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Exploring the Convergence of Newspapers and New Media in the Big Data Era: Postprint

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Abstract

Supported by data elements, the newspaper industry has begun exploring integration pathways with new media, achieving favorable social outcomes. To amplify these effects, this article—based on the fundamental content of new media within the big data context, focusing on the significance of newspaper-new media integration, and taking the dilemmas confronting newspapers in the new media environment as its starting point—explores integration pathways for newspapers and new media under the data information backdrop, aiming to provide insights for relevant practitioners and researchers in their work and studies in this field.

Full Text

Preamble

As new media technologies continue to develop, China's newspaper industry has faced certain impacts. To adapt to this increasingly complex media environment, [1] the newspaper industry has begun adjusting its structural framework based on its own professional characteristics, developing new media technologies in parallel and injecting distinctive contemporary momentum into its development, thereby laying a foundation for deeper advancement. Particularly as the framework of socialism with Chinese characteristics gradually improves, newspapers will confront more “high-dimensional” challenges and opportunities. Practice has demonstrated that enhancing the compatibility between newspapers and new media can provide dynamic guarantees for future development and facilitate the modern transformation of newspapers. Therefore, this study on the integrated development of newspapers and new media holds certain significance.

2.4 Product Form Multi-dimensionalization

To prevent integration from remaining at a superficial level, it is essential to fully explore the interconnections between newspapers and new media, enhancing both horizontal and vertical information flow to ensure their development aligns with both the future trajectory of information dissemination and the fundamental trends of the newspaper industry itself. The deep integration of newspapers and new media has given rise to diverse newspaper formats, elevating the industry's technological barriers and fulfilling the modernization requirements of newspapers. Specifically, under the influence of new media convergence, newspaper products have evolved toward digital formats to meet audience demands in the big data era, exemplified by three-dimensional newspapers, audio newspapers, and QR code newspapers. Particularly with the support of various mobile terminal media, these formats have nearly reached the extreme state of development within the current media landscape.

3. Development Dilemmas for the Newspaper Industry in the New Media Environment

In fact, although the newspaper industry has begun exploring integration points with new media technology and gradually enhancing its technological attributes, thereby promoting modernized development to a certain extent, an examination of their parallel development trajectories reveals that some newspaper organizations or enterprises still exhibit deficiencies that hinder the development of their industrial systems.

3.1 Aging Audience Demographics

Aging audience demographics constitute a significant factor affecting the development of the current newspaper media environment. Currently, due to shifts in audience reading habits and media information consumption patterns, elderly readers have become the primary audience for newspapers, while younger and middle-aged groups, benefiting from the spatial and temporal advantages of new media technologies, increasingly prefer obtaining social information through alternative media channels. Although some newspaper distribution organizations have begun leveraging new media technologies to expand their business domains and have gained certain audience segments, their conventional industry mindsets and models prevent them from sustaining youth engagement, resulting in fluctuating audience numbers. Therefore, in the current environment, newspapers should fully utilize relevant new media technologies, combine them with offline advantages, and rapidly establish online presences across platforms such as WeChat, TikTok, Weibo, and mobile apps to ensure they remain relevant and on course, thereby genuinely achieving modern development.

3.2 Lack of Technical Talent Support

Talent constitutes a core element supporting newspaper development, with interdisciplinary professionals being particularly crucial for enhancing quality and efficiency in the industry' s new media initiatives. However, an analysis of the current newspaper industry' s development reveals two critical issues: on one hand, significant gaps exist in the talent system, preventing the formation of strong momentum to accelerate media convergence; on the other hand, the comprehensive skill sets within the talent system have fallen out of sync with contemporary development, resulting in a lack of fundamental technical support that impedes the industry' s deep development in the modern media environment.

3.3 Insufficient Authority

The newspaper industry currently suffers from a lack of requisite authority, which serves as the foundation for its existence and the core hub connecting it with audiences. However, with the development of new media technologies, some newspaper companies have begun “seeking attention” and “chasing traffic” to enhance their competitiveness. Unbeknownst to them, while this may temporarily attract certain audience segments, it ultimately undermines the industry' s authority and guidance, excessively consumes audience trust, and consequently plunges the newspaper new media sector into a developmental “quagmire.”

4. Pathways for Newspaper Integration with New Media Technology Under Big Data

4.1 Fully Utilizing New Media Technology

To enhance the interoperability between newspapers and new media, efforts should begin with new media technologies. Supported by rapidly developing information technology, new media continues to accelerate its growth, [7] with data and information circulation methods achieving anticipated advancements, as exemplified by mainstream portals such as WeChat and Weibo. The deepening of new media technology not only enriches data circulation patterns but also enhances social influence. Building upon this foundation, newspapers should leverage new media technologies, adapt to the times, break through the limitations of “paper,” and enter the era of digital “newspapers.” This means fully utilizing new media technology platforms to expand the coverage and influence of “reporting,” thereby helping the newspaper industry reach new heights and achieve breakthroughs. Taking current new media mobile terminal information technology as an example, the newspaper industry should establish itself on audience mobile clients, empowering newspapers with modern data attributes. The reason is that mobile phones have become a crucial window influencing people' s lives; by developing newspaper portals compatible with mobile interfaces, newspapers can connect with audiences across space and time, narrowing the distance between them. Particularly through interactive new media platforms,

the newspaper industry can gain more intuitive insights into current audience preferences, such as relevant comments and feedback, and accordingly adjust its development direction to accommodate the multidimensional and personalized information acquisition preferences of audiences.

