

Exploration and Practice of Deep Integrated Development at People' s Daily (Postprint)

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Abstract

At present, media convergence has entered a critical stage of in-depth advancement. As the Party' s media organization, People' s Daily has undertaken extensive exploration and practice in the deep integration of technology and content, thereby providing a new exemplar for enhancing the communication influence of mainstream media. This article elaborates on the innovative practices of People' s Daily in the “content + technology” paradigm from three distinct aspects: its conceptual approach to convergence development, its robust implementation of initiatives achieving “two wings flying in tandem” for technological innovation and high-quality content, and its proactive efforts in constructing and effectively utilizing county-level converged media platforms.

Full Text

Preamble

Title: Exploration and Practice of Deep Convergence Development at People' s Daily

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Abstract: Media convergence has entered a critical stage of deep advancement. As the flagship newspaper of the Communist Party of China, People' s Daily has undertaken extensive exploration and practice in the deep integration of technology and content, providing a new paradigm for enhancing the communication influence of mainstream media. This paper introduces People' s Daily' s innovative practices in “content + technology” from three perspectives: its convergence development approach, solid measures to achieve “two wings flying together” in technological innovation and quality content, and active efforts to build and effectively utilize county-level media convergence platforms.

Keywords: People' s Daily; media convergence; AI+5G+4K/8K+VR/AR; all-media

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New technologies serve as the engine and accelerator of media convergence development. People' s Daily resolutely implements General Secretary Xi Jinping' s directive to “utilize the achievements of the information revolution to promote the deep development of media convergence” and follows the guidance of President and Editor-in-Chief Tuo Zhen to “strengthen innovation-driven development, facilitate deep media convergence, and promptly pay attention to frontier technology trends such as artificial intelligence, 5G, and VR/AR, actively embracing new technologies and transformations.”The organization closely tracks technological frontiers, actively promotes the application of new technologies, accelerates the construction of a new “AI+5G+4K/8K+VR/AR” -enabled all-media production landscape, and comprehensively promotes the deep integration of advanced technology with quality content.

1. Technology-Empowered Deep Integration Practice

As the central Party organ newspaper, People' s Daily has thoroughly studied and implemented General Secretary Xi Jinping' s instructions on media convergence development. In recent years, it has actively built and gradually formed a comprehensive all-media communication landscape covering more than 10 platforms including newspapers, periodicals, websites, apps, microblogs, and screens. The organization operates over 320 online media outlets with a combined reach of nearly 1.2 billion people, and its Douyin account has more than 140 million followers, ranking first among central media outlets on the platform and providing a new paradigm for enhancing the communication influence of mainstream media. People' s Daily' s convergence development approach can be summarized in three main aspects.

1.1 Upholding Content as King, Applying Internet Thinking and AI in Content Production

Thought is the origin. People' s Daily' s commentaries and opinion pieces have always been distinguished by their intellectual depth, while technology serves as the driving force and accelerator in service of content and ideas to present better content and higher-quality news works. The organic integration of creative planning, new formats and channels, and new technologies such as artificial intelligence with content production can stimulate stronger expressive power, appeal, and affinity in news products. During its active exploration of deep content-technology integration, People' s Daily has produced numerous outstanding and classic converged media works.

The “Military Uniform Photo” H5 project serves as a prime example. To commemorate the 90th anniversary of the founding of the People’s Liberation Army, the People’s Daily app leveraged artificial intelligence technologies such as facial recognition to help users generate their own virtual military uniform photos. The project instantly went viral upon release, becoming a phenomenon-level hit. Its success stemmed from three key factors: excellent creativity, precise content, and robust technical support. First, the creativity must be both high-minded and down-to-earth, with correct public opinion orientation. The project enabled netizens from different regions and industries to create dignified and elegant military uniform photos from different eras, expressing their reverence and love for the PLA. This represents a new communication model for mainstream media—one based on mixed emotional communication in individual scenarios. Second, content materials must be accurate, with precise content ensuring smooth and stable dissemination. Experts from People’s Daily’s Military Affairs Interview Office of the Political and Cultural Department and the National Defense University provided authoritative materials and review for 90 years of military history and uniforms, with even minute details such as collar shapes and sleeve badge positions required to be accurate. Third, strong technical support was essential. Behind the “Military Uniform Photo” project was the advanced AI technology of Tencent’s Pitu team, including facial recognition fusion, facial keypoint localization, and facial correction algorithms, supported by ample computing resources. To ensure smooth and efficient user access, more than 4,000 Tencent Cloud servers were deployed during peak times.

