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Post-print: New Business Forms in the Convergence of Traditional Broadcasting Media and New Media

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Abstract

In the era of utilizing information technology to facilitate industrial transformation, the limitations of traditional media—including newspapers, radio, and television—are increasingly manifest, with deficiencies such as rigidity, inefficiency, monolithic formats, and weak innovation capacity becoming progressively conspicuous. In the age of new media, triple-network convergence development constitutes both the prevailing trend and inevitable trajectory of future media reform. Presently, new media operating on the foundation of traditional media are demonstrating rapid and continuous evolution. For the current period and the foreseeable future, the further advancement of media convergence and collaboration must be manifested not merely in content, but more crucially in the industrial domain. MCN represents not only a novel nexus for media convergence but will also undoubtedly herald a new epoch in industrial convergence development.

Full Text

Abstract

In an era where information technology drives industrial transformation, the limitations of traditional media such as newspapers, radio, and television have become increasingly apparent, with shortcomings including rigidity, inefficiency, monotonous formats, and weak innovation capabilities. In the new media era, the integrated development of the “three networks” represents the inevitable trend of future media reform. Currently, new media operating on the foundation of traditional media is exhibiting rapid, ever-evolving growth momentum. For the present and foreseeable future, the further development of media integration must be reflected not only in content but also in industry. MCN (Multi-Channel

Network) is not only a new bond for media convergence but will also usher in a new era of industrial integration development.

Keywords: Traditional Media; New Media; Media Convergence; New Business Models

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1.1 Current Situation of Traditional Broadcasting Media

Taking tourism broadcasting as an example, China's tourism market has experienced rapid growth in recent years, with the industry expanding continuously and business content becoming increasingly diverse. The state has attached sufficient importance to tourism development, and the massive tourism market has provided numerous employment opportunities, making tourism a new growth point for the national economy. Consequently, provincial tourism radio frequencies have emerged, such as Jilin Tourism Radio, Ningxia Tourism Radio, Guangxi Tourism Radio, Guizhou Tourism Radio, and Huangshan Traffic and Tourism Radio. Tourism radio programs must serve the development of the tourism industry, and their evolution must adapt to the diversified forms and content requirements of tourism development. Creating targeted programs based on local tourism resources and cultural customs is an effective approach to enriching tourism radio content and innovating program formats. For instance, Beijing People's Radio's Literature and Art Channel launched the "Global Traveler" program, specifically providing travel consultation, scenic information, and tourism knowledge for tourists. Radio stations across various provinces and cities have established similar targeted programs, enriching broadcast content, expanding audience groups, and increasing listener choice. Audiences can select programs based on content, format, travel knowledge, tourism information, and destination introductions.

Internet broadcasting enables listeners to download programs and retain them permanently, with popular programs becoming top-ranked web pages accessible for browsing at any time. Since the September 2020 issuance of the "Opinions on Accelerating the In-Depth Development of Media Integration" by the General Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the General Office of the State Council, how should the broadcasting industry develop media integration? In recent years, with the explosive popularity of major platforms and short videos, traditional media must transform to gain traffic. Currently, the deep integration of traditional and new media, as well as future

convergence trends, has become a widespread consensus among industry veterans. According to the CTR Media Integration Effectiveness Evaluation System data report, by the end of 2020, 15 broadcasting and television institutions had doubled their annual WeChat article readership, with 235 radio and television institution Weibo accounts exceeding one million followers, 25 short video accounts of broadcasting institutions achieving over 100% follower growth, and 334 broadcasting institution accounts on Douyin and Kuaishou exceeding one million followers, including 25 top-tier accounts with over ten million followers.

1.2 Media Integration Faces a Profound Transformation Requiring Comprehensive Efforts

Following triple-network convergence, new media has gained excellent development opportunities while also providing a favorable environment for tourism radio programs. Triple-network convergence has expanded the reach of tourism broadcasting. Traditional broadcasting relies on radio signals, making it inaccessible in areas without signal coverage. Tourism radio programs are constrained by broadcast schedules and content limitations, with monotonous content failing to meet audience demands. Triple-network convergence has transformed the dissemination disadvantages of radio programs—their ephemeral and difficult-to-preserve nature. With the rise of internet broadcasting, listeners can access, listen to, and download tourism radio programs anytime, both domestically and abroad, as long as they have an internet connection.

