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On the Transformation and Innovation of News Production in the Converged Media Era: Post-print

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Abstract

With the development of Internet technology and the continuous emergence of new media, the industrial landscape of media has undergone tremendous transformations. Against the backdrop of the integrated media industry, the public discourse characteristics exhibited by new media tools influence people's communication patterns and the transmission modes of news information, while also catalyzing significant changes in news production methods. This article focuses on the transformation and innovation of news production methods in the converged media era as its research topic, analyzing and exploring how news production can align with the features and demands of media convergence, aiming to provide theoretical references for the sustainable and healthy development of the journalism industry.

Full Text

A Brief Analysis of the Transformation and Innovation of News Production Methods in the Era of Media Convergence

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Abstract: With the development of Internet technology and the continuous emergence of new media, the media industry landscape has undergone tremendous changes. In the context of media convergence, the public discourse characteristics exhibited by new media tools have influenced people's communication patterns and news information transmission modes, while also prompting significant transformations in news production methods. This paper focuses on the transformation and innovation of news production methods in the era of

media convergence, analyzing and exploring how news production can adapt to the characteristics and requirements of media convergence, aiming to provide theoretical references for the sustainable and healthy development of journalism.

Keywords: Internet technology; media convergence; news production transformation; news production methods; innovation approaches

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1.2 News Production Methods

With the rapid advancement of science and technology since the 21st century, profound social transformations have occurred worldwide, accompanied by significant changes in media forms. Media convergence has become a crucial trend in the development of contemporary journalism, posing substantial challenges to traditional media while also creating new opportunities for growth. In the era of media convergence, how traditional media can achieve deep integration with new media in terms of concepts and mechanisms, and what transformations will occur in news production under this integration, are urgent issues that journalism scholars need to study and explore. Therefore, analyzing the impacts and challenges facing news production in the context of media convergence, and exploring strategies for transforming and innovating news production methods in the era of media convergence based on the characteristics of news production, is extremely important and necessary.

News production refers to the process of processing recent events into news products, while news production methods are the specific approaches employed to realize this process [2]. In Chinese journalism academia, research on news production methods started relatively late, and the existing body of research remains limited. Based on a review of representative discussions and viewpoints that have emerged in recent years, this paper draws the following conclusions. Research on news production methods in domestic academia has primarily focused on several aspects: studies on the transformation and innovation of news production models under media convergence, discussions on the transformation of news production methods at the technical level, analyses of crowdfunding news production models, and in-depth examinations of news production methods from a sociological perspective. Representative works include Shi Changshun and Xiao Yefei's "Innovation in News Production Models Under the Context of Media Convergence," which explores innovation in news production models from three perspectives: news editing processes, news production processes, and news production models. Yue Juan's article "Examining News Pro-

duction Transformation in the New Media Environment from the Perspective of Crowdfunding” provides an in-depth discussion of the limitations of crowdfunding news production models in China’s journalism field and their positive impacts on transforming traditional news production concepts and methods, thereby offering new references and ideas for the development of traditional media.

1.1 Media Convergence

Media convergence is a new concept emerging from media development in the information age, representing the organic integration of media based on Internet technology. In 1983, scholar Ithiel de Sola Pool from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology first proposed the initial concept of media convergence worldwide. A decade later, the official launch of a multimedia platform in Tampa, Florida, marked the first successful practice of media convergence. Chinese academia generally believes that the concept of “media convergence” was introduced to China after journalism scholar Cai Wen visited the United States for investigation. In 2009, with the integration of three networks written into the government work report, China’s “media convergence” process officially commenced and has now entered a stage of deep development, primarily characterized by the advancement of intelligent technology, iterative content upgrades, and the development of media platformization. In a certain sense, “media convergence” refers not only to the integration of communication methods, means, and carriers, but more broadly to the integration of communication organizations and institutions. Under the framework of media convergence concepts, traditional news production must inevitably develop into converged journalism that serves multiple media and platforms, requiring journalists to improve news production methods to better adapt to the demands of news production under media integration [1].

News is a product of the combined effects of social, political, economic, and industry practices. News production is not only influenced by the media ecology and social environment but also reacts upon media and society. With the deepening development of media convergence, the technological environment formed by the integration of artificial intelligence technology into the media environment has broken the traditional news production chain and exerted deep penetration, fundamentally changing the concepts, processes, and relationships of news production. The concept of “news production” discussed in this paper primarily refers to the methods and approaches employed throughout the entire process from organizational structure to production subjects, communication channels, and content presentation, including news information collection, verification, processing, editing, and dissemination. The concept of “news production transformation” in this paper mainly refers to the multi-dimensional and multi-angle industry changes exhibited when comparing news production in the era of media convergence with that in the era of traditional media [2].

