

On Improving News Editing in the Converged Media Era: Postprint

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Abstract

The task of news editing is to process news raw materials in a reasonable manner to produce news products that suit media characteristics and audience demands. It constitutes the final procedure in transforming news information into news products and exerts the most direct and crucial influence on news' s impact, guiding power, dissemination capacity, and credibility. At present, we have entered an era of integrated development between traditional media and emerging media, wherein the two mutually permeate and influence each other, forming a relatively independent media environment. News information communication has consequently exhibited features of fragmentation, interactivity, depth, transience, and disruptiveness. Therefore, news editors must actively adapt to new changes and demands, respecting the laws of news communication and upholding the principles of news communication—including firmly maintaining correct guidance of public opinion and the principle of positive propaganda as the main approach—while implementing the various requirements for news communication from both emerging and traditional media throughout the convergence process into their practical work. Only thus can they produce news information products that meet the needs of media convergence development, thereby enhancing the influence, guiding power, dissemination capacity, and credibility of news media. This paper explores the competencies and qualities that news editors should possess in the era of media convergence and presents perspectives on how news editors can perform their work effectively, hoping to serve as a modest spur to induce more valuable contributions and to elevate news editing work to a higher plane in the converged media era.

Full Text

Preamble

Title: A Brief Discussion on How to Excel in News Editing in the Converged Media Era

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Abstract: The task of news editing is to process news materials in a reasonable manner to produce news products that suit media characteristics and audience needs. As the final step in transforming news information into news products, it exerts the most direct and important influence on news' impact, guidance, dissemination, and credibility. We have now entered an era of integrated development between traditional and emerging media, where they interpenetrate and influence each other, forming a relatively independent media environment. News information dissemination exhibits characteristics of fragmentation, interactivity, depth, transience, and subversiveness. Therefore, news editors must actively adapt to new changes and requirements. While respecting the laws of news communication and upholding the principles of news dissemination—including firmly grasping the correct orientation of public opinion and maintaining positive propaganda as the main approach—they must also implement the various requirements for news dissemination posed by both emerging and traditional media throughout the convergence process. Only then can they produce news information products that meet the needs of media integrated development, thereby enhancing the influence, guidance, dissemination, and credibility of news media. This article explores the capabilities and qualities that news editors should possess in the converged media era and offers perspectives on how editors can excel in their work, hoping to serve as a modest spur to induce valuable contributions that will further advance news editing in the converged media era.

Keywords: news editing; editorial capability; diversification; talent transformation; interdisciplinary talent

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1. New Changes in News Editing Work in the Converged Media Era

In the converged media era, new media technologies have achieved deep integration of the media environment. Intelligent technology, big data technology, scenario-based technology, social media technology, and others have enabled news to spread faster, wider, and with greater interactivity. News dissemination has broken through the temporal and spatial limitations of the traditional media era, gradually exhibiting networked development trends. The multimedia

functions, communication methods, and organizational structures of news have become core elements affecting its influence, guidance, dissemination, and credibility. The methodologies, theoretical foundations, technical standards, and evaluation criteria that news editors should follow have all undergone significant changes compared to the past. The new trend of media convergence has posed new propositions and requirements for news editing methods, communication forms, and subsequent effects, requiring news editors to conscientiously implement new development concepts and promote continuous transformation and innovation in news information collection, compilation, and dissemination. The author believes that news editing work in the converged media era presents the following characteristics.

1.2 Requirement for Editors to Transform from Theory-oriented to Interdisciplinary Talent

Traditional news editors performed the work of organizing and clarifying oriented information, needing only to screen and roughly process collected information. In the converged media era, editors must meticulously screen and refine complex information, identify valuable information submerged in ineffective or low-efficiency information, perform creative labor, and output it in entirely new ways to fulfill the communication function of news information. This requires editors to actively accumulate experience in converged media communication and align their ideological understanding and working methods with the new media market. If editors lack sufficient sensitivity, acuity, and forward-thinking, the news information they edit may fail to adapt well to the complex and ever-changing communication environment. Therefore, news editors should continuously strengthen learning and training to further enhance their sensitivity, acuity, and forward-thinking regarding news information.