In the past two years, People’s Daily has planned and released products such as “These 9 Posters Are Truly Inspiring,” which promoted General Secretary Xi Jinping’s key quotes from the Two Sessions, achieving 120 million total reads across the internet. The “I Love You, China” themed campaign generated 1 billion online interactions and over 15 billion total reads. The new format “Time Museum” national tour was enthusiastically received, with over 500,000 offline visitors and cumulative topic reads exceeding 2.5 billion. The micro-video series “China in 24 Hours” has accumulated over 2.4 billion views and has been translated into multiple languages for overseas dissemination. [Figure 1: see original paper] shows classic communication cases including (1) the “Time Museum” tour and (2) the “China in 24 Hours” short video series.

2. Solidly Achieving “Two Wings Flying Together” in Technology Innovation and Quality Content

People’s Daily focuses on the big picture and long-term planning, adhering to a four-step approach to technology-business integration by resolutely implementing “overall coordination, technology sensitivity, system building, and good guidance.” This ensures that technological innovation and quality content “fly together like two wings,” fully leveraging its role as the “mainstay” and “anchor” to continuously expand the influence and communication power of mainstream media.

2.1 Upholding Integrated Development and Establishing Sound Coordination Mechanisms

To implement the editorial board's directive of "one chessboard for the whole organization, with shared resources," People's Daily established the Media Technology Joint Meeting in 2020. As a regular organization for coordinating media technology across the newspaper, it brings together technical forces from all departments, bureaus, and subsidiary enterprises. Internally, it serves as a technical advisor and assistant to the editorial board, undertaking overall design, coordination, and scheduling for the newspaper's technological development to maximize the effectiveness of technical forces across the organization and promptly communicate advanced technology trends and applications as well as cybersecurity requirements and responsibilities from public security, state security, and internet management departments. Externally, it comprehensively understands the most cutting-edge, advanced, and practical new technologies in the industry, deeply insights into new concepts, applications, and equipment from top technology companies in the media field, and aims to enhance news productivity and build an all-media communication landscape by identifying synergy points with the newspaper's journalism business and media convergence needs, thereby maximizing technical efficiency and centralizing fund utilization.

Simultaneously, People's Daily has carefully organized the "Code Farmer Society" platform, making it the innovation-driven brain for the newspaper's convergence transformation and upgrading. The platform adopts both "bringing in" and "going out" approaches, regularly organizing youth from various units and subsidiaries to conduct technical seminars, inviting renowned domestic technology leaders to exchange ideas on all-media news ecosystems, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, localization, and other new technologies and concepts to clarify thinking and direction for major projects. It also organizes youth to conduct field research at high-tech enterprises to learn about the most advanced technological achievements through online livestreaming, virtual classes, and on-site visits and exchanges, continuously improving technical personnel's skills and innovation capabilities to build a talent reserve for the newspaper's information technology construction.

2.2 Maintaining Technology Sensitivity and Accelerating Innovation Pace

People's Daily continuously strengthens multi-dimensional and multi-level cooperation with leading technology companies, research institutions, and commercial platforms, seizing time windows to test and deploy application scenarios and needs during technology R&D phases. Simultaneously, it focuses on cultivating its own technical teams capable of understanding, digesting, and applying new technologies, ensuring good application and promotion of new technologies at major news reporting nodes while keeping an eye on the long term, laying out future development, and continuously developing independently controllable core technologies.

In the past two years, People's Daily has released People's Daily AI Editor 1.0 and 2.0, introducing AI capabilities of "seeing, listening, comprehending, reviewing, and checking" to empower all-media production from multiple angles and dimensions, creating a benchmark effect in the industry and producing many phenomenon-level hits. The newspaper successfully held the "People's Daily 5G Technology Application Experience Exhibition" and signed a 5G media application strategic cooperation agreement with China Unicom. It has repeatedly utilized 5G+4K equipment to support all-media coverage of major events such as the Two Sessions, the 100th anniversary of the Communist Party of China, the 70th anniversary of National Day, and the China International Import Expo. It established the People's Daily Smart Media Research Institute to launch a mainstream value "algorithm," optimize the communication ecosystem, and expand mainstream value influence. It also established the State Key Laboratory of Communication Content Cognition, focusing on artificial intelligence research and conducting fruitful work in three key areas: mainstream value precision communication theory, intelligent content review and risk control rating, and national cyberspace governance.

Looking ahead, the newspaper will continue collaborating with Alibaba Cloud to launch People's Daily AI Editor 3.0, combining 5G+MEC edge computing and 5G+SD-WAN technologies to significantly improve production efficiency for new media products and popularize mobile integration with cloud broadcasting and cloud directing capabilities. It will also jointly build 5G media application laboratories with China Mobile and China Unicom to continuously explore media applications and product innovation in 5G environments. Additionally, it will launch a leadership speech and document canon data verification database using knowledge graph technology to improve quality and efficiency in all-media production.

