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## Opportunities and Challenges for Book Publishing in the Context of the Chengdu-Chongqing Dual-City Economic Circle Development: Post-print

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### Abstract

With the rapid development of mobile internet, Internet of Things, and other technologies, people's reading habits have undergone significant changes, and digital publishing has experienced rapid growth. This paper provides an overview of the construction background of the Chengdu-Chongqing dual-city economic circle, lists publishing trends related to it in recent years, and proposes seizing the opportunity of dual-city integrated development to develop physical bookstores in the Sichuan-Chongqing region, improve local network infrastructure, create publication reading platforms, build a western publishing brand, excavate high-quality publishing resources, and enhance the comprehensive qualities and professional skills of editorial talent.

### Full Text

## Opportunities and Challenges for Book Publishing under the Chengdu-Chongqing Twin City Economic Circle Construction

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**Abstract:** With the rapid development of mobile internet, Internet of Things, and other technologies, people's reading habits have undergone significant changes, and digital publishing has grown swiftly. This paper provides an overview of the Chengdu-Chongqing Twin City Economic Circle construction context, reviews recent publishing developments related to it, and proposes strategies to seize the opportunity of integrated twin-city development. These

include developing physical bookstores in the Sichuan-Chongqing region, improving local network infrastructure, creating publication reading platforms, building a western publishing brand, excavating high-quality publishing resources, and enhancing the comprehensive qualities and professional skills of editorial talent.

**Keywords:** Chengdu-Chongqing region; twin city economic circle; book publishing; publishing brand; convergent publishing

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### 1.1 Overview of the Chengdu-Chongqing Urban Agglomeration

China's western region, located in southeastern Eurasia, encompasses five provinces and autonomous regions in Northwest China (Shaanxi, Qinghai, Ningxia, Gansu, Xinjiang) and five provinces/autonomous regions/municipalities in Southwest China (Sichuan, Yunnan, Guizhou, Tibet, Chongqing), covering a vast territory. The Chengdu-Chongqing urban agglomeration includes 15 cities in Sichuan Province—Chengdu, Zigong, Luzhou, Deyang, Mianyang (excluding Beichuan and Pingwu counties), Suining, Neijiang, Leshan, Nanchong, Meishan, Yibin, Guang'an, Dazhou (excluding Wanyuan city), Ya'an (excluding Tianquan and Baoxing counties), and Ziyang—as well as 27 districts and counties in Chongqing Municipality, including Yuzhong, Wanzhou, Qianjiang, Fuling, Dadukou, Jiangbei, Shapingba, Jiulongpo, Nan'an, Beibei, Qijiang, Dazu, Yubei, Banan, Changshou, Jiangjin, Hechuan, Yongchuan, Nanchuan, Tongnan, Tongliang, Rongchang, Bishan, Liangping, Fengdu, Dianjiang, and Zhongqing, plus parts of Kaizhou and Yunyang, with a total area of 185,000 square kilometers [1].

Both Chongqing and Chengdu serve as national transportation hubs, information centers, and centers for foreign affairs. They are also potential national centers for healthcare, culture, science and technology, trade, and finance. With the introduction of Chengdu's "Eastward Expansion and Southward Development" strategy and the release of the *Chengdu-Chongqing Economic Circle Development Plan*, these initiatives will significantly boost economic development in the Sichuan-Chongqing region while presenting new opportunities and challenges for the Chengdu-Chongqing urban agglomeration.

In October of the same year, the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee reviewed the *Outline Plan for the Construction of the Chengdu-Chongqing Twin City Economic Circle*, explicitly linking the Chengdu-Chongqing region with domestic macro-circulation strategic planning for the first time. This elevated the region to a strategic-level support point following the Pearl River

Delta, Yangtze River Delta, Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei, and Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area. The plan focuses on enhancing the development capacity of central Chongqing and Chengdu, using these points to drive surrounding areas through integrated development. The development goals position the Chengdu-Chongqing region as an important national economic center with nationwide influence, a science and technology innovation center, a new highland for reform and opening up, and a high-quality living environment, creating an important growth pole and new power source for driving national high-quality development.

