

The Impact of Digital Publishing on Traditional Publishing and Win-win Strategies (Post-print)

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Abstract

In the era of rapid development of Internet and information technologies, the publishing industry has also spawned a new business model, namely digital publishing. The emergence of digital publishing, while diversifying the business forms of the publishing industry, has also posed significant challenges to the development of traditional publishing. Therefore, for traditional publishing, how to address the challenges and seize the opportunities brought by the rapid development of digital publishing, and achieve win-win development with digital publishing, has become particularly crucial. This paper takes digital publishing and traditional publishing as its starting point; while expounding on the impact of digital publishing on traditional publishing's development, it investigates how to facilitate the win-win development of digital and traditional publishing, with a view to providing reference for fostering the sound development of China's publishing industry.

Full Text

The Impact of Digital Publishing on Traditional Publishing and Strategies for Mutual Benefit

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Abstract: With the rapid development of internet and information technologies, the publishing industry has spawned a new business format—digital publishing. While enriching the operational forms of the publishing sector, digital publishing has also posed significant challenges to the development of traditional publishing. For traditional publishing, therefore, addressing the challenges and opportunities brought by the rapid expansion of digital publishing and achieving a win-win development goal with digital publishing has become particularly crucial. This paper takes digital and traditional publishing as its starting point,

examining the impact of digital publishing on traditional publishing while exploring pathways to promote mutually beneficial development between the two formats, with the aim of providing reference for the healthy development of China' s publishing industry.

Keywords: digital publishing; traditional publishing; publishing integration; internet information; digital editing

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1.1 Definition of Digital Publishing

Digital publishing refers to a new publishing model that utilizes digital technology to edit and process content, with networks serving as the primary distribution channel and digital content products as the main form. Compared with traditional publishing, digital publishing exhibits distinct characteristics of digitalized content production, networked distribution channels, and diversified product forms. Although China' s digital publishing industry started relatively late, it has maintained a momentum of rapid growth since its emergence, once pushing traditional publishing into a “difficult position” within the publishing market. However, as digital publishing itself is an emerging phenomenon, it still faces numerous developmental challenges, while traditional publishing, with its accumulated experience, possesses a level of professionalism that digital publishing cannot yet match. Therefore, from a long-term development perspective, establishing a mutually beneficial development model between digital and traditional publishing represents the most sustainable path forward.

1.2 Digital Publishing Technology

Digital publishing technology refers to the use of binary code (0 and 1) to process and transmit information content through communication satellites, fiber optic cables, and computer equipment. The essence of digital publishing technology is the application of digital technologies within the publishing domain. Specifically, it encompasses several key areas: digital printing technologies (including photoelectric typesetting, mechanical typesetting, laser typesetting, CD-ROM publishing, digital proofing, and online publishing), digital editing technologies (used in publication selection, material processing, and content editing, including full Chinese character sets, network editing, digital compression, digital acquisition and recognition, digital indexing and verification, and multimedia editing), integrated publishing system technologies (comprehensive technologies

in digital publishing that include data warehousing, desktop publishing systems, digital information database publishing, media interaction, digital content management, and communications), and digital distribution technologies (emerging alongside digital publishing, including online payment, security certification, data exchange interfaces, and data standards). In practice, these different types of digital publishing technologies are often cross-integrated and applied in more specific and detailed classifications, providing strong support for the development of the digital publishing industry.

2.1 Diverting Traditional Publications' Market and Audience

The emergence of digital publishing has broken the monopoly of traditional print publishing within the industry. Mobile phones, computers, handheld readers, and other mobile terminals have all become carriers for digital publication content, enriching distribution channels significantly. Although print media still dominates the current book publishing market, digital publishing, as a new business format in the industry, demonstrates strong growth momentum and substantial profit margins that make its future value immeasurable. Moreover, as digital publishing is more popular among younger generations than traditional publishing, the audience for traditional publishing has been fragmented. Concurrently, the development of various digital publishing formats has diversified sources of publication materials, publishing forms, and supply channels. Readers' consumption demands have become increasingly varied, and publication cycles for various publications are continuously shortening. This uncertainty and variability have created tremendous shocks for traditional publishing development. Furthermore, digital publishing inevitably leads to segmentation of the traditional readership market and encroachment on profit margins, intensifying competitive pressure on traditional publishing in the publication market.

