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Abstract

The rapid development of information technology and the internet has driven the transformation of traditional publishing. As an emerging phenomenon in the 1980s and 1990s, electronic audiovisual publishing houses possess inherent advantages in content resources, technical teams, digital management systems, and marketing channels for digital products. However, facing the rapid iteration of digital products in the “Internet+” era, these publishers now exhibit phenomena such as scarcity of high-quality content, singular product forms, narrow sales channels, limited capital investment, and shortage of interdisciplinary talent. This paper explores sustainable development pathways to address the opportunities and challenges brought by digital publishing, focusing on transforming traditional publishing concepts, driving development through key projects, and adopting “going global” models.

Full Text

Preamble

Analysis of Advantages and Pathways for Electronic Audio-Visual Publishing Houses Engaging in Digital Publishing

(Henan Electronic Audio-Visual Press Co., Ltd., Zhengzhou, Henan 450000)

Abstract: The rapid development of information technology and the internet has driven the transformation of traditional publishing. As an emerging

phenomenon in the 1980s and 1990s, electronic audio-visual publishing houses possess inherent genetic advantages in content resources, technical teams, digital management systems, and marketing channels for digital products. However, facing the rapid iteration of digital products in the “Internet Plus” era, these publishers now exhibit deficiencies in quality content, monolithic product forms, narrow sales channels, limited capital investment, and a shortage of interdisciplinary talent. This paper explores sustainable development pathways for addressing the opportunities and challenges of digital publishing through transforming traditional publishing concepts, leveraging key projects, and adopting “going global” strategies.

Keywords: digital publishing; publishing house; electronic audio-visual; advantages; pathways

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1. Challenges in Digital Publishing Transformation

1.1 Shortage of Quality Content

According to the *Report on China's Internet Development (2021)* [1], by the end of 2020, China's internet user base reached 989 million, with internet penetration at 70.4%, and mobile internet users exceeding 1.6 billion. The *Results of the 18th National Survey on National Reading* [2] shows that in 2020, the comprehensive reading rate of Chinese adults across all media—including books, newspapers, periodicals, and digital publications—was 81.3%, a 0.2 percentage point increase from 2019. Regardless of how publishing carriers or methods evolve, quality content remains the core value of the publishing industry. In an era of singular publishing formats, authors primarily chose to cooperate with publishers, which amassed substantial high-quality author pools. However, as new technologies, media, and formats continuously reshape perceptions of information dissemination, acquisition, and presentation, they have also spawned more diversified demands for digital content consumption. Countless internet platforms of various types now provide authors with vast opportunities, expanding their options and diversifying outlets for their works. Constrained by institutional structures and economic scale, publishers are losing their competitive edge in developing and maintaining relationships with outstanding authors, resulting in a growing shortage of premium authors and quality content.

1.2 Monolithic Product Structure

A monolithic product structure characterizes the current state of traditional publishing, which primarily focuses on textbooks, teaching supplements, and related derivative books. This has led to a relatively uniform product portfolio. Under digital transformation and convergence trends, such publishers face gradually diminishing market share and further squeezed profit margins. Most electronic audio-visual publishing houses began as “small and micro enterprises” –some as departments within paper book publishers, others as independent publishers required to be self-financing with significant operational pressures, and still others as professional publishers affiliated with industry associations or universities. These attributes have resulted in relatively singular profit models and product structures amid unclear digital publishing business models.

1.3 Narrow Sales Channels

Publishers have traditionally relied on Xinhua Bookstore distribution as their primary sales channel. However, with the arrival of an era of diversified competition, Xinhua Bookstore’s long-standing monopoly has dissolved, leaving traditional sales channels struggling. Publishers find themselves ill-equipped to compete on two fronts: first, against technology companies represented by BAT, primarily in digital publishing; and second, against private book companies with planning advantages, competing for author resources and flexible operational mechanisms. These innovative marketing cooperation models and diversified strategies better stimulate consumer purchasing behavior, leaving publishers with increasingly narrow sales channels.

