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## An Analysis of the Prosperous Development of Academic Journals Based on Talent Cultivation and Multi-channel Dissemination: Postprint

**Authors:** Wang Li, Wang Dandan, Chen Huakang, Luo Xin

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

### Abstract

In May 2021, the Publicity Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Science and Technology issued the “Opinions on Promoting the Prosperous Development of Academic Journals”, setting forth requirements for academic journal development in the new era. At present, this paper analyzes how to advance the prosperous development of academic journals from three dimensions: cultivating communication talent, broadening communication channels, and deepening communication content. Within the context of new media, it explores the construction pathways for the communication ecosystem elements of academic journals, aiming to foster their flourishing development.

### Full Text

#### Analysis of the Prosperous Development of Academic Journals Based on Talent Cultivation and Multi-Channel Dissemination

**Authors:** Wang Li, Wang Dandan, Chen Huakang, Luo Xin

*(Chongqing Classroom Inside and Outside Magazine Press, Chongqing 401121)*

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pathways for constructing the communication ecological elements of academic journals to promote their prosperous development.

**Keywords:** new media; academic journal talent cultivation; communication ecological elements

**Classification Code:** G633

**Document Code:** A

**Article ID:** 1671-0134(2022)02-118-04

**DOI:** 10.19483/j.cnki.11-4653/n.2022.02.036

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In May 2021, the Publicity Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Science and Technology issued the *Opinions on Promoting the Prosperous Development of Academic Journals* (hereinafter referred to as the *Opinions*). The document states that academic journals are important platforms for academic research exchange, crucial positions for disseminating ideological culture, and significant forces for promoting theoretical innovation and scientific and technological progress. Strengthening academic journal construction plays a vital role in enhancing national scientific and technological competitiveness and cultural soft power, and in building China's spirit, values, and strength. The *Opinions* require that academic journals, guided by Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, should focus on the Party and state's major decisions and fundamental tasks of propaganda, adhere to serving the people and socialism, uphold the principle of letting a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred schools of thought contend, maintain correct political orientation, publishing direction, and value orientation, accelerate the improvement of content quality and communication power and influence, and continuously improve the system that prioritizes social benefits while unifying social and economic benefits, thereby contributing to building China into a world leader in science and technology and a socialist cultural powerhouse.

Currently, academic journals face enormous challenges in dissemination. In this context, they must establish internet thinking and plan their development paths and futures from a new media perspective. Specifically, efforts can be made in three dimensions—talent cultivation, channel expansion, and content optimization—to explore communication pathways under the new media vision and promote prosperous development.

### 1.1 Breaking Conventions and Transforming Concepts

The new media era has transformed academic journals from traditional print-dominated distribution to network-based publishing and distribution. Although print circulation has significantly decreased, readership and influence have greatly increased. Changes in dissemination methods, speed, and interactivity are unprecedented. New media has ushered academic journals into an era of

integrated print-online publishing [1]. Based on the roles of academic journal editors as “academic brokers” [2], “academic gatekeepers” [3], and “academic experts” [4], as well as the advocated positioning of building an “academic symbiosis” oriented toward authors and readers [5], editors should keep pace with new media era changes, break conventions, transform concepts, and contemplate the development path of academic journals in this new era.

First, editors must establish transformation consciousness. The academic space of journals is a three-dimensional structure composed of multiple dimensions including academic institutions, scholars, academic achievements, academic systems, and communication media [4]. Editors should transform and upgrade journals according to the characteristics of the new media era, implementing comprehensive innovation and reform across all operational aspects. They should consider their journal’s functional positioning, content orientation, and target user characteristics, fully tap into various resources, and integrate them with new media. Based on six dimensional features—topic planning, review and evaluation, editing and proofreading, information push, digital publishing, and media form [6]—they should explore the construction of communication ecological elements for academic journals from a new media perspective, build an integrated technical service system for journal management processes, save manpower and time costs, create greater benefits, and promote journal transformation and upgrading.

Second, editors must establish innovation consciousness. We are currently in an era of information explosion where modern communication technology has greatly increased information dissemination speed and breadth, making reading faster and more mobile [7]. Academic journal editors should fully integrate era characteristics, establish innovative consciousness, consider more ways to disseminate journal content, and balance social and economic benefits. Today’s works are presented diversely, not only through text but also through music, animation, short videos, and other forms. People use various entertainment software including Weibo, WeChat, Douyin, and Kuaishou. Previously, academic journal content dissemination was relatively fixed, primarily through print or online journals. Therefore, editors should follow the trend of the times, seize opportunities, consider multi-channel information dissemination pathways across various platforms, process and edit journal content accordingly, expand the audience, continuously improve information collection, analysis, and resource integration capabilities, and enhance the effectiveness of journal information dissemination.