2.2 Transforming the Traditional Publishing Industry Chain

In the traditional publishing model, publishing institutions held absolute dominance. However, the rapid development of digital publishing has seriously challenged this position. The emergence of various new media and channels has profoundly impacted the traditional industry chain structure of "author—publisher—printer—distributor—reader." The discourse power of traditional book distributors in sales channels has been continuously eroded, while the proliferation of handheld reading devices and smartphones has shattered paper media's status as the "sole carrier" of book content. Some telecommunications operators, network operators, and hardware operators derived from digital publishing development have begun competing with traditional publishers for copyright and content resources, particularly large websites that have secured substantial digital rights by contacting authors directly. Under these circumstances, the advantages traditional publishers once held in copyright and content resources have been significantly diminished, and the difficulty of publishing books is increasing alongside digital publishing's expansion.

2.3 Inflicting Massive Shocks on Traditional Publishing Structure

As a “content-centric” industry, publishing finds in digital publishing a model that not only adheres to the “content is king” principle but also leverages its product and technological advantages to achieve stronger market control and competitiveness. For instance, some digital terminal enterprises and online publishers integrate traditional publication content using their own technology to rapidly capture book market share. Once digital publishing captures a certain market share, it inevitably alters the traditional publishing industry structure, gradually breaking down the long-standing patterns of regional monopolies, fragmented management, improper resource integration, and decentralized operations in China’s publishing industry. Consequently, traditional publishing structures are experiencing enormous shocks from digital publishing.

3.1 A Necessity of National Development Strategy

With the continuous development of China’s digital publishing industry, promoting the integration of traditional and digital publishing has become a primary research focus in the industry’s advancement. According to national development strategy requirements, accelerating the integration of digital and traditional publishing and promoting the healthy development of the publishing industry based on digital and network technologies is imperative. As China’s publishing industry continues to evolve, digital publishing models—reliant on digital and network technologies—are capturing an increasing market share and gradually highlighting their advantages. Meanwhile, digital publishing’s use of smartphones, computers, and other intelligent mobile terminals provides modern people with more intense visual impacts while satisfying their personalized consumption needs. The gradual penetration of digital publishing across society has also led Chinese official institutions to recognize the importance of digital publishing technology, vigorously promoting the integration of traditional and digital publishing and establishing a multi-carrier, highly digitalized, and comprehensive development model for the publishing industry through various means.

3.2 Beneficial for Driving Publishing Industry Development

The arrival of the internet era requires new forces to support the development of the publishing industry. Integrating traditional and digital publishing can facilitate the transformation and upgrading of the industry. Although China’s publishing industry began its rapid development at the start of the 21st century, there remains a significant gap compared with developed countries. The emergence of digital publishing has broadened the channels for information and news content dissemination in the publishing industry while expanding the user market and consumer base through mobile phones, tablets, and other mobile terminals, laying a solid user foundation for the industry’s transformation and development.

3.3 Meeting Modern Spiritual and Cultural Needs

Modern people's spiritual and cultural needs have become increasingly diversified, personalized, and instantaneous, leading to growing demand for digital publishing information. Additionally, as modern people's consumption of digital products continues to rise year by year, digital publishing's market share in the publishing industry is constantly expanding, providing prerequisite guarantees for the integration of traditional and digital publishing. Therefore, relevant enterprises in the publishing industry should firmly seize this opportunity, starting with improving publication quality and leveraging digital publishing technology while utilizing the professionalism and rigor of traditional publishing to enhance service quality and the production capacity of the entire industry chain, thereby meeting modern people's spiritual and cultural needs.

3.4 Requirements of Digital Publishing Industry Scale Expansion

As China's digital publishing industry develops, it has become an important growth point for the national economy in the 21st century. Under these circumstances, cooperation among channel providers, publishers, technology developers, and operators in digital publishing business has become increasingly extensive, with relevant enterprises forming complete digital publishing industry chains through their advanced technologies. This has placed higher demands on the integration of digital and traditional publishing. Simultaneously, with the expansion of digital publishing business and the development of the internet era, the publishing industry is increasingly influenced by modern science and technology. Both digital and traditional publishing face enormous challenges. If the publishing industry cannot find and grasp development opportunities to promote the sound integration of traditional and digital publishing and identify a path of win-win cooperation, it will inevitably lead to lagging development and an inability to gain a foothold in the international market. Therefore, to address the drawbacks of a single publishing model, enhance the market competitiveness of China's publishing industry, and promote its healthy development, exploring a win-win development path between digital and traditional publishing is imperative.

