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Leading Digital Transformation and Upgrading of Publishing Houses with Innovative Concepts in the Post-Print Era

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Abstract

The Fifth Plenary Session of the 19th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China has elevated innovation to an unprecedented height, requiring all industries to prioritize innovation to adapt to the “14th Five-Year Plan” and even the 2035 long-range objectives. Although traditional publishing houses have achieved certain innovations driven by technology in recent years, the concept of innovative development still needs to be deeply rooted in the process of digital transformation and upgrading. This paper takes the development of China Statistics Press—a professional publishing house—as an example to explore how the concept of innovation can lead the digital transformation and upgrading of publishing houses, with the aim of providing insights for the development of similar professional publishing houses.

Full Text

Preamble

Title: Leading Digital Transformation and Upgrading of Publishing Houses with Innovative Concepts

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Abstract: The Fifth Plenary Session of the 19th CPC Central Committee elevated innovation to an unprecedented height, requiring all industries to prioritize innovation to adapt to the 14th Five-Year Plan and the long-range objectives for 2035. Although traditional publishing houses have achieved some innovation through technological advancement in recent years, the concept of innovative development must be deeply rooted in the process of digital transformation and upgrading. This paper examines the case of China Statistics Press,

a specialized publishing house, to explore how innovative concepts can lead digital transformation and upgrading in publishing, hoping to provide insights for similar specialized presses.

Keywords: Innovation; Publishing; Digital Transformation and Upgrading; Digital New Media; Information Dissemination

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Introduction

Faced with an exceptionally complex domestic and international situation, the Fifth Plenary Session of the 19th CPC Central Committee explicitly established innovation as the core of China's modernization drive. The session's analysis pointed out that the concept of innovative development aligns with China's national conditions and meets the demands of the times, representing both theoretical and practical breakthroughs that offer significant guidance for solving development challenges and strengthening growth momentum. Innovation embodies the principle that science and technology constitute primary productive forces—grasping innovation means grasping development, and pursuing innovation means securing the future. As a key variable in development, innovation will be crucial for achieving the 14th Five-Year Plan, reaching the 2035 long-range objectives, and leading the Chinese nation toward great rejuvenation.

The 14th Five-Year Plan establishes innovation as the main thread, requiring transformation, upgrading, and quality improvement across all social industries. Against the backdrop of mobile internet development ushering in a new era of digital media, traditional publishing faces enormous shocks and challenges. Over the past decade, new technologies have continuously enriched and transformed publishing, with new concepts emerging periodically—from electronic publishing to digital publishing, network publishing, and media convergence. The publishing industry has been driven forward by technology, often pursuing technology for its own sake or digitalization for digitalization's sake, while completely neglecting its own strengths. Such an approach will ultimately cause traditional publishing to be submerged by new media.

Digital new media, dominated by information science and digital technology and grounded in mass communication theory, integrates culture and arts while applying information dissemination technologies to fields such as culture, entertainment, commerce, education, and management. It encompasses various

forms including images, text, audio, and video, employing digital processes for information collection, storage, processing, management, and distribution. Digital new media has become the newest and most widespread information carrier in modern society, permeating nearly every aspect of people's lives and work. As digital technology rapidly develops, the digitization process in mass communication continues to accelerate, with increasing digital media entering daily life and China's digital media industry gradually taking shape and growing within this proliferation.

Although the media environment has undergone significant changes and traditional media faces impact from new media, more than a decade of development has led the publishing industry to a consensus: traditional publishing will not be completely replaced by new media. Instead, they will coexist and develop together through integration and competitive gaming. There is no standard template for digital transformation, upgrading, and convergence in publishing—what fits is best. Therefore, publishing houses must actively seek change, adopt digital new media thinking based on traditional publishing, break through and renew themselves to find suitable paths for transformation and media convergence that meet the demands of industrial change. Consequently, using the concept of innovative development as a lever to lead digital transformation is essential.

Digital publishing represents a critical juncture for the publishing industry to move from traditional publishing toward innovative development. For traditional publishing houses, digital transformation must combine their own characteristics and advantages with bold innovation. This innovation involves not merely formal innovation but, more importantly, content innovation. Formal innovation is relatively straightforward—simply presenting book works in new formats, such as transforming paper media into magnetic media and various electronic publication products, or utilizing network and mobile platforms for direct replication and dissemination of e-books and databases without physical media. Formal innovation requires keeping pace with technological frontiers, accepting and integrating new developments like the latest smartphones, tablets, VR devices, and other mobile equipment that may be used to showcase new publishing formats.

