

“Internet+” or “+Internet” ? –A Discussion on the Integrated Development of Traditional Publishing and New Media Post-print

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Abstract

This paper aims to, through an interpretation of the differing understandings of “Internet+” and “+Internet” , prompt publishers to profoundly recognize the issue of how to properly position the subject-object relationship in the convergence development of traditional publishing and new media, and, combined with the current development status and innovative practices of traditional publishing, explore specific pathways for the convergence development of traditional publishing and new media in the “Internet+” era.

Full Text

“Internet +” or “+ Internet” ? –A Discussion on the Integrated Development of Traditional Publishing and New Media

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Abstract: This paper aims to prompt publishing professionals to deeply reflect on how to properly position the relationship between subject and object in the integrated development of traditional publishing and new media, through an interpretation of different understandings of “Internet +” and “+ Internet.” Combining the current development status and innovative practices of traditional publishing, it explores specific pathways for the integrated development of traditional publishing and new media in the “Internet +” era.

Keywords: “Internet +” ; “+ Internet” ; reader thinking; big data

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In recent years, new media has developed rapidly, bringing a series of opportunities while simultaneously posing unprecedented challenges to traditional publishing. In this new media era, people's daily lives and work habits have undergone tremendous changes, particularly in reading habits, which have fundamentally shifted from traditional print media to mobile devices. Nowadays, people can access desired book information anytime and anywhere through mobile phones, computers, and other terminals, leading to a substantial decline in print publication sales and forcing numerous newspapers and periodicals to face the risk of ceasing publication.

In this era of transformation, new technologies have brought enormous changes and shocks to our work and lives. For the publishing industry, those of us working on the editorial frontline lack deep understanding of new media and new technologies, both theoretically and practically. Especially in the “Internet +” era, how should traditional editors respond? How can we adapt to the new media age? How should traditional publishing integrate and develop with new media? How should “Internet + editing” be implemented? How can “Internet + publishing” achieve integrated innovation? These questions all merit serious consideration.

In November 2015, my paper titled “A Brief Discussion on Journal Marketing in the ‘Internet +’ Environment—Taking Shaanxi Normal University’s Middle School Teaching Reference Series as an Example” was selected for the “Internet + Editing” seminar hosted by the Science and Technology Publications Committee of the China Editors Association, and I was invited to attend. Several veteran publishers’ speeches at that conference remain deeply impressive to this day.

1. “Internet +” or “+ Internet” ?

Wu Peihua, Chief Editor of Tsinghua University Press, argued: “The Internet is merely a tool, a means. The Internet can be ‘+ industry,’ ‘+ agriculture,’ ‘+ military,’ ‘+ transportation,’ ‘+ tourism,’ ‘+ publishing’ ...However, for publishing, our advantage lies precisely in the part that is ‘+ed’ by the Internet—that is, the content part. What we provide differs from the information technology services offered by the Internet. We provide knowledge services, content services.” Indeed, Teacher Wu’s words were a wake-up call. I suddenly realized that as traditional publishers, we should not passively accept the Internet nor be forcibly “pushed” forward by the tide of the times. Instead, we should actively engage with, embrace, and effectively utilize the Internet. As Wu Peihua stated, the Internet is always an advanced entity at the “technical” level, whereas publishing represents knowledge and culture—things that technology alone cannot realize or create. We should capitalize on our strengths, do what we excel at, and seek the most suitable and convenient tools and platforms for our expertise.

Only then can we truly align with the developmental trends of our era.

Therefore, “Internet +” is not our responsibility. What we need to do is “+ Internet.” The shift from “Internet +” to “+ Internet” is not mere wordplay; rather, it represents a genuine clarification and proper positioning of the subject-object relationship—a crucial factor determining whether we will passively follow or actively absorb and utilize in future development. Liu Chengyong, Deputy Director of the National Press and Publication Administration’s Information Center, similarly believes: “For the traditional press and publishing industry, the important thing should not be passively undergoing ‘Internet +,’ but rather actively implementing ‘+ Internet.’ ”

So, on the question of “Internet +” versus “+ Internet,” should we, as traditional publishers, deeply contemplate how to weigh or understand the differences between these two concepts? How should our integration process with new media proceed as we move forward?

2. Should We “+” ? How Should We “+” ?

In this current all-media era, the core competitiveness of traditional publishing remains content production. Whether in traditional publishing or new media, the decisive factor in content output is people. Although the rise of new media has captured significant market share from traditional publishing, new media still relies on the rich content resources of traditional publishing. Moreover, traditional publishing enterprises possess a group of professional talents who are skilled in content planning and familiar with publishing laws and regulations. These professional editors can understand market development, know their readership well, and possess profound professional expertise—advantages that traditional publishing holds over new media. While new media surpasses traditional publishing in information channels, dissemination strength, and quantity, it also suffers from problems of mixed quality, such as clickbait headlines. This necessitates strict content oversight by experienced editorial staff, rather than simply moving content to new media for quantitative dissemination.