2.1 Building Content IP: Broadcast Hosts Construct a New Integration Ecology

Shandong Radio and Television Station's large-scale livelihood news service program "Life Help" is hosted by A Su, who has 15 years of hosting experience and has consistently been dedicated to helping the public solve livelihood issues. He joined Kuaishou to enable online users to resolve their difficulties through his platform. Within just over a year, he gained 3.12 million followers, becoming a Kuaishou influencer. In the "8.26" case where he helped a 12-year-old girl find a hit-and-run driver, A Su and the "Life Help" program team rushed to the incident site in Linyi, using traditional television media for rolling coverage while simultaneously following the case's progress on Kuaishou. After six days of reporting and 63 hours of live streaming, the case was solved in collaboration with the police, and the suspect was successfully apprehended. A Su's establishment of his widely recognized "Help Master" persona on Kuaishou would not have been possible without the support of Shandong Star Media MCN, which mobilized Shandong Radio and Television resources to follow up on the case, with the media matrix continuously releasing over 60 pieces of content. Additionally, three flagship programs—"Shandong News," Qilu Channel's "Daily News," and Shandong Life Channel's "Life Help"—all reported on the incident, maximizing the communication impact.

2.2 A New Broadcasting Ecosystem from Content Production to Industrial Operation

Media convergence broadens business scope. In 2019, following reform, Jining Radio and Television Media successively launched new models targeting different industries. Based on its client-side “Preferred Mall” service function, it aimed to serve the production, living, and consumption needs of the masses by offering local preferred goods and services including green food, dining consumption, cultural crafts, and home building materials. Leveraging the media convergence center’s multi-platform matrix of “two micros, one end, and one Douyin,” it vigorously promoted and marketed local agricultural specialty products, providing consumers with goods, payment, travel, and entertainment services through WeChat mini-programs and live short videos. The inaugural live broadcast of “Preferred Mall” attracted over 300,000 followers within five hours, completing more than 5,000 online sales orders with transaction amounts exceeding 80,000 yuan. Compared with ordinary live-streaming sales, it has professional technical and anchor teams, greater credibility and dissemination power, and incorporates local historical features, cultural tourism, and folk customs, creating distinctive cultural appeal and brand influence that is more attractive to netizens.

Affected by the pandemic, offline tourism activities were restricted. To better promote merchants and self-guided tour products, Jilin Tourism Radio launched the WeChat mini-program “Ji Ke Chu Fa” (Immediate Departure), using new media formats to display semi-self-guided tour products with online booking capabilities, suitable for self-driving tour demands in the post-pandemic era. This approach not only maintains a healthy advertising ecosystem but also enables client merchants to directly see promotional results.

2.3 Integration Requires “Premium Content”

In 2020, Shanghai Education Television focused on users’ fragmented needs in the internet environment and innovatively explored educational media convergence construction. “Green Leaf Air Classroom” broadcast through various media convergence innovative programs, with its official Weibo followers rapidly increasing from 50,000 to 300,000, a year-over-year increase of 450%, and achieving 1.04 million clicks. It not only transformed the broadcast format from recorded to live but also enhanced vitality. Currently, the campus television education platform has been initially established, covering nearly 10,000 students across 10 schools. Relying on the cultural content products of “Green Leaf Media Cloud,” it extends content product dissemination to classrooms through “Green Leaf Box,” further expanding interactive communication between campuses and media and delivering higher-quality educational resources to students.

Ground frequency revenue has long been an industry challenge, yet Hunan Economic Television achieved remarkable revenue of 350 million yuan in 2020. Of its 500 staff members, 300 volunteered to transition to the new battlefield of integrated communication, with former television communication practitioners

transforming into new integrated communication and marketing team members. According to Hunan Economic Television Director Chen Yang, the station has successively established business resource alliances with leading traffic platforms including ByteDance, Kuaishou, JD.com, and Tencent. In 2020, it completed full-link resource integration from large-screen television broadcasting and entire-network content seeding to e-commerce monetization, with the business team evolving from simple brand communication operations to an integrated media marketing effectiveness platform.

2.4 Integration Development: Building Mainstream Media Credibility While Enhancing Publicity Power

As media integration continues to deepen, broadcasting and television institutions at all levels have gradually built a broadcasting integration system featuring “integrated resource allocation, multi-channel content distribution, and multi-terminal services.” During this critical period of in-depth media integration development, mainstream media must conform to the development trends of the new era, research new technologies, reach new audiences, and actively innovate media communication methods. This not only enables the construction of high-quality, rich, and diverse content but also stimulates audience participation in dissemination, transmitting mainstream values in fresher ways to achieve wins in communication value, user value, and social value.

Thus, orientation is the soul, mobile is the priority, and content is king. Only by strengthening demand orientation and service effectiveness, bridging various fields and coordinating corresponding resources, can we continuously build momentum for constructing new mainstream media under broadcasting integration.

3. The “Trinity” of Content, Operation, and Technology Is Most Critical for Media Integration

All-Media Talent

3.1 Traditional Media Urgently Needs to Cultivate New Media Talent

Currently, due to the inherent organizational mechanisms of traditional media, media practitioners lack sufficient motivation to learn new media. Additionally, the generally older age of practitioners and weak new-generation talent result in slower acceptance of new things and a weak position in new media. Therefore, traditional media urgently needs to cultivate new media talent.