## 1.2 Policy Support

Under the background of the new era of western development, Sichuan and Chongqing face important adjustments in development thinking. In recent years, Chengdu and Chongqing have rapidly developed under the “land economy” model, with cities quickly gaining substantial fiscal revenue from incremental expansion. Since Chongqing became a municipality directly under the central government in 1997, its main urban area has expanded from the mother city of Yuzhong to multiple new urban districts, gradually enlarging its metropolitan territory. According to Chongqing’s latest development strategic plan, the city will further expand eastward and westward. Chengdu has historically followed a “circle-layer” development model to become the “single center” of Greater Chengdu. According to its latest development plan, Chengdu will further implement the strategies of “eastward expansion, southward development, western control, central optimization, and northern transformation.” The “eastward expansion” strategy will cross the Longquan Mountains, breaking through Chengdu’s 2,300-year-old urban pattern to create new urban spaces.

The State Council’s *Guiding Opinions on Promoting the Formation of a New Pattern of Western Development in the New Era* points out the need to accelerate the planning and construction of major projects such as the Sichuan-Tibet Railway, Chongqing-Kunming High-Speed Railway, and Xining-Chengdu Railway. It also supports Sichuan and Chongqing in leveraging their comprehensive advantages to build inland open highlands and development hubs; actively implements the China-Singapore (Chongqing) strategic connectivity demonstration project; encourages Chengdu and Chongqing to accelerate the construction of international gateway hub cities; establishes the Chengdu International Railway Port Economic Development Zone; strengthens cooperation and interaction between Southwest and Northwest China; promotes coordinated development of the Chengdu-Chongqing urban agglomeration and Guanzhong Plain urban agglomeration; and builds a core engine to lead western China’s opening and development. The policy also supports the establishment of collaborative development mechanisms in Sichuan-Chongqing border areas across provinces (autonomous regions, municipalities), and strengthens regional joint prevention and control of air pollution with the Chengdu-Chongqing region as the focus to improve response capabilities for heavy pollution weather [2].

## 2. Publishing Dynamics

In 2019, China's digital publishing industry generated total revenue of 988.143 billion yuan, an 11.16% increase from the previous year. This included 5.8 billion yuan from e-books and 231.482 billion yuan from mobile publishing. Digital income from traditional books, newspapers, and periodicals reached 8.908 billion yuan, showing a year-by-year declining trend from 2016 to 2019. From 2018 to 2019, emerging digital publishing sectors such as online education and web-comics saw continuous revenue growth, with online education revenue increasing by over 50%, representing the fastest growth [3].

Against this backdrop of sustained positive development in China's digital publishing industry, Sichuan and Chongqing are actively promoting convergent publishing. Both local governments and relevant departments have issued policy documents to promote high-quality local publishing development, encouraging publishing houses to produce good books and quality works, focusing on thematic publishing, and establishing publishing brands.

The *Guiding Opinions on Strengthening and Improving Publishing Work to Promote High-Quality Development in Sichuan Publishing*, issued by the General Offices of the Sichuan Provincial Party Committee and Provincial People's Government, proposes that by 2022, Sichuan should develop a group of nationally first-class publishing units, build a high-quality professional publishing talent team, and propel Sichuan publishing into the "first echelon." By 2025, Sichuan publishing should achieve comprehensive revitalization. Regarding content production quality, the plan calls for promoting the publication and dissemination of Sichuan-characteristic content, deeply developing characteristic content resources such as Bashu culture, ancient Shu civilization, and historical celebrity culture. In building the publishing industry system, it emphasizes constructing a batch of high-quality publishing development platforms, promoting the transformation and upgrading of the publishing industry, and improving the level of "going global" [4].

On July 20, 2020, the Sichuan Provincial Local Chronicles Office, Chongqing Municipal Local Chronicles Office, Chengdu Map Publishing House Co., Ltd., and Sichuan Nationalities Publishing House held a symposium in Chengdu to actively promote Sichuan-Chongqing collaboration in publishing and provide relevant support and guarantees for local chronicle publishing in both regions [5].

On November 13, 2020, at the Chongqing Digital Publishing Annual Conference held in Liangjiang New Area, the Chongqing Audio-Video and Digital Publishing Association and Chengdu Technology Enterprise Incubator Association signed a strategic cooperation agreement. This represents a positive collaboration under the Chengdu-Chongqing Twin City Economic Circle construction background. According to the agreement, each party will select 1-2 key areas from their advantageous industrial chains to promote deep linkages in technical platforms, expert resources, and production capabilities of professional incuba-

tors. Based on this foundation, they will promote the formation of an industrial ecological belt linking the Chengdu-Chongqing urban agglomeration. In terms of digital culture collaboration, they will also establish integrated digital cultural and creative product evaluation standards and select digital culture awards to incentivize industry development [6].

