring integrated radio and television stations established by broadcast and television administrative departments, internal newspapers established by county Party committee propaganda departments, and government website departments into a unified legal entity—the converged media center. Institutionally, the converged media center has separated editorial units from business units, with editorial units as public institutions and business units as enterprise units. The key to forming new operational mechanisms lies in integrating these two types of units to leverage their respective advantages [6].

The operational mechanism can be divided into seven components: (1) **Provincial and Municipal Cooperative Media Command Center**, responsible for overall coordination and evaluation of the Statistics + Outreach, Editorial, Pre-editorial Meeting, Duty Editor-in-Chief Office, Operations, and All-Media Journalist departments. (2) **Editorial Department**, responsible for product creation. (3) **Statistics + Outreach Department**, responsible for collecting various information and providing statistical data and feedback. (4) **Duty Editor-in-Chief Office**, which formulates product topics and provides creation guidance based on information collection, such as effectiveness feedback and hot topic feedback. After the Duty Editor-in-Chief Office develops a product project, the Pre-editorial Meeting reviews it, and approved projects are assigned to the Editorial Department for creation. (5) **Pre-editorial Meeting Department**, responsible for operation monitoring, task coordination, topic planning, and dissemination monitoring. It reviews applications from the Duty Editor-in-Chief Office, supervises information from the Statistics + Outreach Department, and

oversees the Operations Department. (6) **Operations Department**, responsible for operating the institution's network app across all-media channels. It forwards information to websites, WeChat, Weibo, and apps, and reports and provides feedback on topics. (7) **All-Media Journalists** (including other personal websites and self-media on the internet), who write and republish articles according to their needs and form cooperative relationships with provincial and municipal media.

This operational mechanism integrates coordination, data analysis, news creation, manuscript review, topic planning, product promotion, and product extension into a cohesive whole, where each unit has clear rights and responsibilities and their operations form an integrated system.

3.2 Building Two-Way Communication Platforms

Building two-way communication channels requires constructing bridges in three aspects: communication content, tools, and forms. (1) **Establish a communication content classification matrix** to create a “Smart + Intelligent + Think Tank” system. In the big data context, the Statistics + Outreach Department cannot rely on manual methods to collect user demands. To comprehensively understand user needs, the technology department must establish a scientific communication content classification matrix that automatically categorizes user demands using intelligent software. (2) **Flexibly establish interactive platforms** based on user demands. User demands change over time, and the Statistics + Outreach Department must dynamically grasp these evolving needs. By concentrating converged media resources to address issues users care about—for example, the current top concern being pandemic developments—the Duty Editor-in-Chief Office can respond quickly to create relevant products when data from the Statistics + Outreach Department indicates such needs. (3) **Expand communication channels** to carry out supply-side reforms. Leveraging the Operations Department's functions, the system should create a “content production cluster + user cluster + big data + media platform” that encourages user discussion on the app platform, providing vast amounts of data to the Statistics + Outreach Department. The Editorial Department then creates products based on user needs, the Operations Department handles promotion, and All-Media Journalists create news hotspots according to operational needs, ultimately forming a hub ecosystem through comprehensive interaction [7].

3.3 Optimizing Product Creation Concepts

Traditional media previously approached product innovation from a demand-side perspective, as they faced no competitors and were users' sole information source. However, as new media began creating products based on online platforms and competing with traditional media, traditional media's information guidance power weakened. Nevertheless, traditional media maintain advantages in product creation—approximately 70% of first-hand news information in current online products originates from traditional media, while only about 30% is

originally created by new media. Traditional media excel at creation, while new media excel at dissemination. Only by combining these strengths can content integration be achieved [8].

When traditional media create news products, they must collaborate with new media for secondary creation tailored to online dissemination needs. In the internet environment, users receive fragmented information. New media must therefore address how to help users quickly discover information and generate interest based on audience needs. Information types can be categorized as text, graphic, video/audio (of varying lengths), and audio.

3.4 Improving Technology Application Frameworks

Although current converged media platforms have resolved some technical issues, new problems often emerge in the process. Merely solving problems locally cannot improve user experience. To perfect technology application, a comprehensive framework must be established with macro-level planning before optimizing technical implementation (see Table 1).

Table 1 Overall Framework for Converged Media Platform Technology Application

The framework comprises four components: interactive business bus, interactive module pool, interactive terminal applications, and interactive operations management. **Standards:** Establish unified interactive application interfaces, interactive module interfaces, and interactive data formats for the front end; create integrated interactive application modularization for scalability; establish a unified interactive business bus to share user data and interactive data big databases across the media platform industry chain; and enable personalized customization of interactive business for different media. **Data:** Create a big database for “comprehensively mastering user interactive business data,” managed by the Statistics + Outreach Department and reviewed by the Pre-editorial Meeting Department. **Business:** Break down production-broadcast system boundaries to enable shared production processes, integrating traditional media’ s production-broadcast systems with online platforms and mobile user terminals to achieve “shared production” on the converged media platform. **Resources:** Establish an interactive technology system featuring unified yet decentralized management, clear permissions, interconnectivity, real-time interaction, and security control to optimize resource integration. **Technology:** Build an integrated platform to enable collaborative media production, providing customized service functions for traditional media, cooperative operations departments, and other partners.

3.5 Establishing Shared Profit Models

On converged media platforms, traditional media must form industry chains together with new media, investors, licensors, operators, cooperators, and disseminators. Traditional media must leverage their strengths to create indispensable

value within these chains. Only by forming such industry chains can users be provided with higher-quality products, better services, more mature communication channels, and superior experiences. Only when users are satisfied can industry chain value increase and traditional media generate revenue.

See Figure 1 [Figure 1: see original paper] for an example of an industry chain under a converged media platform for game event live streaming. In this case, the broadcasting media is responsible for live streaming game events on media platforms, as users generally consider traditional media authoritative, thereby expanding the influence of game events. In this industry chain, traditional media can leverage their strengths to enhance overall value. By extension, as long as traditional media participate in any valuable industry chain segment and create indispensable value, they can generate revenue. Traditional media must therefore evaluate cooperative partners to participate in valuable industry chains while leveraging their own strengths to increase their value within these chains.

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(Editor in charge: Yang Hu)

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

Source: ChinaXiv – Machine translation. Verify with original.