Third, editors must establish academic communication consciousness. In a narrow sense, editors’ academic communication includes interaction with the journal’s audience (authors and readers), which runs through the entire editorial process of topic planning, soliciting contributions, and editing manuscripts. Broadly speaking, editors’ academic communication embodies dialogue relationships, follows interactive logic, and points toward inter-subjectivity [8], referring generally to academic exchanges with the academic community or academic circles. This

is the necessary path to enhancing editors' academic literacy and constructing their academic identity. Simply put, academic communication first points to the internal improvement of editors' self-cultivation and second to external communication with readers and academic communities. The new media era demands increasingly high proficiency in network technology. Academic journal editors should continuously learn and master new media tools to improve their technical skills for better communication with readers and scholars. Additionally, editors need to "go out" rather than work behind closed doors, for example, by participating in academic conferences and hosting academic exchange sharing sessions, fully exercising subjective initiative, actively communicating externally, and building an "academic community."

## 1.2 Strengthening Training to Cultivate Multimedia Talent

Researchers studying the current state of academic journal editors in the new media era have found that they suffer from a learned helplessness psychological dilemma [9], characterized by a relative lack of internet thinking, insufficient new media literacy, and weak market-oriented thinking and service consciousness. Journals should strengthen editor training, provide resources and conditions, promote improvements in thinking and consciousness as well as knowledge and skills [10], cultivate multimedia talent, and thereby promote healthy and sustainable journal development.

First, strengthen training in thinking and consciousness. The new media era has endowed academic journals with more value connotations, playing important roles in disseminating human thought, promoting academic knowledge, and creating a favorable social learning environment. Academic journal editors should first strengthen their cognition of their role positioning, enhance their sense of role identity, and thereby stimulate autonomous learning to actively consider development paths for academic journals in the new media era. Second, strengthen political learning and political consciousness training to enhance political sensitivity and moral cultivation, understand national policy dynamics and laws and regulations, consciously resist the dissemination of undesirable ideas and viewpoints, and disseminate excellent national culture.

Second, strengthen training in knowledge and skills. "Academic" is the foundation of journals, so regardless of past or present, training in editors' academic literacy must be emphasized. Under the new media vision, editors should fully utilize new media tools to understand and learn the latest domestic and international research theories, progress, and achievements through various channels to broaden their horizons. They must also learn and master new media technology to keep pace with the times and create and publicize works that readers enjoy. Specifically, journals can conduct training through regular internal academic exchange sharing sessions and inviting relevant experts and scholars to hold lectures.

## 2. Channel Expansion: Building a Multimedia Linkage Matrix and Strengthening Interaction and Linkage

Academic journal dissemination differs from mass communication. Due to their professionalism and academic nature, academic journals have inherently small audiences, generally limited to contributing authors and a few researchers in relevant fields, making it difficult to form large-scale, wide-ranging dissemination effects. Moreover, the dissemination ecology of academic journals under traditional media is very limited, with channels mostly being postal subscriptions. Most academic journals are non-profit, and although related academic papers and research results are largely open to society as public goods, their popularity in the market and society is very low. The limitations of academic journals' dissemination ecology result in academic papers and research findings being difficult to apply effectively, and their academic value is difficult to truly realize, which violates the fundamental purpose of science serving society. Therefore, academic journals urgently need to expand dissemination channels and build a multimedia linkage matrix.

### 2.1 Using New Media to Build Multi-Level Information Distribution Platforms

How to make good use of the internet to give “angel’ s wings” to dissemination and meet the personalized reading and communication needs of readers and authors requires in-depth development. Academic journals should actively use new media to build multi-level information distribution platforms and fully utilize network information technology.

First, on the basis of traditional postal subscription channels, academic journals should actively use major paper database service platforms (such as CNKI, Wanfang, and VIP) for digital dissemination, placing the digital paper publishing process before print publication. Currently, the new dissemination model of priority digital publishing of academic papers is gradually becoming mainstream, which greatly improves the timeliness of academic papers and accelerates their digital dissemination speed. For example, CNKI has developed a “Network First Publication” system and begun collecting “Network First” papers. Although major databases are commercial in nature, they have strong resource integration advantages, and their digital dissemination capabilities and effects are unmatched by any single academic journal. These databases have already accumulated widespread social recognition, and whether an academic journal is included in various databases has become a basic evaluation indicator of journal influence. Undeniably, they have played a significant role in promoting the dissemination of academic papers.