3.2 Traditional Media Development of New Media Must Solve Technical Barriers

New media technology is a broad concept encompassing multiple specialized technologies. In operations and marketing, what users see is software technol-

ogy (also called the front-end), while user access speed and quality are provided by hardware technology, including broadband and servers. Software development services are most frequently used in new media communication. Currently, most traditional media rely on third-party companies for development, operation, maintenance, and secondary development, resulting in high development investment, untimely operation and maintenance, long iteration cycles, slow product output, and delayed technology and market promotion. This also slows the pace of integration with new media, always lagging behind others. For example, Jilin People's Radio established the App Mu'er FM in 2017 as the main force supporting new media transformation within the station. After more than four years of operation, it faces the following practical problems.

3.2.1 Lack of Product Managers Product managers bridge the market and technology, possessing keen market insight, flexible product thinking, and certain new media technical knowledge to rapidly integrate products and technology and create new product solutions, ensuring new products respond effectively within market timeframes. Among traditional media practitioners, most hold multiple positions. While practitioners possess multi-domain skills, the lack of specialization is a fatal weakness for products. Having professional product managers has become an urgent issue to address in new media development.

3.2.2 Lack of Developers Software development is extremely time-consuming, with numerous specialized fields including front-end and back-end development, design, database administration, and model design engineering. Relatively ample staffing combined with reasonable scheduling is essential. Insufficient developers lead to slow software version updates and upgrades, poor user experience, and a chain reaction of negative consequences. In the author's view, while equipping with adequate developers, it is also necessary to enhance their professional expertise—only then can product output efficiency be improved.

3.2.3 Reduce Third-Party Investment, Increase Proprietary Investment Third-party companies' new products mostly reflect cutting-edge market thinking with incomparable advantages. While leveraging these for better product development, reducing dependence on third parties is also necessary. From a technical perspective, this involves interfacing with third-party products and developing self-produced alternatives within a certain future period to reduce version iteration costs. Solving these problems requires increasing R&D, training, and operational budgets for development departments. The birth of new products follows several steps: product manager → development framework → UI design → front-end/back-end development → operation and deployment → testing and release. Each step requires its own technical knowledge, which can be acquired through learning cutting-edge technologies or purchasing technical modules to achieve proprietary technology development. Taking the Mu'er FM Lite App as an example, with one product manager, one graphic designer, and

three developers, it took three months to develop and launch in the application market. However, because each person also has other operation, design, and other work, upgrades to some functions, version iteration, and technology updates remain relatively slow. Still, the Lite version's iteration speed is evidently better than the old version of Mu'er FM, demonstrating the advantages of proprietary technology: lower investment, fewer communication links, faster iteration, and better adaptation to the new media environment.

3.3 Establishing Studios Effectively Solves Broadcasting New Media Talent Cultivation Challenges

Due to constraints in the traditional broadcasting media system, all-media talent can only be cultivated through practice, making studios a highly effective approach. Different local radio stations provide varying degrees of space for studios. For example, Anhui Radio and Television Station allows integrated media studio personnel to conduct studio-related business part-time while performing their main duties and enjoying original benefits; Guangdong Radio and Television Station stipulates that studios with unsuccessful operations can exit and be reassigned. Studio staff learn new technologies to master new skills, using business crossovers to drive improvements in operations and diversified skills, growing into “multi-skilled” talents through mentorship systems. By establishing studios, content supply between traditional and new media platforms is connected, effectively alleviating talent constraints and high operational costs. For instance, Anhui Radio and Television Station has creatively built a policy and service system suited to its conditions, developing 75 integrated media studios that have entered its flagship App “Anhui Satellite TV · ATV” to provide original content for its proprietary platform. Wuxi Radio and Television Station launched the “Hundred Studios, Thousand Terminals, Smart Alliance” project, establishing studios covering parenting education, livelihood rights protection, beauty and sports, among other fields, entering its proprietary “Smart Wuxi” App to create a regional livelihood service cloud platform.

3.4 Improving Leadership Mechanisms to Promote Better New Media Development

Due to constraints in traditional media management systems, many new media leaders are non-new-media professionals. During upgrade processes, they cannot adjust according to correct development directions, leading to many detours that waste time and effort while missing development opportunities. Therefore, improving leadership mechanisms is particularly important to provide team members with correct development directions, stimulate enthusiasm, and create greater value.

Current media integration has entered a crucial period of in-depth development, and the era of building an all-media communication pattern has arrived. Overall, three aspects must be well managed: First, media integration development must emphasize politics—adhering to correct political orientation, guiding public

opinion, and improving guidance capabilities. Second, media integration development requires innovation—advancing reforms to existing systems and mechanisms, using new technologies and methods to integrate resources, connect platforms, and reshape workflows. Third, media integration development must prioritize talent—strengthening training to transform personnel into all-media reporters, editors, and management talents, jointly writing a new chapter in media integration development.

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

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