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Postprint of Research on Media Convergence Development in the Internet Plus Context

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Abstract

With the development of technologies such as 5G, big data, cloud computing, and artificial intelligence, the media landscape, communication modalities, and public opinion ecology have undergone tremendous transformations. In the “Opinions on Accelerating the In-depth Integrated Development of Media” issued by the General Office of the CPC Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council, it is proposed to “construct a mainstream public opinion landscape that integrates online and offline spaces and coordinates domestic and international communication, and establish an all-media communication system with content development as the foundation, advanced technology as the support, and innovative management as the safeguard.” The dominance of traditional media in the communication sphere is being challenged by emerging media. In the “Internet+” era, for traditional media to gain new impetus for development and for emerging media to avoid the “old path” of traditional media, it is necessary to achieve media convergence between them, which has become the inevitable path for media transformation, upgrading, and development at the current stage. In the Internet era, for new and traditional media to pursue autonomous integration, they must integrate content and technology into an organic whole, not only aggregating content resources but also fully leveraging technological advantages. Based on this, this paper examines the convergence between media from the perspective of the “Internet+” era background, in order to conduct a relatively objective forecast and assessment of the prospects for media convergence development.

Full Text

Preamble

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Title: Research on Media Convergence Development in the “Internet +” Context

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Abstract: With the development of 5G, big data, cloud computing, and artificial intelligence, the media landscape, communication methods, and public opinion ecology have undergone tremendous transformation. The “Opinions on Accelerating In-depth Media Convergence Development” issued by the General Office of the CPC Central Committee and the State Council proposes to “build a mainstream public opinion pattern that integrates online and offline channels and coordinates domestic and international communication, and establish an all-media communication system rooted in content construction, supported by advanced technology, and safeguarded by innovative management.” Traditional media’s dominant position in the communication field faces challenges from emerging media. In the “Internet +” era, traditional media seeking new development opportunities and emerging media aiming to avoid the “old path” of traditional media must achieve mutual convergence, which has become the inevitable route for media transformation, upgrading, and development in the current stage. In the Internet age, for new and old media to pursue autonomous convergence, they must integrate content and technology into an organic whole, not only aggregating content resources but also fully leveraging technological advantages. Based on this premise, this article explores media convergence from the perspective of the “Internet +” era background, aiming to provide an objective prediction and evaluation of the prospects for media convergence development.

Keywords: “Internet +” ; media convergence development; era connotation; accelerated communication speed

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In the “Internet +” era backdrop of continuous socioeconomic development and rapid innovation in emerging media, audiences have fundamentally changed how they access information. Traditional media such as newspapers, radio, and television have fallen out of the mainstream of information consumption. Audience demand for information is increasingly moving toward personalization, diversification, convenience, and interactivity. Internet technology itself has already made audience information needs more distinctive, and the formation of “Internet +” on this basis has created an even more complex environment for survival and development in the communication field. “Internet +” and “media convergence” represent, in a sense, the two major contextual backgrounds for current media development, exhibiting a trend of mutual interaction and influence. As traditional and new media collide and converge, they must seize the

pulse of the era and embrace the historical trend to achieve mutual integration and development.

1. The Era Connotation of “Internet +”

The concept of “Internet +” was first proposed in 2012, and Tencent played a crucial role in its subsequent promotion. “Internet +” is a dynamic concept that gradually integrates into people’s daily lives through its breadth and depth. The concept represents an extension of the traditional notion of “Internet,” representing progress in both technology and content. For the communication field, “Internet + Media” constitutes a branch domain of the “Internet +” concept, utilizing “Internet +” technology to achieve convenience and sharing in information resource dissemination and to transform the development models of both traditional and emerging media. The concept of “Internet + Media” expands traditional communication media models, enabling them to combine with the advantages of emerging media in the era’s development and present information-based, diversified characteristics of the times, thereby forming a more scientific, rational, and effective mass media communication model in an environment where new and old media blend.

2. Overview of “Media Convergence”

2.1 The Meaning of Media Convergence

Media convergence refers to the integration of advantages from both traditional and emerging media to create a new media ecosystem encompassing content, technology, and environment. This phenomenon has transformed the development laws of traditional media while simultaneously addressing the dilemmas faced by emerging media in their current development environment. It plays a crucial role and holds significant value in promoting the upward development of the media industry and satisfying public demand for media information. Media convergence achieves the integration of content and technology, enabling the media industry to consolidate both elements, thereby increasing media attention in the “Internet +” era and substantially improving the speed and quality of information dissemination, which benefits the overall development of the media industry.

2.2 Characteristics of Media Convergence

Massive and Convenient: With the rapid development of Internet technology, emerging media characterized by processing massive amounts of information have gained widespread popularity. Information from different times and places spreads on a large scale through mobile phones, computers, and other network platforms anytime and anywhere. Coupled with the development of “Internet +” technology, traditional media has encountered new development opportunities, with even more information gushing forth, creating an “information explosion” era.

