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## Approaches to Improving Book Quality in the Digital Era: Postprint

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### Abstract

Quality is the lifeline of the publishing industry and an eternal theme of publishing work. In the digital era, while grasping the overall landscape of book quality, it is essential to analyze and assess the new quality risks that digital technological progress brings to book publishing, and to choose targeted implementation pathways from aspects such as adhering to correct publishing orientation, implementing book quality assurance systems, strictly enforcing relevant quality assurance regulations, improving digital technology application capabilities, and establishing online quality feedback mechanisms, thereby ensuring continuous improvement in book quality.

### Full Text

#### ChinaXiv Cooperative Journal: Research on Paths to Improve Book Quality in the Digital Age

*(China Times Economic Publishing House Co., Ltd., Beijing 100000)*

**Abstract:** Quality is the lifeline of the publishing industry and an eternal theme of publishing work. In the digital age, while grasping the overall situation of book quality, it is necessary to analyze and assess new quality risks brought by digital technological progress to book publishing work, and to selectively implement targeted paths from aspects such as adhering to correct publishing orientation, implementing book quality assurance systems, strictly enforcing quality assurance regulations, improving digital technology application capabilities, and establishing online quality feedback mechanisms, to ensure continuous improvement of book quality.

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As China enters the “14th Five-Year Plan” period, with the acceleration of a new round of technological revolution and industrial transformation, further strengthening the awareness of premium products and implementing a premium product strategy—focusing on the taste, quality, category, and brand of books to make exquisite books with profound ideas, masterful content, beautiful binding, and excellent printing the mainstream of the book market, thereby driving the high-quality development of the publishing industry—has become the inevitable path for the publishing industry under the digital age background. To this end, the “Publishing Industry ‘14th Five-Year Plan’ Development Plan” explicitly states that improving quality should be regarded as the lifeline of publishing work.[1] How to safeguard this lifeline of book publishing work, using quality improvement as a breakthrough to better seize the commanding heights of book publishing development in the digital age, is an issue that the book publishing industry cannot avoid. This paper takes the book editing quality situations reported by the national press and publication administration as an entry point, affirms the reality of an overall positive trend in book quality, analyzes new quality risks faced by book publishing work in the digital age, and explores paths for improving book quality on this basis.

## 1. Assessment of Current Book Quality Status

According to the “Book Quality Management Regulations” formulated by the State Press and Publication Administration on December 9, 2004, book quality comprises four components: content quality, editing quality, design quality, and printing quality. Only books that pass all four components are considered qualified; any single failure disqualifies the book. Specifically, content quality is defined as compliance with Articles 26 and 27 of the “Publishing Management Regulations”; editing quality requires an error rate not exceeding 1/10,000; design quality requires that overall design and cover elements (including front cover, inside front, inside back, back cover, flaps, jacket, sleeve, and spine), title page, and illustrations all comply with relevant national technical standards; and printing quality must meet the “Printing Product Quality Evaluation and Grading Guidelines” (CY/T 2-1999).[2]

### 1.2 Analysis of Book Quality Inspection Results

Among the four criteria for evaluating book quality, problems in content and editing are most easily noticed by readers and have always been the focus of national press and publication administration inspections. Since 2011, the national press and publication administration has conducted annual book quality inspections focusing on editing issues, yet unqualified books remain difficult to eliminate from the market. For example, in 2020, the National Press and Publication Administration organized the “Book Quality Management 2020” special

initiative, focusing on editing quality of books in social sciences, literature, children's books, textbooks, teaching supplements, and popular science published since 2019. Among 180 books sampled from 60 publishing institutions, 19 were found to have unqualified editing quality, involving 16 publishing houses. The highest error rate was 5.54/10,000, and the lowest was 1.26/10,000.[3] These results indicate concerning book quality.

### 1.3 Overall Judgment on Book Quality

Since the 19th Party Congress, the book publishing industry has continued to prosper and develop, with overall strength and quality benefits steadily improving. However, the overall quality of book publishing not being high enough and the scarcity of premium products remain prominent issues constraining industry development. Analysis of the aforementioned book quality inspection results from the national press and publication administration over the past four years shows that while book quality is trending positively overall, quality risks persist, and quality issues remain an important factor affecting the healthy development of the book market.

## 2. Manifestations of Book Quality Risks in the Digital Age

With the development of internet and digital technology, an increasing number of things in real life are being unified and incorporated into the data world through digital modeling. Human society has entered an era governed by digital technology—the digital age.[4] The digital age represents an important developmental stage in human civilization and results from applying science and technology to social practice to promote human progress. Digital technology is widely used in industry, agriculture, finance, education, science and technology, culture, health, sports, and many other fields. While bringing positive changes to production and lifestyles, it inevitably carries some unknown negative impacts. For book publishing, the digital age can provide readers with more convenient reading methods, broader reading spaces, richer content, and more diverse experiences, while also enabling authors and editors to improve the timeliness, relevance, economy, efficiency, and effectiveness of book compilation and publication. However, it also causes inherent book quality risks to emerge in new forms.