Second, academic journals should establish their own digital databases, launch official websites, and regularly upload back issues to improve the professionalism and concentration of their academic paper dissemination and help researchers accurately find and obtain materials. Although major databases have resource

integration advantages, the vast number of academic papers they contain leads to homogenization issues. Therefore, for academic journals, these large platforms also present greater competition in academic dissemination. Journals cannot overly rely on large databases and must strengthen their own network platform construction capabilities. Meanwhile, establishing specialized database websites helps academic journals strengthen connections with authors and readers, gather a group of experts and scholars who support the journal's development, absorb them into the journal's think tank, concentrate various academic resources, and form the core competitiveness of each academic journal—after all, competition in modern society is essentially talent competition.

Finally, academic journals should strengthen the construction of “Three Micros and One Client.” The “Three Micros” refer to WeChat, Weibo, and micro-video; the “One Client” refers to mobile clients. In terms of current dissemination channels, most academic journals have opened WeChat official accounts and Weibo accounts, but their functional positioning mostly remains at regularly publishing journal tables of contents, displaying partial papers or excerpts, and releasing journal-related information. The utilization of WeChat and Weibo stays at a relatively superficial level with limited effectiveness. As for micro-video and mobile clients, only a very small number of journals have chosen to open them, and most are affiliated with universities, associations, or research institutes, with content and information only targeting the journal's own academic paper dissemination. Very few journals develop App products and related software specifically for mobile clients. The dissemination costs of micro-video and mobile clients are higher than those of WeChat and Weibo, and academic journals need to balance benefits and costs. However, their dissemination role should not be ignored, and construction efforts should be strengthened.

## 2.2 Strengthening Interaction and Linkage

Interactivity is another characteristic of new media. After building information distribution platforms, academic journals should strengthen interactive and linkage functions. Interaction mainly refers to the interaction between academic journals as information disseminators and readers as information receivers; linkage refers to the linkage between print and digital publications and among various information distribution platforms.

Modern society emphasizes the combination of professionalism and service orientation. Particularly in the new media context, building a communication ecology for academic journals must focus on interaction and feedback with authors to construct an “academic community.” The relationship between authors, readers (who are often also authors), and journals should not be limited to that of contributors, readers, and publishers. New media provides more opportunities for interaction and possibilities for cooperative development among the three parties. From the perspective of authors and readers, academic journals provide a platform for academic discussion, expecting to display academic research results and conduct problem research to promote academic advancement.

From the journal' s perspective, its function is the publication of academic papers, with the purpose of enhancing its own academic influence and absorbing high-quality academic resources for better development. All three parties share the same ultimate goal, which is the premise for developing interaction and cooperation. Specifically, based on the aforementioned information distribution platforms, academic journals should play the role of topic publishers, actively guide authors and readers to participate in topic discussions, and participate themselves. For example, for current hot academic issues, journals can open special columns on WeChat official accounts and invite authors or readers to participate in discussions, promptly pushing discussion results on the official account. They can also excerpt content from several scholars' articles, integrate them for push notifications to serve as a conversation starter, attracting and encouraging authors and readers to discuss and contribute. In this process, academic journal editors can also enhance their professional capabilities and professional literacy, thereby promoting the journal' s own development.

Academic journals should strengthen the linkage and integration of various information dissemination channels. Print and digital publications should develop in an integrated manner, various information distribution platforms should release information in a linked manner, and academic journals should utilize the advantages of new media technology. Media convergence is not simply revision or restructuring but a completely new concept of media development—the organic combination of new media and traditional media against the backdrop of rapid internet development and continuous digital technology updates [11]. Both print and digital publications serve journal development. Due to the complex processes and many links involved in print publication and distribution, digital publications can be updated first on various information distribution platforms. For example, academic journals can upload electronic versions of each issue' s papers to major databases first, while simultaneously updating them on the journal' s official website, “Three Micros and One Client,” and other platforms to facilitate rapid access for authors. Readers and authors can also quickly and conveniently contact the editorial department through these platforms, greatly improving problem-solving efficiency. Various information distribution platforms should also strengthen linkage among themselves. Academic journals should integrate resources from each platform and corresponding author and reader resources. For instance, information release should be conducted simultaneously across multiple platforms, with appropriate identical or similar columns set up on the journal' s official website and “Three Micros and One Client,” which helps academic journals guide authors and readers in cross-platform communication without hindering the differentiated development of each platform.

### 3. Content Optimization: Catering to Users and Producing Differentiated Characteristic Content

The new media era has brought updates to talent cultivation concepts and expansion of information distribution channels, but “content is king” remains the unchanged principle in academic journal dissemination. How to stand out in a homogenized market ultimately requires academic journals to deepen their content cultivation, produce high-quality, differentiated content products, and lay a solid foundation for brand building with 扎实的 content quality. Specifically, in the content construction process, academic journals need not only to strengthen connections with users, incorporate users into content production, and enhance user participation but also to exert their own efforts to explore user reading needs and produce high-quality content.