4.2 Optimizing Audience Structure

Audience system architecture constitutes the foundation for ensuring the sustainable development of newspapers in the new media environment and therefore warrants appropriate attention. Relevant editorial personnel have conducted in-depth research into the information consumption preferences of different age groups in the current environment, [8] and based on development trends, have optimized the newspaper industry through new media approaches to guarantee its “sustainable” development. Newspaper professionals should focus on the development of various age cohorts, accurately identify the genuine needs of each demographic, and adjust their presentation modes and structures accordingly. On one hand, newspaper content should be made more accessible, such as interpretations of relevant content in the Civil Code; on the other hand, more multidimensional approaches should be adopted to optimize display methods and reconstruct understanding and perceptions of the newspaper industry across age groups, for instance, by using big data comparative analysis to push more youth-oriented targeted content. Furthermore, existing content format limitations should be innovated or broken through; that is, to engage young people in discussions on newspaper topics, beyond focusing on content presentation formats, the behavioral context should align with contemporary youth thinking to enhance their participation interest, thereby increasing youth group stickiness and helping break the barrier of audience aging.

4.3 Strengthening Technical Talent Support

Throughout the process of integrating new media development, newspapers should dynamically enhance the skill vitality of their talent pool. Robust skill support not only enables newspapers to quickly overcome the adaptation period of new media integration but also lays a foundation for future-oriented development. Therefore, this aspect demands appropriate attention. Specifically: First, combine regular and timely improvement methods to dynamically strengthen the skill sets of existing teams, such as through various thematic training sessions. This approach serves dual purposes: it raises awareness among team members about the importance of skill development in the newspaper industry under the new media context, encouraging proactive transformation and exploration to continuously improve team performance; and it imbues existing team members with professional competencies suited to the new environment to prevent ideological and behavioral deviations. Second, the recruitment threshold for technical talent should be elevated; new hires must possess not only fundamental newspaper skills but also new media-related technical capabilities, such as back-end maintenance, data collection and analysis, and audience informa-

tion protection, to ensure stable development in the newspaper industry' s new media environment. Finally, to maintain team vitality, a corresponding evaluation system should be established to dynamically assess team skill attributes, with appropriate rewards and penalties to ensure personnel actively learn and improve.

4.4 Strengthening Report Authenticity

It is widely recognized that authority constitutes a competitive advantage for newspapers in the modern environment. Authenticity represents the fundamental attribute of authority, while authority embodies the essence of authenticity. Although new media possesses rich communication methods and rapid dissemination speed that can cater to popular “tastes,” it lacks a certain degree of authority. In particular, some media organizations artificially process information to gain development, which affects audience access to information and undermines new media' s authority. Therefore, when integrating with new media, the newspaper industry should leverage its own authority and strengthen its authenticity. For example, when interpreting the Civil Code, analysis should not be based on subjective speculation but should center on China' s fundamental legal framework, the Constitution. Take the interpretation of the divorce cooling-off period: its original intent is to establish a 30-day reflection period for divorcing parties; if one party is unwilling to divorce, the divorce becomes invalid. However, this does not apply in cases involving domestic violence, or when one party insists on divorce while the other refuses, in which case divorce litigation can be filed to bypass the cooling-off period.

4.5 Enhancing Newspaper News Regenerability

Due to inherent limitations of the newspaper medium, although newspaper pages contain substantial reporting, much meaningful and valuable news content cannot be presented to audiences. Against the backdrop of new media technology, newspaper editors must break through mental “barriers.” That is, the quantity of news should not be limited to newspaper pages; editors can fully utilize various modern online information platforms to innovate newspaper content dissemination paths and enhance information regenerability. Newspaper editors can interpret the same news from multiple angles based on the unique characteristics of different platforms, thereby achieving diversified news presentation. For instance, print news can be serious and profound, computer-based news can combine text and images, mobile news should be concise, and pushes on platforms like QQ should be relatively vivid. Overall, through editorial work, multiple processing iterations enable the same report to appear in different formats across multiple platforms, substantially enhancing its influence and dissemination scope, and endowing newspaper news content with greater vitality.

4.6 Integrating and Innovating Newspaper Media Resources

The new media convergence construction of newspaper content represents a modernization development pathway for newspapers. In this context, the technological advantages of new media under the big data backdrop facilitate resource integration between the newspaper industry and new media strengths. Through powerful advantage alignment that satisfies both newspaper and new media merits, their integration can effectively compensate for respective shortcomings while enhancing newspaper media flexibility. Furthermore, business model innovation for newspaper media constitutes a crucial task. First, when placing newspaper advertisements, precise targeting should be achieved by innovating, pricing, and distributing ads according to different audience needs. Second, attempts at paid reading models can be explored to ensure the news value of paid content, with in-depth excavation of such content to improve the economic returns of the newspaper media industry. Finally, based on new media technology in the big data context, relevant skills and resources should be fully utilized to enhance the authority, advancement, and influence of newspaper media.

In summary, in the current media environment, for the newspaper industry to achieve sustainable and stable development, it should leverage its own advantages, accurately position its new media development foundation, thoroughly analyze its weaknesses and strengths, transform its mindset and management approaches, and propose new media integration methods adapted to the environment to facilitate diversified, modernized, and data-driven newspaper development. Consequently, this article, grounded in new media technology within the big data context, proposes six-dimensional measures for the integrated development of newspapers and new media, offering certain reference value.

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

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