1.4 Lack of Interdisciplinary Talent

Talent is the foundation of enterprise development and the key to competitiveness in today’s global economy. The quality and caliber of talent represent current priorities for business development. Traditional publishers have cultivated numerous conventional editors and distribution personnel over time, but these professionals struggle to keep pace with digital transformation demands. The new publishing structure requires interdisciplinary talent possessing three capabilities: content expertise, technical programming skills, and market operations knowledge. For traditional publishers, finding individuals fully qualified within existing talent pools proves difficult, making the shortage of interdisciplinary talent another major challenge in digital publishing development for electronic audio-visual publishing houses.

2. Advantages of Electronic Audio-Visual Publishing Houses in Digital Publishing

2.1 Rich Content Resources

Electronic audio-visual publishing houses boast diverse content resources. Rich, professional, and comprehensive resources constitute their greatest advantage in digital publishing. Each electronic audio-visual publisher possesses unique resource content unavailable elsewhere, making it difficult to find complete industry-specific resources in society. Organizing and developing these exclusive resources represents the primary task of digital publishing. Electronic audio-visual publishers, particularly those with extensive audio and video resource accumulation, hold resource advantages unmatched by other publishing houses. Due to their inherent genetic advantages, electronic audio-visual publishers have already taken the lead in the digital publishing wave.

2.2 Professional Technical Teams

After decades of development, electronic audio-visual publishing houses have acquired domestic first-class recording, editing, copying, and electronic reading production equipment, along with modern recording studios, video studios, and network demonstration rooms. They have deployed high-end computers and a complete set of servers and storage networks for video editing, post-production transcoding, production, and resource storage. They have also established high-quality technical elite teams comprising technology professionals with undergraduate degrees or higher in computer science, software engineering, and related fields, creating specialized technical production departments, network operations departments, and digital media development departments to meet the demands of the digital era.

2.3 Digital Management Systems

As an emerging phenomenon from the 1980s and 1990s, electronic audio-visual publishing houses appear closer to digital publishing and possess inherent advantages for digital integration. In content resource management, they emphasize resource integration and have formed a converged media interaction model featuring one-time development, multiple uses, and cross-departmental collaboration. In production systems, they have established comprehensive ERP systems for production workflows. In marketing channel systems, they have built digital product marketing channels including educational product sales channels, three major telecom operator channels, and digital product industry chain partners.

2.4 Favorable Policies

To promote integrated publishing development and support the construction of a publishing powerhouse, China has introduced a series of policies and measures. The *Notice on Organizing and Implementing the Publishing Integration*

Development Project [3] guides the publishing industry to vigorously implement digital strategies and systematically advance integrated development, achieving deep integration between traditional and emerging publishing. The *Several Opinions on Accelerating the Development of China's Digital Publishing Industry* [4] calls for accelerating the digital upgrading of audio-visual electronic publishing units and actively utilizing new media and technologies to accelerate industrial upgrading. It encourages audio-visual electronic publishing units to conduct comprehensive cooperation with telecom operators, network operators, and hardware manufacturers to expand new business formats. Additionally, since 2007, the state has implemented the “disk-with-book” policy, representing policy support for electronic audio-visual publishing houses. Publishers with this qualification can publish books within policy-permitted scopes, expanding product categories to some extent. Guided by these national policies and measures, traditional publishing units have increasingly clear goals and pathways for transformation and upgrading, growing more confident in digital transformation and integrated development.

3. Pathways for Digital Publishing in Electronic Audio-Visual Publishing Houses

3.1 Transforming Traditional Publishing Concepts to Drive Digital Transformation

Amid the vigorous wave of digital publishing, the question for traditional publishers is no longer whether to transform, but how. Traditional publishers should actively shift their publishing concepts and production methods, integrate resources, foster innovation, adapt to new business formats, and reconstruct industrial chains. By “setting direction, preserving fundamentals, and promoting integration,” they can drive their own digital transformation and achieve deep integration between traditional and digital publishing.