#### 3.1 Collaborative Production of UGC and PGC

PGC refers to Professionally Generated Content, meaning information content produced by professionals with high specialization throughout the entire production process, including information collection, production, and release. UGC refers to User Generated Content, meaning content output with users as the main content producers. UGC is seen as a rebellion against PGC’s monopoly on content production in the Web 2.0 era, replacing the exclusive control of traditional PGC by 门槛式地 including users in information production, where everyone can publish their self-produced content on network platforms for dissemination and diffusion via the internet.

In the new media era, UGC and PGC are no longer in traditional opposition but are moving toward collaboration—using UGC’s “down-to-earth” content to shorten the distance with users, explore topics closer to the audience, and expand content breadth; while using PGC to produce high-quality, highly readable content to expand content depth. Currently, social platforms such as Douyin and Xiaohongshu are extremely representative UGC production platforms, producing content mainly in discourse familiar to ordinary audiences, close to their lives, and gaining large audiences. For academic journals, incorporating users into content production entities and increasing user participation will significantly enhance academic journal influence. For example, when designing their journal logo or promotional slogans, some academic journals can release their needs online, collect ideas and suggestions from audiences broadly, and then have professionals conduct secondary processing of audience-produced content to make it a complete work. Through this collective effort, not only can audiences feel a sense of familiarity, but it can also pool wisdom from multiple parties to produce higher-quality content.

#### 3.2 Differentiated Content Production

The new media era has brought tremendous opportunities for information dissemination of academic journals. How to produce differentiated and high-quality

content among numerous journals is crucial for academic journals' own development and brand building. Against this backdrop, academic journals need to seize new media era opportunities, grasp audience reading habits, and break free from the shackles of homogenized content production.

First, fragmented information should fill audiences' fragmented time. A prominent feature of the new media era is fragmentation. Under high work and study pressure, audience attention and time are divided, gradually favoring short, concise, and refined information. In response to changing audience needs, academic journals must also seek solutions, transforming traditional print media content processing forms toward mobile reading, shallow reading, and fragmented reading. While using multimedia means to disseminate information, they also need to produce targeted content according to the characteristics of different media, fragmenting academic content and making it "down-to-earth." For example, when pushing content on Weibo, the *Journal of Zhejiang University* (Humanities and Social Sciences Edition) controls information length to about 400 characters, pushing not only summaries of latest published papers but also the latest "golden sentences" from experts in related fields, keeping up with academic frontiers, as well as classic concepts in professional fields. For instance, in its June 21, 2021 Weibo post, it analyzed scholar Shi Chenwei's concept of "potential collective belief." By refining and streamlining information to cater to audiences' fragmented information needs, it thereby improves information dissemination effectiveness.

Second, depth must be achieved on the basis of fragmented information while maintaining professionalism and popularization. Academic information is inherently professional, requiring audiences to have certain theoretical knowledge foundations to read and digest. In the new media era, blindly catering to audiences' fragmented needs may gather popularity and broaden the audience in the short term but could also damage the professionalism of academic journals themselves. Therefore, academic journals need to uphold their professional standards, take professional and rigorous content as their foundation, and explore information value in depth vertically. Bacon once said that the power of knowledge depends not only on its own value but more on the breadth and depth of its dissemination. It is evident that academic journals can use fragmented academic information to attract audiences' "inadvertent" attention and professional academic information to attract researchers' "intentional" attention, employing both approaches to produce high-quality content and thereby enhance their influence.

## Conclusion

Reflecting on the construction of communication ecological elements for academic journals under the new media perspective is of great significance for enhancing academic journals' influence and competitiveness and building academic journal brands. In the current media convergence environment, academic journals need to fully utilize multimedia technology for self-innovation, improve

traditional operational methods, explore more convenient and efficient dissemination paths, promote the cultivation of multimedia talent, build a multimedia linkage matrix, and produce differentiated characteristic content according to current user characteristics, carrying out journal transformation and innovation from multiple dimensions and levels to adapt to the demands of era development. The state and society should pay attention to the transformation challenges facing academic journals, provide policy support and assistance, jointly create a favorable academic learning and communication environment, and promote the improvement of national academic standards.

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**Funding Statement:** This article is a research outcome of the horizontal project “Research on the Convergent Publishing of Academic Journals” by *University Magazine*.

**Author Biographies:**

Wang Li (1986-), female, from Chongqing, associate senior editor, research direction: educational media communication.

Wang Dandan (1984-), female, from Chongqing, editor, research direction: teacher development and academic communication.

Chen Huakang (1995-), male, from Chongqing, editor, research direction: political science principles and history of Western political philosophy.

Luo Xin (1996-), female, from Chongqing, editor, research direction: digital media publishing.

*(Editor in charge: Zhang Xiaojing)*

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