2.3 Leveraging Major Technology Projects to Build Mainstream Media Technology Support Systems

Currently, People's Daily is solidly advancing several key technology projects including international communication, localization application innovation, and mobile integrated services. It strives to achieve integration and sharing between content dissemination and advanced technology, improve the quality and efficiency of editorial office work, build a comprehensive international communication technology support system, and comprehensively enhance the newspaper's international communication capabilities to provide full technical support for deep media convergence.

2.4 Playing the Role of "Golden Microphone" and "Vanguard" to Demonstrate and Lead Media Technology

In this era of great transformation, development, and convergence, People's Daily, as the mainstream media public opinion front, plays the role of anchor and mainstay in the Party's news and publicity work. The newspaper attaches

great importance to technology-business integration, focusing on using advanced technology to accelerate all-media news production, striving to provide technology leadership and innovation demonstration for the media industry, and serving as the industry's "golden microphone." In recent years, People's Daily's breakthroughs in media convergence development have been made possible through continuous innovation from media technology colleagues and industry manufacturers who have empowered all-media production and dissemination with new perspectives, applications, and equipment. Under this "strong alliance" effect, one party provides a large platform while the other provides new technology; one provides new demands while the other provides new equipment, jointly aiming to create benchmark media products and achieve healthy improvement in news productivity.

3. Actively Building and Effectively Using County-Level Media Convergence Platforms

County-level media convergence is an important front for grassroots ideological work, a crucial carrier for advancing national governance system and capacity modernization, and an important platform directly facing and serving the people. In the media convergence era, new technologies have reconstructed news production processes, emphasizing data value mining to facilitate content dissemination and service monetization. Media convergence construction should follow the positioning of "news + government affairs + services," integrating propaganda and management functions to comprehensively deploy across government, enterprise, and university sectors, achieving cross-industry expansion of "media +." The new media convergence platform has become a new platform for governance and comprehensive services in the new era.

Building and effectively using county-level media convergence platforms requires addressing local government needs through functional construction including Party building services and government new media to achieve flat government service management, government affair sorting and statistics, and government scenario coordination and planning. This promotes Internet Plus government services and achieves a strong alliance between technical support and operational planning. In terms of precise decision-making, platforms should provide public opinion analysis, government database analysis and interpretation, and media think tank functions. For smart supervision, they should provide policy implementation reputation monitoring and industry risk control functions to provide decision-making references for government management departments.

Zhejiang Daily's "Tianmu Cloud" serves as a successful case of media convergence cloud platform construction. Taking new media mobile terminals as the core development focus, it has established seven capability systems including converged media collection and distribution, big data command and monitoring, AI full-scenario assistance, diversified content ecosystem aggregation and distribution, quantitative assessment and control, client development, and multi-terminal mobile operation. Successfully serving nearly 100 local prefecture-level

media outlets, government agencies, and enterprises, it aims to guide and serve the masses, establishing itself as a mainstream public opinion platform, comprehensive service platform, and community information hub.

People's Daily's "Central Kitchen" has guided the construction of the Jiyun Media Convergence Platform, which can support the intelligent capabilities of over 100 county-level media centers and meet the content production needs of mainstream media under internet communication trends. Leveraging local characteristics and relying on big data profiling and intelligent recommendation technology, Jiyun actively builds precise and effective information push capabilities, aggregates what the masses need and think, and gradually forms a mainstream public opinion front, comprehensive service platform, and community information hub oriented toward the grassroots level, continuously expanding the influence of mainstream values and setting a benchmark for county-level media center construction.

In summary, building county-level media convergence platforms requires keeping in mind General Secretary Xi Jinping's earnest instructions: "We must work hard to expand toward the grassroots and move closer to the masses, provide the people with more and better cultural and information services, bring People's Daily closer to the people, and ensure that People's Daily serves the people."

4. Summary and Outlook

With increasingly mature and stable global coordination mechanisms, a thriving and improving all-media communication landscape, fruitful and flourishing media laboratory achievements, deeply rooted and flourishing 5G and AI applications, and rapidly advancing major information system construction projects, People's Daily has achieved a series of breakthroughs in its convergence development process. However, convergence transformation and upgrading cannot be accomplished overnight but requires persistent and diligent cultivation. Moving forward, People's Daily will continue to work hand-in-hand with media colleagues, uphold content as king and innovation-driven development, leverage advanced technology, continuously expand the all-media communication landscape, accelerate the deep advancement of media convergence, and enable Chinese stories and voices to spread to the world more loudly, diversely, intelligently, and efficiently.

[1] Gu Minggui, Hao Guannan, Li Can, Liu Xinghong. New Technologies Lead a New Model of All-Media News Production—People's Daily AI Editor 2.0 Helps Improve Quality and Efficiency in Two Sessions Reporting[J]. *China Media Technology*, 2021(04): 7-10.

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

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