Content innovation, however, constitutes the most core resource. Publishing houses must firmly grasp their content resource advantages for further exploration and innovation. Nearly two decades of electronic publishing, digital publishing, network publishing, and transformation development have demonstrated that content remains king in publishing. Regardless of format, only by steadfastly focusing on content and resources can publishing houses achieve sustainable development. So how exactly can innovative concepts lead digital transformation and upgrading? The author believes there are four key aspects.

1. Building an Innovative Professional Editorial Team

Taking China Statistics Press as an example, the company primarily relies on statistical yearbook publications as its pillar business. Traditional advantages such as statistical table typesetting and publishing must be preserved. Through long-term research and exploration, China Statistics Press has developed significant advantages in yearbook typesetting. The currently implemented offline typesetting package integrates statistical table typesetting tools into Excel and Word, enabling one-click automatic typesetting after simple configuration. With ongoing functional testing, modification, and improvement, this tool can basically be promoted for use by all editors, substantially enhancing yearbook publication efficiency and quality.

Building an innovative professional editorial team means, for China Statistics Press, establishing an innovative statistical editing team—not merely a text editing team capable of typesetting statistical yearbooks, but a scholar-editor team familiar with statistical yearbooks, proficient in statistical indicators and knowledge, and capable of conducting data verification and statistical analysis research. This will be the core competitive advantage of content as king during the digital transformation process. The core of this editorial team consists of in-house editors, but may also include externally hired statistical expert teams or even professionals from other industries interested in statistics found through the internet.

By fully utilizing the yearbook data verification function in the collaborative compilation system, preset indicator relationships can be established or comparisons made with previous years' data. If data in newly published yearbooks deviate significantly from preset indicator relationships or historical data, they are automatically identified and flagged by the computer, truly fulfilling editorial verification functions. These preset indicator relationships must be established by a statistical editing team that masters statistical yearbooks and indicators—this represents core competitiveness. With such an innovative professional statistical editing team, statistical yearbook publishing will become the ace of aces, attracting more yearbook materials to be published at the specialized China Statistics Press. As yearbook resources continuously increase, databases become richer, creating a virtuous cycle.

Additionally, the innovative professional statistical editing team includes editors proficient in statistical knowledge and analysis research who must firmly grasp the characteristics of statistics. The most important aspects are the creativity and originality of content resources. By relying on statistics, they should expand and strengthen the field, achieving excellence and depth. On one hand, they should maintain professionalism; on the other hand, for statistical popularization, they should also emphasize accessibility. Professionally, they must strive for excellence, depth, and novelty—not only inviting senior statistical experts and scholars to achieve academic excellence but also encouraging and guiding young statistical experts toward new research directions, while discovering schol-

ars who can produce popular science works.

Professional popularization requires substantial effort because a field' s development cannot proceed without public participation. As the general public becomes increasingly interested in statistical data, disseminating basic statistical science knowledge among ordinary people can accelerate professional development, and digital new media publishing formats are particularly suitable for popular science promotion. It is worthwhile to seek insightful experts and scholars from other related fields outside one' s own discipline—works from their perspectives may bring greater vitality and attention to the statistics profession. For instance, Tu Zipei, a computer database expert, combined computer science and database technology with statistical analysis to write China' s first monograph on big data, leading national discussions on big data strategy, data governance, and open data. Additionally, attention should be paid to young cross-disciplinary authors, leveraging their vitality and social media proficiency to produce creative statistical publications, encouraging them to break conventions, supporting their unconventional ideas, and using their cross-disciplinary influence for public outreach and popular science to achieve greater integration.

With such an innovative professional statistical editing team established, whether for statistical professional publishing, statistical database management and maintenance, or statistical consulting and services after media convergence, new business growth points will continuously emerge.

2. Innovating Work and Learning Models Through Coordinated Development and Resource Sharing

Publishing in the digital new media era may be all-encompassing, integrating publishing and distribution while combining online and offline resources. Publications may include not only books but also network publishing, audio and video products, game publishing, and may even extend to mobile interactive multimedia and virtual reality technologies—a concept of “big publishing.” This now requires editors to excel in their own work while also promoting team integration, breaking departmental boundaries, and forming system-wide optimal efficiency and effectiveness for comprehensive integration.

