

Research on the Operation Models of Academic Journals in the Context of Media Convergence: Postprint

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Abstract

Media convergence refers to the integration of all elements, including media forms, functions, and other components. The prosperous development of academic journals, integration of academic resources, acceleration of academic information exchange and transmission, expediting the convergence between academic journals and new media, and realizing seamless three-in-one communication among readers, authors, and editors hold significant importance for promoting the innovative development of academic journals. The integrated development of academic journals can be divided into four stages: the primary digitalization stage, the Internet+ stage, the journal-network integration stage, and the all-media new publishing stage. Academic journals encounter substantial obstacles in the traditional integrated development process, requiring intensified media convergence efforts, such as clarifying journal positioning, understanding audience needs, and transforming ideological concepts.

Full Text

Preamble

Research on the Operation Model of Academic Journals Under Media Convergence

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Abstract: Media convergence refers to the integration of all elements, including media forms and functions. Prospering and developing academic journals, integrating academic resources, accelerating the exchange and transmission of academic information, speeding up the integration of academic journals with new media, and achieving barrier-free communication among readers, authors, and editors are of great significance for promoting the innovative development

of academic journals. The integrated development of academic journals can be divided into four stages: primary digitalization, Internet Plus, journal-network integration, and all-media new publishing. Academic journals face significant obstacles in their traditional integration process, requiring intensified media convergence efforts that involve clarifying journal positioning, understanding audience needs, and transforming mindsets.

Keywords: student journals; media convergence; transformation and development; development strategies

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1. The Impact of Media Convergence on University Academic Journals

In media convergence, both information production and consumption undergo certain changes. Each individual appears not only as a consumer but also as a producer. This revolutionary technological innovation has created a very significant impact on university academic journals.

1.1 Severe Circulation Squeeze and Economic Pressure

University academic journals typically adopt traditional operational models, serving higher education institutions and specialized researchers. However, the integration of new media technologies has brought convenience and timeliness, leading many to prefer multimedia academic journals. This has affected the distribution scale of university academic journals and substantially reduced their economic returns. For example, a sociology journal previously circulated over 5,000 copies monthly, but under media convergence, circulation has dropped to approximately 1,000 copies. Many university journals are priced quite low, generally not exceeding 20 RMB, with some specialized journals even cheaper, resulting in a substantial decline in economic benefits for university academic journals.

1.2 Talent Shortage, Particularly of Interdisciplinary Professionals

University academic journals are generally not a major source of revenue for institutions. Even universities with multiple academic journals tend to treat them as marginal, placing them in a peripheral position. University academic journals have small staffs—while a typical journal requires six to eight personnel, due

to lack of institutional emphasis, they often operate with only one or two staff members. Most personnel in university academic journals have backgrounds in content-related disciplines or editing, but lack expertise in new media. This deficiency in professional knowledge seriously affects daily operations such as peer review, layout, and distribution, and severely limits the use of new media in academic journals.

2. The Necessity of Integrated Development for Academic Journals

Academic journals serve as important platforms for showcasing academic innovation and bear the crucial tasks of leading disciplinary development and promoting academic exchange. The digitalization of traditional media has dramatically impacted the internet, causing substantial reductions in journal circulation. The gradual improvement of new media technologies has brought tremendous opportunities to academic journals, and the promulgation of relevant laws and regulations has further elevated the importance of media convergence. As media convergence deepens, the academic journal community has recognized its significance, yet successful cases of integration between academic journals and new media remain scarce. Three reasons account for this situation: first, the slow pace of media convergence development; second, the superficial application of media convergence without full realization of its potential; and third, the incomplete manifestation of intensive development technologies for journals. Therefore, accelerating media convergence and the transformation of academic journals is crucial. Expanding academic resources and information dissemination channels to truly achieve integration of authors, readers, and editors with barrier-free communication is of great significance for realizing cluster operation models of academic journals under media convergence [1].