Transformation does not mean changing industries. A primary task for publishers remains producing and disseminating quality content, adhering to the philosophy of “content as king, creativity as foundation, and technology as enabler.” First, they must establish the concept of reengineering publishing workflows, breaking the conventional editing-printing-distribution process and shifting the mindset of prioritizing paper books over digital publications. They should explore synchronized, three-dimensional publishing across paper and digital formats, considering multiple uses, product forms, and channel operations from the source of topic planning—developing multiple formats from one content and synchronizing publications across multiple media. Second, all staff must strengthen user-centric thinking, continuously upgrading this mindset to not only meet user needs but also use user feedback to continuously improve products and services, guiding planning, design, production, and operations, and even creating new user demands to accelerate digital transformation. Fur-

thermore, they should accelerate technology integration, as integrated publishing development represents a profound transformation. Throughout publishing history, every industrial revolution has been technology-driven. Traditional publishers should strengthen cooperation with internet technology companies and platforms through external alliances and internal integration, technology upgrades, and proprietary platform transformation to enhance their capacity for producing and disseminating new digital products. Additionally, electronic audio-visual publishers should maximize their advantages in professional technical personnel and outstanding planning editors by providing digital publishing training to continuously improve digital publishing capabilities and meet interdisciplinary talent requirements. They should explore diversified, multi-level talent cultivation to sustain digital publishing development. Finally, every employee must deeply understand the importance of marketing and practice it in their work, establishing concepts of all-staff marketing and whole-process marketing to comprehensively drive digital transformation for enhanced quality and efficiency.

3.2 Highlighting Project-Driven Development to Enhance Integration Efficiency

In driving digital publishing integration, talent teams form the foundation for publisher transformation, while project-driven development serves as the key. Highlighting “project” drivers—whether large or small—provides a platform and driving force for digital publishing. Publishers can focus on projects aligned with national integration development policies, such as those selected for annual digital publishing excellence recommendation programs, national audiobook excellence publishing projects, or National Publishing Fund projects. They can also leverage provincial high-growth service projects, special guidance projects, and IP incubation projects as support. Using transformation and integration projects to drive resource aggregation and technological innovation allows publishers to accumulate experience, train teams, and cultivate talent, thereby enhancing overall integration efficiency.

Electronic audio-visual publishers should first capitalize on their rich audio-visual resources by systematically organizing accumulated content, connecting external resources, and achieving integrated content association. Second, they must accelerate platform construction through independent or collaborative efforts to strengthen internet publishing service platforms that connect authors, readers, and editors. Third, they should develop digital content and multimedia products while actively conducting knowledge services through secondary development of premium resources to excavate deeper value.

Database projects and integrated publishing projects merit consideration. Database projects offer the clearest business model and customer base for publishers undergoing digital transformation. To build database projects, electronic audio-visual publishers should first inventory their advantages and categorize various data content. They can construct databases based on user

needs and professional divisions—for comprehensive publishers, these might include digital library databases, folk culture databases, opera databases, martial arts databases, etc. Digital library projects particularly align with the national “National Reading” strategy, which has been included in the Government Work Report for eight consecutive years since 2014. Digital libraries can be segmented into primary/secondary school, university, individual, and industry versions, serving as effective vehicles for promoting national reading across rural areas, communities, families, schools, government agencies, enterprises, and military units. For educational publishers, databases can be constructed for preschool, primary, secondary, university, and adult education, as well as prestigious schools and renowned teacher databases to support educational informatization training and comprehensive coverage of quality educational resources. Under the overall database framework, specialized databases can be established based on different user needs, incorporating graphic, text, video, and audio resources into specialized databases for art, music, nature, history, science, and local historical culture, providing personalized and precise services.

Integrated publishing projects can adopt models such as “book + audio product + cultural creative product + animation product + mobile game + online dissemination + offline activities,” providing strong support for publisher integration through multi-type products, multi-dimensional perspectives, and multi-channel dissemination.

3.3 Comprehensive Expansion: Exploring New Models for Global Digital Publishing

Centering on policy guidance, adhering to the principle of “content is king,” and pursuing continuous content innovation, publishers should undertake comprehensive expansion efforts, transform traditional publishing paradigms, accelerate digital transformation, and emphasize project-driven development. By focusing on national funding initiatives or IP incubation projects, they can enable digital publishing transformation and reengineer editorial and production workflows. Using IP incubation as a strategic “stepping stone” to explore digital publishing, publishers should strategically layout digital platform construction, connect online and offline resource aggregation channels, gradually develop multi-format products, and achieve resource complementarity and mutual benefit through IP-based operations and diversified knowledge services, thereby maximizing the extension of publishing knowledge service chains.

Electronic audio-visual publishers should first leverage their rich audio-video resources by systematically organizing accumulated## References

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

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