1.3 Transformation of Editorial Thinking from Traditional to Modern

Traditional news editors mostly focused on cultivating awareness of readers, messages, and services, with their work centering on processing news materials. They only needed to act as gatekeepers for news, revise manuscripts, and beautify columns. However, in the converged media era, editing theory, procedures, technology, management, operations, and effectiveness have become important factors in evaluating news communication efficiency. The subject concepts of editorial work show diversified development trends, and the core of editorial work is to process news manuscripts into news information products suitable for dissemination in the new media environment. Therefore, editors should also possess forward-thinking, innovative awareness, and service consciousness, particularly commercial awareness, competitive awareness, and management awareness compatible with the market economy. Simultaneously, when facing massive information in the converged media era, editors should adopt a factual, objective, and fair attitude to extract valuable information. All news in the converged media era requires topic planning with an all-media concept, so editors also need

to possess Internet thinking and align news information with popular reading formats according to Internet laws.

2. Capabilities Required of News Editors in the Converged Media Era

Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the Party Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core has taken a farsighted view and identified promoting media convergence as an important measure to enhance the capability of public opinion guidance in keeping with the needs of the times. In addition to considering some experiences from traditional media, news editors must possess capabilities compatible with the new media environment to screen valuable information, process and output it, and make it into information with certain public opinion guidance power that can be widely disseminated through both traditional and new media. Therefore, editors should actively adapt to the demands of the times and continuously improve their work capabilities and qualities to ensure their competencies meet the needs of media convergence development. The author believes that news editors should possess the following capabilities in the context of media convergence.

2.1 Capability to Practice the “Four Capabilities”

In the Internet era, everyone is a publisher of news information, and the field of news communication shows strong competitive momentum. The responsibility and mission of news editors is to produce eye-catching news products, explain news information completely, accurately, and thoroughly, and make them well-received by audiences. Practicing “footwork, vision, intellect, and writing” is an inevitable requirement for accomplishing these tasks. First, news editors must be able to go deep into the grassroots and the masses, lower themselves, settle their hearts, investigate actual conditions, understand reality, ask about needs from the people, seek advice from the people, and serve the people, producing news manuscripts that are close to the masses, life, and reality. Second, news editors must continuously improve their political theory level, have a comprehensive and systematic understanding of the Party and state’s policies and measures, and avoid falling into “information cocoons” where different information intertwines by continuously enhancing political acuity, political discernment, and news insight, thereby playing the role of news as both a “telescope” and a “microscope.” Furthermore, editors must continuously learn to master new skills and methods, actively think and accurately analyze problems, and have the capability to serve as “gatekeepers,” “producers,” and “disseminators” of news products. Only in this way can news information be explained in simple terms, concise and comprehensive, with the smell of earth and the dew of morning, making it readable, memorable, and shareable for audiences, achieving the effect of gentle influence and silent nurturing.

2.2 Capability for Social Thinking

In the converged media era, information with rich content, diverse presentation forms, and high communication value is more easily accepted. Therefore, before starting work, editors must plan news communication channels and methods, such as how to disseminate, the timeliness after release, and the impact on audiences, thus requiring editors to possess “social thinking” capability. In the converged media era, the initiative and activity of audiences in receiving news information, as well as their participation in disseminating information, are important indicators for examining the communication power, credibility, and influence of news information. Therefore, news editors should also possess “data thinking” capability, accurately grasping user needs, communication needs, and social needs to process information precisely and efficiently through data technology. Additionally, because news audiences have different growth environments and education levels, their preferences when receiving news information also differ. To effectively improve news communication efficiency, news editors need to continuously innovate and explore, spending time trying to figure out audience needs. Therefore, editors in the converged media era need the capability to excavate and expand news connotations from different angles and explore the essence of news in multiple dimensions, enabling news information to possess characteristics of specificity, authenticity, and reliability through effective media presentation forms. In the converged media era, news information has explosive communication characteristics, with numerous news events occurring every moment. To improve news communication efficiency and value, editors should also consider how to broaden news communication channels through public platforms like Weibo and WeChat, while conducting multi-faceted analysis of news information to maximize communication effects.