3. The Evolution of Academic Journal Integration

With the continuous development of internet technology, media convergence has evolved from singular integration to journal-network integration, with broader scope and more diversified integration methods. Currently, China has over 6,000 academic journals, accounting for 60% of all published journals. As an important pathway for academic research and dissemination, academic journals are transitioning from traditional dissemination models to internet-based distribution. Against this backdrop, journals nationwide are actively transforming, with over 90% now employing online publishing and entering an era of integrated development. Media convergence represents a new model of diversified information transmission channels, integrating television, broadcasting, and internet technology to centralize journal resources and derive other media forms. This is an important communication method in the information age, representing integration in both technological and operational aspects, and has gradually demonstrated the trend of all-media integrated development.

3.1 Primary Digitalization Stage

China's academic journal digitalization first emerged in the 20th century when Tsinghua University launched the *Academic Journal* CD-ROM edition, opening the door to digital publishing. During this stage, to meet the demands of the times, some publishing houses adopted digital construction by transferring newspaper content onto CDs. However, this form of digital dissemination only changed the storage medium of knowledge information without significantly altering journal distribution methods. It merely compressed journal content through technical means, and due to limited storage capacity, had minimal impact on journal distribution and dissemination.

3.2 Internet Plus Stage

Around 2000, as the global economy developed, the internet grew rapidly, impacting all industries. In recent years, integrating journals with the internet has led to the establishment of major databases such as CNKI, Wanfang, and VIP, which have gradually matured with government support. Journal dissemination has shifted from digital to internet-based broadcasting, bringing qualitative changes to distribution. As the internet entered ordinary people's lives and journal research achievements matured, China's journals gradually entered the Internet Plus stage, with people accustomed to retrieving information through library searches and online databases. During this era, journals as knowledge dissemination channels increasingly recognized the importance of the internet, with many journals transforming from email submission systems to establishing websites for editorial and publishing operations.

3.3 Journal-Network Integration Stage

The concept of journal-network integration first emerged in 2010, creating closer connections between readers and authors that could effectively enhance reader experience and increase reading interest. In 2014, as internet development accelerated toward video and social media, many academic journals integrated into self-developed software in various forms and cooperated with major resource databases to enhance their influence [2].

3.4 All-Media New Publishing Stage

In recent years, China's academic journals have entered a new stage of development, with online journals making content more disseminable. Unlike traditional journals, they are no longer simply digital or print editions but are distributed through networks. Data papers are no longer limited to print publication, which better facilitates journal preservation, asset management, and brings major changes to resource allocation methods for library and information departments, ushering in a peak period for academic journals [3].

4. Development Strategies for Academic Journals Under Media Convergence

4.1 Leveraging Media Convergence Technology to Promote Academic Journal Development

In the media convergence environment, academic journals play a vital role. By optimizing publishing processes and strengthening academic dissemination and development, they can fully demonstrate academic value, lead academic journals toward prosperity, fully showcase research achievements, and promote academic development [4]. In this new era, as important carriers of academic achievements, academic journals must improve content quality and make quality their primary criterion [5].

4.2 Using Media Convergence Technology to Advance Digital Publishing

For more sustainable development, academic journals must promote the digital publishing process. Through rational application of digital publishing technology, presenting journal content to readers in digital form not only accelerates academic dissemination and expands transmission pathways but also provides a platform for researchers and readers to communicate. Digital publishing also greatly facilitates editorial work through online manuscript processing systems that enable editing, proofreading, publishing, manuscript tracking, and downloading functions [6].

4.3 Using Media Convergence to Promote Editorial Resource Integration

Traditional academic journals possess their own resource advantages. In the new era, resource sharing has become an intrinsic demand for academic journal development [7]. Content is the core competitiveness of academic journals. To achieve better development, academic journals should leverage their resource advantages, integrate their resources with those of the broader academic journal community, establish resource sharing platforms, improve resource quality, and ultimately achieve common progress and development [8].

5. Summary of Cluster Operation Models for Academic Journals Under Media Convergence

With the arrival of the new media era, network information dissemination methods have changed, moving beyond paper-based transmission. Traditional dissemination methods can no longer meet contemporary needs, and network communication has become an important pathway. Journal publishers must fully recognize the importance of transformation, change traditional mindsets, follow the trend of the times, and pursue the path of media convergence development.

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

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