The *2019-2020 Chongqing Digital Publishing Industry Development Report* officially released at the annual conference shows that in 2019, Chongqing's digital publishing industry maintained steady growth. In the future, optimized recombination of regional policy factors will become the core driving force for industrial optimization and development, with regional industrial collaboration entering a new stage. Report data indicates that in 2019, total output from digital publishing product production reached 11.211 billion yuan, a 2.01% increase from the previous year. Total output from digital publishing support services and publishing equipment manufacturing and sales reached 10.657 billion yuan and 644 million yuan respectively, the latter decreasing by 1.02% year-on-year. Digital newspaper publishing (520 million yuan), journal publishing (325 million yuan), and publishing platform operations (175 million yuan) saw growth rates of 35.10%, 25.65%, and 41.46% respectively, all showing upward trends. The report also proposes six recommendations for Chongqing's digital publishing development during the "14th Five-Year Plan" period: improving the industrial support policy system, strengthening talent cultivation and reserves, nurturing and introducing ecological enterprises, increasing guiding investment, increasing investment in digital publishing new infrastructure, and establishing regional and industry enterprise groups [6].

### 3.1 Broadening Physical Book Sales Channels

Although the rapid development of mobile internet, Internet of Things, and digital publishing technologies has impacted the reading, dissemination, and sales of physical publications, relevant state departments deeply recognize the importance of physical bookstores and have introduced policies to support their development. On June 16, 2016, 11 departments including the Publicity Department jointly issued the *Guiding Opinions on Supporting the Development of Physical Bookstores*, proposing that "by 2020, a physical bookstore construction system should be basically established, centered on large cities, supported by medium and small cities, and extended by township outlets, forming a healthy pattern of coordinated development among large bookstores, chain bookstores, small and medium-sized characteristic bookstores, community convenience bookstores, rural bookstores, and campus bookstores" [7]. The General Office of the Ministry of Education issued the *Guiding Opinions on Further Supporting the Development of Physical Bookstores on University Campuses*, proposing to "implement the relevant deployment requirements of the Party Central Committee and the State Council, and further support the construction and healthy development of physical bookstores on university campuses" [8].

Under the background of twin-city integration, Sichuan and Chongqing can

establish a more efficient and extensive book sales network, broaden sales channels for physical books, and accelerate the circulation of outstanding books from central urban areas to surrounding towns and villages. This will facilitate the regional circulation of advantageous publications, including local chronicles, Bashu culture series, and other cultural readings documenting local historical and cultural development and folk customs, practical readings on agricultural development, tourism industry development, and infrastructure construction, and readings on educational and teaching reform achievements of outstanding primary, secondary, and higher education institutions in various regions.

In addition to physical bookstore construction, publishing houses can also use online platforms such as WeChat and TikTok to promote their outstanding publications to the public, showcase the highlights of their content, tell the stories behind the books, and generate reading interest among people. Meanwhile, this can enhance the image of publishing houses in people's minds. Furthermore, physical books can be placed in high-traffic locations such as subways, high-speed railways, and airports. For example, creating a Sichuan-Chongqing book brand and establishing a physical sales point in airport shopping areas specifically selling excellent books published by Sichuan and Chongqing publishing houses can promote the books while deepening the impression of the Sichuan-Chongqing publishing brand and enhancing the image of publishing houses [9].

### 3.2 Building Comprehensive Media Networks

In recent years, the construction of county-level media convergence centers in China has basically achieved full coverage. These centers integrate media with government affairs and services, primarily providing users with diversified comprehensive services including media, party building, and government affairs [10], to consolidate and strengthen mainstream public opinion and enhance the communication power, influence, guiding power, and credibility of news and public opinion [11]. The Chengdu-Chongqing urban agglomeration, with Chengdu and Chongqing as its core, is forming an increasingly dense innovation-oriented network with more and more projects. Research shows that besides Chengdu and Chongqing, an increasing number of node cities are participating in the innovation network, which features good accessibility among node cities [12]. As the Chengdu-Chongqing Twin City Economic Circle construction advances, the two core areas of Chengdu and Chongqing will drive the collaborative development of other cities, making the innovation network among node cities more smooth and convenient, with the number of node cities continuing to increase, ultimately forming a larger-scale western network system that accelerates the flow of information, knowledge, culture, and talent in this region [13].