4.1 Establishing Digital Industry Chain Platforms

The emergence of digital publishing has not only increased business formats in the publishing industry but also satisfied the diverse reading needs of modern readers, improving public satisfaction with publishing industry services. To ensure that modern readers' needs can be further met and to enhance the industry's service level, publishing professionals can capitalize on this trend to establish digital industry chain platforms. Among existing digital publishing platforms in China, the most prominent are CNKI, Wanfang Data, Longyuan Journals, and VIP, which collectively account for over 90% of the national electronic journal market, forming the four pillars of China's digital publishing industry chain. These four pillar platforms have focused their development goals on competing

over platform functionalities, emphasizing the integration of various digital resources to provide better publishing services for enterprises, institutions, and individuals. Therefore, China's publishing industry can reference this platform model by establishing cooperative relationships with third-party technical teams, enabling traditional publishers to build their own digital publishing platforms while effectively controlling creation and operational costs. This approach would help control sales costs across the entire publishing industry and promote balanced, long-term development between traditional and digital publishing.

4.2 Deepening Data Information Mining

Compared with digital publishing, traditional publishing involves more complex workflows, including book pricing, binding, design, and publication, with cumbersome processes and poor information timeliness. These drawbacks of traditional publishing are precisely why digital publishing could establish its market position upon emergence. To promote win-win development between digital and traditional publishing, industry professionals should, on one hand, attach greater importance to data information mining and processing, screening valuable content from in-depth information excavation and integrating it with traditional publishing to protect the interests of users and distributors while enhancing the core competitiveness of publishing units in the modern market. On the other hand, they should gradually increase emphasis on university-enterprise cooperation by introducing digital publishing concepts and technologies into the daily teaching of relevant majors, cultivating more interdisciplinary and high-quality talents for the digital publishing industry. This would establish a talent pool with solid professional knowledge, strong technical skills, and high comprehensive qualities, laying a good foundation for deeper integration between digital and traditional publishing.

4.3 Accurate Market Positioning

In reality, because digital publishing emerged relatively recently and its development time has been short, its related technologies remain immature, with urgent issues such as copyright problems, lagging professional talent development, and suboptimal business models. These issues have significantly hindered digital publishing's development in modern society, making it dependent on support from traditional publishing. Therefore, to ensure win-win development between digital and traditional publishing, digital publishing needs to rationally integrate various resources through necessary means, leveraging the rigorous, authoritative, and professional qualities of traditional publishing to improve digital publication quality. Simultaneously, it should utilize digital publishing's advantages of strong timeliness and convenience to solve the problems of poor information circulation and timeliness in traditional publishing, achieving the effect of complementing each other's strengths and accurately targeting audiences. For example, traditional publishing formats such as television and newspapers can target elderly audiences, focusing on reporting news of social value that concerns

seniors to attract this demographic. Mobile client applications can target young people, with digital publishing editors pushing socially valuable, fresh, and interesting content to youth through various online platforms, enabling them to access needed information anytime and anywhere in their preferred ways. This information dissemination approach often achieves a “1+1>2” effect.

4.4 Enhancing Content Processing Depth

For the publishing industry, content is the key to development and a critical factor determining core competitiveness, particularly for digital publishing where innovative content is essential. In the evolution of digital and traditional publishing, traditional publishing has become the content provider for digital publishing. Digital publishing, utilizing various content and resources from traditional publishing, has established a composite publishing model through mobile and computer clients that interface with various publishing platforms. Representative examples include Amazon’s Kindle reader and its derivative products. Amazon’s reading terminals have effectively advanced their development strategies and maintained industry leadership precisely through deep processing of publication content. In summary, the emergence and widespread application of digital publishing have not only dramatically changed the market environment of the publishing field but also catalyzed the rise of “cross-media” publishing models, transforming publishers’ management concepts and publishing entities and exerting tremendous influence on the modernization of the publishing field. Therefore, in an era of rapid digital publishing development and continuously expanding scope and efficiency of information resource development and utilization, the publishing industry can achieve shared management cost goals through low information costs. For traditional publishing to achieve effective development, it should actively absorb and learn from digital publishing’s advantages, allowing digital and traditional publishing to complement each other’s strengths and weaknesses through integration, thereby enhancing the core competitiveness of China’s publishing industry and laying a solid foundation for its healthy development.

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

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