### 2.1 Content Quality Risks from Deviation in Publishing Orientation

Books are important carriers of knowledge production and dissemination, bearing the important responsibility of providing theoretical and knowledge support for career development, and playing an irreplaceable role in innovating work concepts, promoting work progress, and updating knowledge. China's book publishing work is an important component of the Party and state's cause and one of the main ideological positions. In the digital age, it should adapt to new situations, tasks, and requirements, take Party political construction as

the guiding principle, resolutely safeguard the authority and centralized, unified leadership of the Party Central Committee, and continuously improve its communication power, guidance power, influence, and credibility.[5] However, some book publishing takes catering to specific target audiences as its starting point, using web crawler technology to indiscriminately collect and organize content related to national security and social stability, downloading and aggregating online works that violate socialist core values, and editing research results used without authorization. Such editorial and publishing behaviors can easily deviate from publishing orientation, may trigger legal disputes over privacy rights and intellectual property, and even result in violations of confidentiality regulations.

## 2.2 Editing Quality Risks from Over-reliance on Editing Software

Graphic and text editing and proofreading software based on big data and intelligent learning technologies generally has the function of automatically detecting and correcting errors in documents. This technology can liberate editors from basic proofreading of text, numbers, and symbols, thereby significantly improving editing efficiency and shortening publication cycles. However, any technological invention is based on specific environments and needs, and has its prerequisites and functional limitations. Blindly trusting and over-relying on editing software, treating it as a “panacea,” or even abandoning the “three reviews and three proofreads” system is bound to create editing risks. In reality, some publishing institutions use machine proofreading to replace human proofreading to shorten publication cycles and reduce labor costs, leading to errors in specialized professional knowledge or regionally/industry-specific expressions, resulting in quality problems.

## 2.3 Printing Quality Risks from Improper Selection of Printing Processes

Book printing quality is the comprehensive representation of content quality, editing quality, and design quality—the final result of book editing work and the ultimate embodiment of book quality. In recent years, national and local press and publication administrations have vigorously strengthened management and taken effective measures, achieving gratifying results in improving book printing quality. They have also formed a relatively complete regulatory and standard system for printing quality management, including the “Printing Industry Management Regulations,” “Interim Measures for Supervision and Management of Book and Periodical Printing Product Quality,” “Interim Regulations on Qualifications of Printing Industry Operators,” and “Common Standards and Specifications for Book and Periodical Printing (Third Edition).” However, in the digital age, with the popularization of digital printing technology and the diversification and personalization of audience needs, some publishing institutions ignore the aforementioned regulations under the guise of innovation and technology, using digital printing to pursue novelty in binding design and printing

processes in violation of printing standards. Other institutions, considering cost reduction, choose lower-end digital equipment to replace traditional or high-end digital printing, allowing books with quality problems to enter the market.

### 3. Exploring Paths to Improve Book Quality in the Digital Age

In the digital age, information dissemination channels are more numerous, coverage is broader, and speed is faster. If books have quality problems, the negative impact is greater. Therefore, book publishing work should adapt to the new characteristics of the digital age, strengthen information-based and internet thinking, improve digital management capabilities, innovate editing and publishing methods, scientifically select quality improvement paths, and effectively take measures to prevent quality risks.

#### 3.1 Adhering to Correct Publishing Orientation

Orientation-based publishing is the fundamental principle of book publishing and must always be upheld without any wavering. When considering paths to improve book quality in the digital age context, we should take Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era as guidance, firmly grasp the correct political direction, adhere to correct publishing orientation, constantly pay attention to Party and state policies, laws and regulations, and decisions and deployments, fully understand the major significance of the “Two Establishments,” continuously enhance the “Four Consciousnesses,” strengthen the “Four Confidences,” and achieve the “Two Upholds,” recognizing the importance of improving book quality from a political height. Only by continuously strengthening political awareness can we make correct judgments about various messages flooding the internet with a more professional perspective, control the source of manuscripts, prevent false knowledge and misinformation disguised as scientific or objective reporting from confusing the public, deny stage to viewpoints and discordant voices that contradict the Party and state’s positions, and avoid adverse effects on internet users’ values.