In today' s information network era, digital transformation and upgrading will continue to be propelled forward by new technologies. During continuous upgrading, each project implementation requires a project team for control. However, is it truly necessary to establish separate fixed teams or hire many external personnel for team building? The author believes that publishing houses should focus on mastering the content and presentation forms of publications rather than expertise in specific computer or network technologies. Professional matters should be outsourced to professional software teams, while publishing houses need only understand how to use and manage these tools effectively. This allows projects to proceed smoothly with one or two people taking primary control and others providing assistance, provided there is coordination under

leadership and resource sharing. Additionally, regular communication between departments or projects is crucial. The transformation process is not solely the work of digital publishing departments; each project should involve as many people as possible, enabling learning through innovation. When everyone in the publishing house has transformed and upgraded, the entire organization will achieve transformation.

Using digital technology to reshape traditional publishing workflows enables entirely new digital publishing processes. Building a collaborative compilation and dynamic publishing system integrates the entire publishing house into a digital environment, naturally stimulating creativity in digital aspects among most staff members. In the digital new media era, virtually everything requires computers and networks. This demands that we not reject computers, mobile devices, and other new technologies in our hearts but rather regard using these new devices and technologies as basic skills—just as smartphone apps are now used proficiently by everyone but were not universal just a few years ago. What we need is to use these new devices and technologies effectively to present publication content to readers and expand markets, allowing users to experience the convenience and enjoyment brought by new devices and technologies.

3. Utilizing Big Data Analytics for Innovation in Topic Selection, Publishing, and Marketing

After digital transformation and upgrading, traditional publishing and distribution will undergo fundamental changes. Publishing and distribution can occur simultaneously online, enabling editors to directly participate in distribution work. The big data analysis in currently implemented dynamic publishing projects can conduct in-depth analysis of fragmented and disorganized information, enabling topic planning and publishing based on customer needs, segmenting customer groups more finely, and ultimately implementing precision marketing that significantly reduces marketing costs while improving efficiency. This represents just one direction for big data in publishing houses; future analytics will provide more accurate bases for market expansion of published works.

Big data analytics can be applied to inventory clearance, analysis of first-print demand for new books, reprint analysis, author publishing efficiency analysis, dealer evaluation analysis, and more. As transformation deepens, more big data analytics will become available for reference, enabling deeper analysis to promptly identify problems and improvement directions in publishing management, thereby providing advisory support for management enhancement and decision-making.

4. Innovating Management Models Toward Digital Platformization

The process reengineering of traditional publishing business models must adapt to information age requirements and be practically feasible, implemented in ev-

ery detail of daily management processes—this represents the “last mile” for achieving innovative development in publishing. Currently, building digital management platforms is technically easy to implement; what is needed is familiarity with all aspects of publishing work to completely integrate management into digital platforms, effectively using technology to serve management and improve efficiency.

Through continuous practice and exploration, we have discovered that publishing management is a cyclical and iterative process. The various stages of topic planning, editing, publishing, and distribution are closely interconnected, making it difficult to clarify the precise relationships between them. Years of practical experience in publishing have led to certain explorations: we should utilize digital platforms for scientific management and decision-making. First, management processes must be further integrated and optimized based on various business scenarios to clarify the internal logical relationships of publishing work, properly positioning and connecting each stage. Second, platforms should be used to 打通 relationships between stages, deeply 挖掘 system data and analyzing various application data to strengthen decision-making support. Finally, shared service centers should be established to handle routine transactional work in publishing stages through platform-based centralized processing.

Based on comprehensive analysis of current status and requirements, an open digital publishing management platform should be positioned as a digital operations center and digital decision-making center. This digital publishing management platform should have four key characteristics: (1) **Process Servitization**: Treat publishing process management as a service delivery process, optimizing and integrating workflows from the perspective of business scenarios to provide management services that better meet the needs of units, departments, leaders, and employees. (2) **Platform Operation Standardization**: Structure service standard processes through the platform for the tedious transactional work handled daily by topic planners, editors, publishers, and distributors, improving departmental efficiency and freeing up more professional energy and focus to support core business development. (3) **Real-Time Data Information Sharing**: The management platform should distinguish the characteristics and needs of different staff members, centrally displaying highly relevant information on interfaces to meet multi-dimensional information acquisition needs for personnel at various levels. (4) **On-Demand Big Data Analysis**: The platform should provide publishing data to managers at all levels, enabling real-time big data analysis to support decision-making.

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

Source: ChinaXiv – Machine translation. Verify with original.