Open and Interactive: Traditional media communication is unidirectional and linear, disseminating specific information from specific publishers to audiences at specific times, with audiences in a passive position and almost no initiative to contribute information. This communication mode has poor fluidity and is not conducive to information circulation. In the era of media convergence, emerging media communication is bidirectional; both information disseminators and receivers can become information publishers. This is an era of “everyone is media,” a “pan-media” age.

Immersive and Efficient: Against the backdrop of media convergence, the efficiency and immediacy of information dissemination have been effectively enhanced, enabling timed, instant, real-time, and full-time information release in the “Internet +” era. [1] Meanwhile, with technologies such as 5G, big data, and artificial intelligence, live on-site information collection can be realized, giving audiences a strong sense of presence. This feeling of being on the scene can enhance users’ interest and curiosity in obtaining information.

Decentralized: In the converged media era, the “opinion elite” control over information has become a thing of the past. “User-generated content” enables different audiences to independently choose different topics for discussion, promoting the diversified development of information. Simultaneously, different media can provide differentiated content according to the personalized needs of audiences within their media systems, improving user loyalty and stickiness.

3. Media Development Status in the “Internet +” Era

3.1 Challenges Facing Traditional Media

Low Benefit Acquisition: Under the influence of “Internet +,” traditional media faces unprecedented challenges, with their market share gradually shrinking under the pressure of emerging media. In the media convergence environment, network and media technologies have become important lifestyles for the public in the “Internet +” era. Against this backdrop, traditional media development has hit a bottleneck. A series of changes, including severe content homogenization, greater audience choice autonomy, fiercer industry competition, and gradually shrinking audience scope, have driven traditional media into a predicament in terms of benefit acquisition.

Media Talent Drain: In the “Internet +” and media convergence environment, talent drain from traditional media has become a widespread phenomenon, with many professionals flowing into the emerging media industry, which significantly constrains traditional media development. Talent has always been the core of competition in all industries, and the lack of talent prevents traditional media from better integrating into the “Internet +” and media convergence era.

Loss of Credibility: In the Internet era of massive information dissemination, fragmented information fills people’ s daily lives. Currently, what people lack most is quality content. However, as life rhythms accelerate, the public needs

to reduce the time cost of information screening and desires to obtain needed information content in the shortest time possible. In this process, to retain users and satisfy this demand, prompting users to maintain continuous attention to media content, many media outlets use “eye-catching” content containing false information to “stick” to users. [2] Over time, this has caused a loss of media credibility, and users no longer trust media. Even authentic information is questioned by users, which is highly detrimental to media convergence development and the transformation and upgrading of traditional media.

3.2 Advantages of Emerging Media

Increasing Communication Speed and Audience Access: (1) In the “Internet +” and media convergence era, audiences hope to obtain information immediately. Compared with traditional media, emerging media effectively utilizes the timeliness of the Internet, improving information circulation speed and making the timeliness advantage of information more prominent. (2) Traditional broadcasting and television information dissemination requires multiple stages such as collection and editing before entering communication channels, with communication time also restricted, thus having strong lag. Therefore, in the “Internet +” and media convergence era, audiences tend to prefer emerging media with high communication efficiency, such as Weibo and WeChat, for information acquisition.

Meeting Audience Personalized Needs: (1) Although traditional broadcasting and television media adopt audio-visual combination methods, audiences accept information passively, resulting in poor feedback in the communication process. In contrast, through emerging media, audiences can actively select information content they need or are interested in according to their preferences. (2) The usage of smartphones, tablets, and computers continues to rise among younger audiences, enabling convenient information acquisition with simple finger movements and better realizing the ability to “know world affairs without leaving home.” This new role positioning of “information freedom director” can fully guarantee user initiative, achieving information acquisition, editing, dissemination, and feedback through comprehensive utilization of text, pictures, video, and other media.

Achieving Multi-party Interactive Communication: The rapid development of emerging media and the Internet has fundamentally changed interpersonal communication methods. In today’s “Internet +” and media convergence era, audiences can express views from their own perspectives, and interactive communication on various social platforms has more humanistic characteristics.

4. Significance of Media Convergence in the “Internet +” Era

Driven by continuous economic and technological development, information dissemination has undergone earth-shaking changes from initial newspaper reports

to current “Internet +” communication models. Therefore, to better utilize Internet technology to promote information dissemination, it is necessary to deeply understand media convergence in the “Internet +” era context, thereby facilitating the transformation and development of both traditional and emerging media in the new era. [3]

Emerging Technologies Promoting Convergence: Science and technology constitute primary productive forces and the most active factor driving continuous social progress. The development of 5G, big data, artificial intelligence, and other technologies can propel development in all industries to unprecedented heights. New media technologies improve traditional media technologies, thereby facilitating media revolutions and industry development. [4] Technological innovation represents the general trend, and only by conforming to this trend can the publishing industry achieve transformation and pioneer innovation.