2.3 Capability for Resource Integration

In the converged media era, news information is disseminated through print media, online media, and television media. Only by efficiently utilizing computer software can editors produce news information products that meet their characteristics, have distinctive personalities, and integrate ideological, artistic, and aesthetic qualities. Therefore, computer application skills are a basic skill for editors. Currently, micro-videos, with their creative concepts and concise, efficient presentation methods, enable audiences to watch and browse news more intuitively and are gradually gaining favor among audiences. As editors, they should actively adapt to this trend and fully master the ability to use relevant equipment to produce short video news. Additionally, in their work, editors must collect information from various sources, screen out valuable information for utilization, making resource planning and coordination capabilities, understanding of target audience needs, and comprehensive design capabilities for various traditional and emerging resources particularly important. Moreover, editors frequently use large editing and planning platforms in their practical work and need to have efficient interaction with editorial teams to build an

editorial production process that suits their needs, achieving diversified design, production, and presentation of news materials and realizing coordinated collection, generation, and dissemination of news information. Therefore, editors should also possess team collaboration capabilities.

2.4 Capability for Project Coordination

In the converged media era, various news types are disseminated like a “symphony,” with information forms and communication methods intertwined like a grand symphony. Therefore, editors must become the chief conductors, planning and coordinating news resources in an organized manner. That is, editors must skillfully collect information on various platforms, conduct in-depth interactive communication with audiences, and continuously optimize the influence, guidance, dissemination, and credibility of news manuscripts to better achieve efficient communication and comprehensive sharing of news information. Simultaneously, editors must possess certain planning capabilities to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of news information through rich and colorful news planning. Furthermore, editors need independent planning and organizational operation capabilities, strengthening coordinated management of news planning projects, organizing different activities precisely and efficiently, and coordinating relevant departments and personnel to form synergy for achieving common goals. In the converged media era, news information changes rapidly and spreads at high speed, so editors cannot remain in a “single combat” state but should rely on team cooperation mechanisms to conduct efficient and precise cooperation with colleagues to achieve a “1+1>2” effect. At the same time, editors should have the capability to accurately grasp audience needs to efficiently communicate and interact with audiences and learn from others’ strengths.

2.5 Capability for Information Fusion

News media are important platforms for disseminating information, needing to produce both precise and efficient products and products that are well-received by audiences. Therefore, editors should possess “product thinking” and “innovative thinking” capabilities. While using text, images, audio, video, and other forms to package news products, they should truly integrate commodity concepts and market concepts to maximize satisfaction of communication needs and enhance communication effectiveness. In the converged media era, news information has explosive communication characteristics, with numerous news events occurring every moment. To improve news communication efficiency and value, editors should also consider how to broaden news communication channels through public platforms like Weibo and WeChat, while conducting multi-faceted analysis of news information to maximize communication effects.