Publishing differs from other industries; it deals with culture, guides and transmits correct values, and provides spiritual nourishment for the public. Therefore, any “dissemination” that abandons content quality violates industry principles. If traditional publishing’s editorial experience, methods, and techniques are combined with new media, they will inevitably produce creative results. Additionally, although traditional publishing’s current development is relatively slow, its long-established brand effects will not be surpassed by new media in the short term. Through long-term operation and development, traditional publishing brands have gained varying degrees of recognition and influence among audiences, which has become an effective strategy for traditional publishing enterprises to strengthen their original brands and increase market share through brand extension in recent years.

However, under the impact of new media, traditional publishing has gradually

“fallen behind” in the publishing torrent. For instance, insufficient attention is paid to reader feedback, and social media is not truly used for comprehensive reader surveys and research, leading to a certain degree of “working behind closed doors.” There is also blind following of social media trends, with traditional publishing enterprises often hastily creating new media platforms simply to “keep up with the trend” or on a whim, only to subsequently ignore them. Furthermore, genuine two-way interaction on platforms has not been effectively achieved, with only one-way output and superficial application of social media.

Traditional publishing must break free from the constraints of existing traditional development models and actively seek effective pathways for integration with new media. Among these, establishing communication platforms is the first step for traditional publishing toward new media integration, requiring the sharing and integration of content, technology, talent, and other elements. Therefore, comprehensive transformation, seizing opportunities to integrate resources, accelerating development, and utilizing the advantages of new media to open new development paths are excellent choices for traditional publishing development.

In the new media era, as traditional publishers, we urgently need to realize that “Internet + publishing” requires new thinking:

3.1 User Thinking Publishers in the new media era must first possess user thinking, making topic conception and publication design always user-centered. Topics should be planned based on the common choices and needs of a large number of users. For example, in the initial stage of topic planning, editors can first survey current user groups about the popularity of relevant topics, or users can spontaneously propose points of interest for editors’ reference, making topic generation originate from user concerns as much as possible—coming from users and going to users. Only with “users” in mind can products truly focus on target groups and achieve truly targeted planning.

3.2 Big Data Thinking In the current new media era, the consensus that “big data is an asset” is forming, and this applies to the publishing industry as well. Regardless of the “Internet + publishing” business model, the ability to collect and analyze reader data, author data, and various knowledge and information data is one of its most important competitive advantages. For instance, we can glimpse user-attended product features or content points and directions from single product purchase volumes and user feedback. Through overall structural analysis of marketing data, we can determine the market share of single products nationwide or in specific provinces and cities, and gain deep insights into user acceptance and preferences beyond surface-level data.

3.3 Service Thinking For future publishing institutions, the main service objects should include two categories: authors and readers. For authors, publishers provide writing guidance, copyright protection, and marketing promotion ser-

vices that add value to their works, enhancing authors' dependence on publishing institutions and securing long-term stable copyright authorization and cooperative relationships. For readers, publishers enhance reading experiences through better content quality control, customized reading guidance, and additional value-added services such as education and training, providing comprehensive information consumption solutions for core reader groups. Consequently, future publishers' profits will mainly come from rich value-added service projects rather than from the current simple difference between book production and sales prices.

3.4 Integration Thinking The integrable resources within traditional publishing are enormous, and with a little attention, significant steps can be taken in content product innovation. For example, my publishing house possesses abundant resources for student and teacher categories related to Chinese language. When developing online products, we have the advantages of favorable timing and geographical position, only lacking the “harmony” factor. This requires publishing house leaders to have unique vision and strong top-level design capabilities to effectively schedule and integrate existing resources to achieve product innovation.

3.5 Talent Thinking Talent is the strongest core competitiveness of this era. However, current traditional publishing enterprises mostly lack “compound” talents. Why compound? Because talents specializing solely in new media are insufficient to undertake work in the publishing field. Publishing domain compound talents need to possess rich publishing experience and business knowledge while also understanding new media development trends and mastering relevant new media technologies. Only such talents can meet the “talent needs” of the publishing field. However, such talents are extremely scarce and require targeted cultivation by traditional publishing enterprises with dedicated time and effort, resulting in a long-term lack of completeness in traditional publishing talent.

Therefore, in promoting the integration of old and new media, traditional publishing enterprises need to invest more energy in strengthening the cultivation of modern publishing talents.