User Demand Guiding Convergence: In this information explosion era, users increasingly emphasize information acquisition efficiency technologically while pursuing personal experience in terms of content. How to balance conflicts between personalized user information needs and media industry operations? The convenience and efficiency characteristics of media convergence provide excellent solutions. Therefore, building bridges between emerging and traditional media convergence to integrate more information resources for meeting different audience group needs is gradually becoming mainstream in media industry development.

5. Dimensions of Media Convergence in the “Internet +” Era

Content Convergence: The “Opinions on Accelerating Media Convergence Development” states: “We must advance supply-side structural reform in content production, pay greater attention to online content construction, maintain content focus consistently, concentrate on content quality, expand high-quality content production capacity, innovate content expression forms, and enhance content dissemination effects.” “Content is king.” Information content convergence primarily occurs during the information product production stage. Using big data for in-depth information mining, employing professional algorithms to derive more targeted information frameworks through modeling and calculation, organizing, reviewing, and editing through computer technology, then designing information through multiple forms such as audio, video, and pictures, media convergence permeates all aspects of information content production.

Technology Convergence: The principle of “technology as tool” indicates that digital technology characteristics or attributes determine media content selection, editing, processing, and communication methods. However, with the continuous deepening of the new round of technological revolution, technology plays more than just a supporting role. Content is content, but technology is also content, as technology can create new content. [5] The convergence be-

tween technologies represents a major highlight in current new and old media convergence development. In the new media convergence environment, technology convergence is not simply the fusion between technology and content but rather the mutual integration among various technologies.

Personnel Convergence: The convergence of information producers and information disseminators represents a typical example of personnel convergence in new and old media integration. However, facing the new media ecology, such convergence is somewhat inadequate for the all-media era. In the Internet era, the pursuit is the integration of content and market and the integration of planning and marketing. Therefore, incorporating marketing personnel into the personnel convergence framework is imperative. Only through mutual influence among three main groups—content producers, technology providers, and marketing planners—can human support be provided for media convergence development.

Market Convergence: In the convergence process between traditional and emerging media, not only does communication content change, but their operational markets also transform. The emerging media communication market now has broader development prospects due to communication technology innovation. After integrating emerging media, traditional media has experienced significant changes in market orientation, audience scope, and communication forms. For traditional media, traditional communication methods have been upgraded and transformed, while for emerging media, this has fostered “content deepening.”

Channel Convergence: The convergence of traditional and emerging media has also produced corresponding changes in their communication channels within the convergence mechanism. Therefore, in achieving channel convergence between new and old media, comprehensive transformation must be realized to satisfy audience demand for massive information and achieve coherence, connection, and integration of communication channels between traditional and emerging media.

6. Approaches to Media Convergence in the “Internet +” Era

Enhancing Information Value through Content Convergence: Content is the “soul” of information, and the path of media convergence cannot depart from this foundation. In the all-media era, information producers must be adept at capturing cultural content across various fields and integrating and innovating through digital technology. [6] Information is no longer an isolated product, and in the “Internet +” era, media has broader development space. The essence of media lies in the selection, processing, and dissemination of information content. Only by firmly grasping this main thread can information value be enhanced and new developments in media formats be realized.

Driving Information Innovation through Technology Convergence:

The value of information content resources and their manifestation forms can only be realized when they align with contemporary technology. In the era of traditional and emerging media convergence development, technology must not only integrate with content but also with products. In the new “Internet +” era, only by mastering application skills of new technologies and achieving technology convergence through various technological superpositions can information innovation be driven and higher-level information products be spawned. [7]

Improving Information Service Quality through Personnel Convergence: The integration of all links from planning to marketing can not only improve media convergence efficiency but also enhance information service quality and elevate user reading experiences. Therefore, content producers, technology providers, and marketing planners must communicate, cooperate, and support each other. Relying on digital technology, grasping users’ personalized needs, driving demand through supply, and guiding supply through demand will facilitate media convergence development.

In summary, the “Internet +” environment presents both opportunities and challenges for traditional and emerging media. Transformation and upgrading are opportunities, while challenges include traditional media’ s lower technological competitiveness compared to emerging media and emerging media’ s lower content competitiveness compared to traditional media. In the “Internet +” and media convergence environment, new and old media must grasp this important trend of convergence development to achieve transformation, forming their own competitive advantages while maintaining their media characteristics and combining other media strengths. This will realize the transformation and upgrading of traditional and emerging media in the “Internet +” era, enabling them to actively participate in convergence development, continuously explore new paths for integration, and stand at the forefront of the “Internet +” tide.

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

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