During this period, Chengdu and Chongqing can accelerate the construction of a more interconnected network system, using the two cities as cores to carry out broader radiating infrastructure construction, enabling towns and villages with low network usage and smart terminal adoption rates to enjoy the changes brought by twin-city integrated development. This will allow advantageous pub-

lications from both regions to spread not only through physical sales channels but also efficiently through mobile internet technology, facilitating people' s reading, enriching their spiritual and cultural life, and cultivating patriotism and determination to build their hometown and practice socialism with Chinese characteristics.

### **3.3 Creating Reading Platforms Covering Both Regions' Publications**

Digital publishing is developing vigorously, with significant improvements in both quantity and quality among mobile publishing content providers, platform service providers, network operators, and terminal manufacturers. Platform service providers mainly offer transaction platforms for content providers and consumers. Currently, there are many types of e-book terminal reading Apps, and the publication formats used by various operating platforms are not unified [14]. The author believes that under the background of integrated development, an App or e-reader can be developed to provide people with access to books published within both regions. This App or e-reader can connect with all book publishing houses within the two regions, transforming outstanding works from their publications into e-books, striving to create excellent Sichuan-Chongqing electronic reading products and brands, and integrating the outstanding works of both regions to promote them nationwide. This approach can not only provide another dissemination and sales channel for outstanding publications from large publishing houses in both regions but also drive some smaller and local publishing houses, allowing their published works to be seen by more people and thereby enhancing social and economic benefits.

### **3.4 Joint Development to Build a Western Brand**

Under the Chengdu-Chongqing Twin City Economic Circle construction background, the Chengdu-Chongqing region can jointly build a western publishing brand, showcasing the outstanding publishing houses and publications of both regions to people nationwide and enhancing the overall image of publishing units in people' s minds. This involves using outstanding publishing houses to drive less advanced ones and large publishing houses to drive smaller ones, appropriately optimizing existing publishing resources on a stable basis to improve their quality. Some publishing houses with conditions and digital publishing development plans can promote the digitalization of suitable varieties and content that have been published or are being edited and processed, accelerating their digital publishing pace and enriching their publication varieties.

Taking professional textbooks published by university presses as an example, content suitable for digitalization can be placed in an online "digital classroom" established by the publishing house. Teachers or students using the textbooks can log in directly with accounts and passwords, which can be obtained by scanning QR codes on purchased books or by purchasing the publishing house' s digital textbooks directly. In addition to textbooks, the online "digital classroom" can also include teacher lectures, courseware, and explanations of key and

difficult knowledge points related to textbook content. This approach can bring teachers and students closer to the publishing house, increasing their attention to and dependence on it [9], not only ensuring textbook sales but also potentially bringing higher-quality textbook publishing resources to the publishing house in the future.

### 3.5 Strengthening Editorial Talent Development in Both Regions

In editorial and publishing activities, editors' subjective consciousness refers to the reflection on editorial activities formed by editorial subjects through relevant practical activities on editorial objects in specific work [15]. Therefore, optimizing publishing resources, improving publication quality, and producing various digital publications are all closely related to editors. In promoting digital publishing integration, book editors must actively transform their concepts, engage more with various publishing processes, study modern editing technology, expand their editorial horizons, exercise their comprehensive abilities, strive to contact outstanding publishers and authors, discover potential authors and works, and excavate advantageous content. They should regularly upgrade their professional technical knowledge, develop their editorial capabilities in editorial work, pay timely attention to policy documents issued by relevant publishing departments, and learn new national standards in editing and publishing. Additionally, as modern editors, they should actively understand and learn modern editing and publishing technologies to improve work efficiency; strengthen modern publishing concepts, continuously learn to improve business skills and subjective consciousness; enhance their observational skills, improve their ability to identify manuscript quality, and elevate their comprehensive qualities [16].

Under the Chengdu-Chongqing Twin City Economic Circle construction background, editors in both regions should further innovate their publishing concepts, strengthen modern publishing concepts, emphasize ideological education, and improve their comprehensive qualities.

### Conclusion

Under the Chengdu-Chongqing Twin City Economic Circle construction background, Sichuan and Chongqing book publishing houses should accelerate the promotion of publishing method innovation, focusing on broadening physical book sales channels, optimizing manuscript source quality, promoting digital convergent publishing, improving modern publishing technology levels, building advantageous books and western publishing brands, and strengthening editorial talent development to strive to publish various high-quality books. In the inaugural year of the "14th Five-Year Plan," they should adhere to the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics, focus on thematic publishing, build a batch of high-quality publishing development platforms, promote the transformation and upgrading of the publishing industry, and improve the level of publishing "going global."

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