These points represent only the more basic thinking that traditional publishing should possess in the new era. Meanwhile, traditional publishing enterprises can also attempt to transform their profit models and develop innovative multiple profit models based on their special circumstances. For example, they can change their business philosophy, establish and implement “Internet +” based business strategies, and instead of relying solely on book quality, reputation, and unlimited expansion of publishing scale for sustained stable profits, they can take a long-term perspective. Through full-media development of products and extension of product lines, they can reduce the marginal cost of publications, increase market share, and obtain future profits and derivative profits

through various channels such as copyrights and personalized services.

Regarding “thinking breakthroughs” in marketing, how can we effectively utilize consumers’ “conflict” psychology for marketing? Here I share an example about HLA’ s advertising slogan. When I first saw HLA’ s advertisement, “Men visit HLA twice a year,” I thought it was absolutely brilliant. “Twice a year” doesn’ t literally mean only going twice—frequent customers certainly go more than twice. So who is this statement targeting? Yes, it’ s for those who have never worn or visited HLA; this advertisement is specifically designed for them, to develop new customers. After all, frequent customers are only a small portion, while a large number of potential customers are precisely those who have never been. Moreover, “twice a year” sounds like a low requirement at first hearing. But consider what would happen if everyone went twice a year. Therefore, this advertisement employs a strategy of retreating to advance—it makes the vast majority of people who have never worn or visited HLA only need to go once, because after one visit, they will know it and be attracted by its beautiful clothes, thus becoming regular customers. Why specifically say “men” visit twice a year? This makes the request more specific and highlights its specialization in men’ s clothing, making it more authentic, more appropriate, and more likely to make male customers feel it is speaking to them. This is an excellent example of breakthrough and thinking transformation in marketing. Because where there is “conflict,” there is demand. Studying “conflict” thoroughly essentially clarifies marketing needs. In the new media era, the Internet has redefined marketing; relying solely on positioning and segmenting markets can no longer easily gain consumer recognition. For marketing, discovering “conflict” is only a victory of the eye—third-rate marketing discovers “conflict,” second-rate marketing resolves “conflict,” while first-rate marketing creates “conflict.” Expanding and creating the value of “conflict” is the ultimate victory in marketing. I hope this case inspires traditional publishing on how to find new marketing points in conflict.

4. Upholding Values Amid Change

In today’ s era of advanced network technology and information explosion, few readers are willing to calm down and write articles. Just as some students no longer concentrate on writing essays, instead replacing them with Baidu searches and reference modifications, this is also why academic journals are becoming increasingly homogeneous. Communication between editors and frontline readers becomes particularly important, especially the encouragement, inspiration, and guidance for frontline authors. I believe that behind every excellent author stands an editor who has deeply engaged with them. Just as Lu Xun, spurred by Chen Duxiu’ s “urgent requests for manuscripts,” produced five novels including “A Madman’ s Diary,” “Kong Yiji,” and “Medicine.” Lu Xun unabashedly expressed his admiration for Chen Duxiu, referring to his novels from this period as “commissioned literature” and viewing Chen Duxiu as a “pioneer of revolution” and “chief commander.” He said: “The editors of *New Youth* came to urge me again and again; after several urgings, I would write one piece. Here

I must commemorate Mr. Chen Duxiu; he was the most forceful in urging me to write novels.”

Only when editors fully recognize their responsibilities and mission can they maintain their work passion and envision the future, enabling publications to better guide readers and benefit them. Only with such persistence can we continue to “push” out valuable and guiding excellent content to serve readers. Only with this commitment can we engage in editorial work with a clear conscience, become “conscientious editors,” do conscientious work, remain true to our original aspirations, uphold the pure land in our hearts, resist the temptation of fame and fortune, conduct genuine research, and edit outstanding works.

Times create heroes, and heroes can also create times. This is both the worst and the best of times. In the integration development of traditional publishing and new media, as publishing professionals, we must always adhere to our responsibility and commitment, upholding cultural values amidst turbulence. We always believe that “print media is the rear base,” providing material support and talent support for new media, serving as the talent output for the new media main battlefield, and providing excellent content for new media to gain developmental advantages through content superiority.

As editors, we must treat the content we edit with dedication, never forgetting the mission of disseminating quality culture that editors shoulder. Our responsibility is to edit and publish excellent content, lead and spread correct values, and never produce “shoddy work” that disregards editorial professional ethics. We must always hold ourselves to editorial codes of conduct and ethical standards. Regardless of how profound our professional capabilities become, we must never stop learning; no matter our circumstances, we must maintain the integrity of scholars and better inherit national culture amidst transformation.

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

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