2. Impacts and Challenges of Media Convergence on Traditional News Production Methods

Media convergence is a continuously evolving process. For a long time, traditional media such as newspapers, radio, and television have been deeply trusted by audiences and possessed strong credibility. However, with the advent of the information age, new media's powerful advantages in information reception, dissemination, and audience interaction have posed enormous impacts and challenges to traditional media. Particularly, the development of Internet technology has not only greatly expanded the breadth of media convergence but also further advanced the depth of integration among media, reshaping not only the industrial ecosystem of media but also the methods of news production and dissemination.

2.1 Transformation of Traditional News Media Communication Channels

In the era of media convergence, the rapid development of mobile Internet technology has transformed news communication channels from single-medium releases to diversified forms integrating PC terminals, mobile terminals, and social platforms. Especially with the advent of the 5G era, the popularization of smartphones, and continuous upgrades and improvements in mobile application experiences, news producers have become separated from news communication channels. Professional news websites on PC terminals have flourished, various mobile news apps have proliferated exponentially, and platforms such as Weibo, WeChat, and short-video platforms have increasingly become the most widespread channels for people to receive and distribute news information. News information can now be disseminated rapidly and extensively across media, completely shattering the control barriers that traditional media once held over news communication channels and signifying that traditional media has completely lost absolute control over news product releases and communication channels. To cope with the impact of new media, traditional media has had to conform to the demands of the times and the media market, integrating into the tide of media convergence development. Consequently, numerous newspaper and radio-television groups have established media convergence centers, rapidly building all-media and converged media communication models while conducting comprehensive, structural, and systematic integration and optimization of the news production process.

2.2 Transformation of Traditional News Media Content Presentation Methods

In the era of media convergence, the media ecological environment has undergone tremendous changes, altering not only people's lifestyles and thinking habits but also exerting substantial impact on traditional media's news content presentation methods. In the past, traditional news information almost exclusively used the single form of text plus images to present content to audiences.

However, news products under the concept of media convergence feature diverse presentation methods. In addition to explanatory text and images, they can incorporate animated graphics, animations, and even short videos, greatly enhancing the vividness and visualization of news products. This not only strengthens audience attraction but also satisfies audience demands for personalized and diversified news products, achieving excellent news communication effects.

3. Characteristics of News Production in the Era of Media Convergence

Based on recent practices in media news information dissemination, media convergence demonstrates advantages in technology, channels, carriers, and platforms that traditional media cannot match. Against this backdrop, news production inevitably exhibits some new characteristics.

3.1 More Diverse News Reporting Forms

In the era of media convergence, news reporting builds a comprehensive information production and release platform that integrates traditional and new media, supported by Internet technology and based on massive information, enabling news reporting to achieve a communication effect of $1+1>2$ to a certain extent. Meanwhile, the widespread application of new media technologies, virtual technologies, and live streaming technologies in news production and dissemination has prompted news reporting to present richer and more diverse reporting forms.

3.2 Broader Scope of News Topics

In the context of media convergence, news program audiences are no longer merely passive recipients of news information but can instantly transform into news information publishers or disseminators. This two-way identity transformation and information transmission not only greatly broadens the channels for obtaining news information but also enables journalists to acquire news clues more timely, thereby creating broader space for news topic selection.

3.3 Faster News Dissemination Speed

In the era of media convergence, the development of emerging media has been advancing rapidly. This has not only promoted the enhancement of news production capacity but also accelerated the speed of news information dissemination. The simplicity and convenience of new media technology enable real-time dissemination of news information, reducing temporal and spatial distances and improving the timeliness of news communication.

3.4 More Prominent Audience Demands for News Information Interactivity

In news production during the traditional media era, real-time interaction and communication between audiences and news publishers was almost impossible to achieve, and even when interaction occurred, the models employed were outdated and the methods were singular. However, against the backdrop of media convergence, with the aid of the Internet, mobile terminals, and social platforms, audiences and news publishers can fully achieve real-time interaction and communication. This has prompted audience demands for real-time and interactive news information to become more prominent, also posing higher requirements for the journalism industry to actively cater to audience needs.

4. Strategies for Transforming and Innovating News Production Methods Under Media Convergence

It is no exaggeration to say that all media production activities revolve around audience consumption needs. In the past, audiences generally obtained news information unidirectionally through traditional methods such as reading newspapers, listening to radio, and watching television. In the era of media convergence, PCs, mobile terminals, and specialized mobile news clients can all provide convenient channels for people to access news information, allowing audiences to freely choose their preferred methods for obtaining news information. For most audiences, the greater the likelihood of meeting their needs and the more time and effort saved, the more likely they are to choose a particular communication channel for news information. This demonstrates that media convergence has imperceptibly changed audience habits of obtaining news information.