#### 3.2 Implementing Book Quality Assurance Systems

The “Book Quality Assurance System” (hereinafter referred to as the “Assurance System”) issued by the National Press and Publication Administration (National Copyright Administration) on June 26, 1997, is China’s scientific mechanism and basic guideline for regulating book publishing activities and ensuring book quality. The Assurance System provides specific provisions for all aspects of the book publishing process, including topic selection planning, manuscript organization, topic management, “three reviews and three proofreads,” and production printing. Publishing institutions should strictly implement the Assurance System, strictly control topic and manuscript quality, and conduct comprehensive quality management and supervision throughout the entire process of review,

final review, proofreading, red-line checking, binding, design, typesetting, and printing, with a strong emphasis on responsibility implementation. Publishing institutions should also, based on their professional characteristics and combined with new challenges to book quality in the digital age, use big data and cloud computing to achieve precise analysis of quality issues and risk points, refine their quality control mechanisms accordingly, and build effective quality control systems.

### **3.3 Strictly Enforcing Quality Assurance Regulations**

The Assurance System clearly defines various mechanisms: forecasting mechanisms such as annual topic plan approval and filing systems, major topic filing systems, and national new manuscript dispatch review systems; guidance mechanisms such as publishing ventilation meeting systems, publishing law and regulation intensive training systems, public opinion guidance systems, and publishing fund guarantee systems; constraint mechanisms such as publishing house annual inspection and registration systems, book number usage macro-control systems, cross-province printing approval systems, and pre-sale review systems; supervision mechanisms such as random sampling review systems, regular comprehensive analysis systems for book publishing, book editing and printing quality inspection systems, and book market dynamic monitoring systems; responsibility mechanisms such as hierarchical management responsibility systems, competent hosting unit responsibility systems, and publishing house staff certification systems; reward and punishment mechanisms such as outstanding book awards, outstanding editor recognition, outstanding publishing house recognition, and penalties for violations; and social supervision mechanisms such as publishing industry association supervision, social group supervision, reader complaint feedback, and social public opinion supervision, forming a closed-loop quality management system. National press and publication administrations, book publishing institutions, their competent departments, and other relevant units should earnestly fulfill their responsibilities as stipulated in regulations such as the “Publishing Management Regulations,” “Book Quality Management Regulations,” and the Assurance System, weaving a tight quality protection network and building a solid risk isolation wall. While using policy controls to solve problems of blind growth in book varieties and declining publishing quality, we should also keep pace with the times, continuously improve the national-level quality assurance regulatory system, and strengthen quality control and risk prevention mechanisms.

### **3.4 Improving Digital Technology Application Capabilities**

In the digital age, the combined application of multiple technologies such as big data, artificial intelligence, mobile internet, cloud computing, and blockchain has become the technological support for the development of all industries, including book publishing. Book editors should master the application of these emerging digital technologies as basic professional skills. For statements regard-

ing the Party and state' s development strategies, decisions and deployments, laws and regulations, and industry plans, they should verify accuracy and standardization by consulting authoritative websites or mobile apps such as “Study Strong Nation.” For ambiguous or unclear expressions, they should use professional websites or search engines to review relevant materials and determine whether manuscript content complies with laws and regulations and is accurate. For suspected plagiarism in manuscripts, detection systems such as CNKI, Wanfang, and VIP can be used to verify originality, promptly identifying infringement and academic fraud to avoid legal disputes. For data, citations, and references in manuscripts, intelligent editing and proofreading software can be combined with manual proofreading to increase efficiency while adding a “safety gate” for preventing editing problems.

### 3.5 Establishing Online Quality Feedback Mechanisms

Currently, China' s 5G technology has become increasingly mature, and the internet provides great convenience for information collection and dissemination. Book publishing institutions can use mobile communication technology to build the “two micros and one app” in the publishing field—book publishing Weibo, WeChat, and App—forming an efficient and convenient network editing-reading service system and realizing a long-term mechanism for interactive communication among editors, authors, and readers. Through the “two micros and one app,” reader supervision can be leveraged to encourage readers to provide errata information, strengthen supervision of book publishing quality, and form a benign feedback mechanism. For editing, knowledge, and technical issues reported by readers, responsible editors and authors should promptly verify them for correction in reprints and new editions. The “two micros and one app” can also be used to timely release book publishing information, intensify promotion of new books, and understand publishing needs through online questionnaires to plan topics more effectively.

Quality is the lifeline of the publishing industry and an eternal theme of publishing work. The technological platform of the digital age has paved a “fast lane” for the high-quality development of the book publishing industry while also setting up “speed bumps.” Book publishing institutions and publishers should shoulder the mission of “holding up the banner, gathering the people' s hearts, cultivating new generations, invigorating culture, and presenting a good image,” actively embrace the digital age, make full use of new technologies, continuously improve book quality, launch more premium books filled with “positive energy,” and provide the people with richer and higher-quality publishing products and services.

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

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