3. Strategies for News Editors to Adapt to the Converged Media Era

3.1 Keep Pace with the Times

In the converged media era, mobile media terminals have become the main channel for people to obtain information and interact with media. Everyone uses mobile media and is firmly 黏着 to it, with audience interaction with news information far exceeding that of traditional media. First, news editors must actively adapt to changes and development in the media environment, comprehensively and accurately understand the communication laws of news information in the converged media era, and firmly establish the concept of keeping pace with the times, fully understanding the pathways and type needs of different audiences in obtaining news information. In their work, they should break free from the ideological constraints of traditional media and run through the entire work process with socialized, Internet-based thinking and innovative concepts. Second, in the converged media era, the usage frequency of mobile media terminals is very high, with the number of users, adhesion, and activity far exceeding other terminals. Mobile terminals have become the main medium for news information dissemination, and the information dissemination battlefield has shifted from traditional channels to mobile terminals. Therefore, in their work, news editors should improve news acuity and sensitivity while adhering to the principle of empathy, considering problems more from the audience' s standpoint, running commodity awareness through news manuscripts, and excavating in-depth information from multiple aspects and channels to promote news information to generate due value for audiences.

3.2 Change Inherent Patterns to Meet Communication Needs

Objectivity and authenticity are the greatest values of news and the core requirements of media communication for news information, determining news quality and standards. Therefore, news editors must maintain the integrity, objectivity, and accuracy of news information in their work. They should conduct re-creation and re-development according to the needs of media convergence development, especially not fabricate information to attract eyeballs. At the same time, news editors must deeply excavate information behind the news. When processing each piece of news information, they should thoroughly investigate the information behind it to plan subsequent chain reactions and follow-up tracking. When tracking news events, editors must uphold an objective and fair attitude, avoid interference from personal subjective consciousness, and prevent mixing personal viewpoints into news information to ensure providing complete and authentic news to audiences. Second, because audiences in the converged media era are accustomed to browsing news through mobile terminals and exhibit “fast-food” style reading characteristics, often only scanning headlines and key points of lengthy news, editors must continuously innovate news forms and content. By creating eye-catching headlines and highlighting key information content, they should try to maintain a fresh, brisk, concise, and clear news for-

mat. Finally, editors must actively promote product innovation, enabling the news information they edit to transform into pictures, animated images, videos, audio, and other forms during dissemination, promoting news to evolve into highly interesting and people-friendly information products during communication.

3.3 Enhance Competencies and Improve Work Effectiveness

Competence and capability are the primary drivers of innovation. The converged media era has put forward higher requirements for the competencies and capabilities of news editors, so editors must strengthen learning and training, temper their character in news communication practice, and enhance work capabilities. First, facing new changes in the social and media environments, they must adapt to the opportunities and challenges brought by the new era, new systems, and new media, maintain a sense of crisis, and overcome capability panic. Through various forms of learning, they should further improve their knowledge system structure and consolidate their knowledge and cultural foundation. Second, they must actively adapt to modern news communication laws, adhere to news content innovation and editorial work innovation, and maximize the converged media communication advantages of news information. Next, “For first-class craftsmen, character is more important than technology.” As core personnel in news communication, news editors must carry forward the spirit of craftsmanship, adhere to the principle of character first and equal emphasis on virtue and talent, consciously pursue selfless realms, and firmly establish dedication awareness. They should not only require practical diligence, foolish effort regardless of gains and losses, and inquisitive drilling but also possess dedication, silent cultivation, long-term commitment, and down-to-earth professionalism to continuously improve work quality and effectiveness and promote news information to further enhance its influence, guidance, dissemination, and credibility.

In summary, in the converged media era, various communication media interpenetrate and influence each other, and news communication exhibits characteristics of fragmentation, interactivity, depth, transience, and subversiveness. As the final process in news information processing and production, editing has the most important impact on news dissemination power, influence, and credibility. Therefore, editors should, on the basis of adhering to journalists’ principles, conscientiously practice the “Four Capabilities,” actively cultivate new media thinking capabilities, enhance their resource integration, project coordination, and information fusion capabilities for processing news information, keep pace with the times, change inherent patterns to meet communication needs, and enhance their competencies and improve work effectiveness. Only then can they quickly adapt to the requirements of media convergence development and news communication needs in the new era, producing news information products that both meet the needs of news information communication and media convergence development and are well-received by audiences, thereby further enhancing the

influence, dissemination power, guidance, and credibility of news information.

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

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