4.1 Conceptual Thinking: From Traditional Singularity to Inclusive Integration

The foremost requirement for any industry's development is innovation in conceptual thinking, and the journalism industry is no exception. As media convergence has moved toward in-depth development, for traditional media to forge a new path of innovative development, the most important task is to change traditional thinking patterns and introduce new development concepts. More specifically, news production must also transform its original single-threaded production methods through innovative conceptual thinking, presenting content in higher quality and more novel ways to provide audiences with richer and more colorful audio-visual experiences [2]. First and foremost, it is necessary to establish the concept of dual emphasis and dual advancement on both news production content and communication channels. As is well known, the news reporting field has always adhered to the principle of "content is king." However, in today's context of media convergence, the essence of competition among media is fundamentally a struggle between the presentation power of news production content and the integration power of news communication channels. Relying

solely on news information content to achieve victory can no longer secure a leading position and attention for news reporting. Only by inclusively integrating both elements and advancing them simultaneously can the advantages and competitiveness of news reporting be strengthened. Second, news production must reflect the interconnections among news events from different perspectives and establish and disseminate its own viewpoints and theoretical perspectives based on comprehensive consideration, forming broad yet in-depth research horizons in terms of communication viewpoints and concepts, thereby establishing absolute advantages and competitiveness in the media market. Third, against the backdrop of media convergence, audiences have extremely broad channels for receiving news information. Especially for some sensitive or controversial news events, audience attention and reactions have reached near real-time levels. This requires media to express their editorial stance at the first moment, guiding and helping audiences to not only follow the progress of news events but also to make comprehensive reflections and objective evaluations of the entire event. Finally, in news production, media organizations must also establish the concept of combining viewpoint penetration with formal expression, focusing on integrating the rigor of news content with flexible and diverse communication forms to better connect with audiences, allowing them to experience a sense of psychological participation and closeness while receiving news information.

4.2 Production Model: From Closed to Open

In the era when traditional media dominated, news production was primarily conducted internally by media organizations through professional collection, screening, and editing according to established rules, before finally releasing news information to audiences. Audiences served merely as passive “recipients” of information throughout the news information dissemination process, possessing only the right to access news information without being able to directly participate in the news production process. This demonstrates that traditional news production occurred in a closed environment with participation only from professional journalists, manifesting as a closed model. In the era of media convergence, supported by information technology development, news production is no longer the exclusive domain of professional journalists; audiences can also directly participate in the news production process. The closed model of traditional news production has transformed into an open model. For instance, the “crowdfunding news” model represents a typical open news production model. The open news production model not only breaks the traditional organized production method of news reporting conducted solely by professional journalists but also significantly promotes the socialization of news production.

4.3 Content Presentation: From Unidirectional to Comprehensive Integration

In the era of media convergence, the presentation of news information is manifested not only in diverse forms and rapid dissemination speed but also in the

multi-dimensional collision of values reflected from different angles and levels of the same news content. This requires audiences to further screen, organize, verify, and compare the vast and chaotic amount of information while receiving news information, ultimately forming their own comprehensive and accurate judgments of news information. The unidirectional presentation of news facts by traditional news media can no longer satisfy audience demands for comprehensive understanding of news facts. This requires media organizations to effectively integrate and refine large amounts of fragmented news information, achieving multi-angle and all-around observation and comprehensive grasp of news events through multi-perspective presentation methods and more in-depth, speculative forms of expression. Furthermore, in terms of news content presentation, it is necessary not only to consistently align with the key points and public opinion guidance of Party and government news propaganda, grasp the broader social context to achieve the effects of disseminating positive energy and promoting mainstream values, but also to stay close to ordinary people' s lives, striving to explore livelihood issues and typical content of greatest concern to the public, thereby playing a positive role in guiding public opinion.

4.4 Communication Methods: From Isolation to Complementarity

In the “Internet Plus” era, media convergence has undoubtedly occupied the technological high ground in the field of news communication. Taking the comprehensive entry of CCTV’ s flagship news program “Xinwen Lianbo” into new media platforms as an example, the comprehensive surpassing of emerging media in news reporting is undeniable. Especially in the news reporting of the anti-pandemic efforts and the Two Sessions in recent years, the diverse combination of various media formats including images, text, short videos, live streaming, and H5 has greatly leveraged the characteristics and advantages of different media. Multiple communication channels have achieved comprehensive and full-coverage distribution of news content, presenting refreshing communication forms. This demonstrates that news reporting in the context of media convergence has exhibited complementary integration in both production and dissemination. Various media platforms have utilized advanced technological means to break the isolation and boundaries between traditional media formats, not only achieving diversified combinations of news content but also changing the single-channel distribution method of individual media through interconnections among multiple media formats. This has realized multi-frequency, all-around, and repetitive distribution of the same news content through different channels and methods [3]. From the audience’ s perspective, they can not only have more channels to access news information simultaneously but also choose their preferred forms of news presentation according to their preferences. Such complementary communication methods also achieve integrated sharing of information resources, saving news production costs and yielding multiple benefits [4].

In conclusion, the arrival of the era of media convergence is an inevitable re-

sult of technological progress and epochal development. Against this backdrop, journalism practitioners need to break through inertial thinking, adapt to the development of the times, and explore the path of transformation and innovative development of news production methods with a broader vision, thereby continuously advancing the cause of in-depth media convergence development [5].

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

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