

Approaches and Countermeasures for the Convergence and Development of Traditional and New Media: Postprint

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Abstract

In the contemporary world, network technology is experiencing vigorous development, with information technologies such as 5G, big data, cloud computing, Internet of Things, blockchain, and artificial intelligence advancing at a rapid pace. New media—including network platforms, self-media, WeChat, Weibo, clients, and short videos—are undergoing multi-dimensional development, vertically serving user groups, and achieving interconnectivity of all things, with new media development progressing by leaps and bounds. In contrast, traditional media, particularly market-oriented urban print media, faces tremendous survival pressure, with some even being forced to cease operations or deregister. The innovative development through integration with new media has become extremely urgent. Through this study, this paper aims to provide a reference for the integration and development of domestic traditional media with new media.

Full Text

The Information Explosion Era and the Need for Credible Media

In the era of information explosion, the public often finds it difficult to distinguish truth from falsehood in content published by new media platforms, leaving users confused and disoriented, particularly among those with lower education levels, the elderly, and children. Many users struggle with information overload, limited access channels, and difficulties in discernment, making it increasingly challenging to obtain high-quality content. This user demand creates a critical window for media organizations to establish authoritative influence. During this period of information confusion, conscientious media with credibility must step forward to guide users in establishing correct values, thereby promoting a virtuous cycle and fostering a healthy new media industry ecosystem.

Defining New Media, All-Media, and Integrated Media

New media refers to information carriers based on internet information technology and digital technology that can integrate multiple media forms, feature strong interactivity, and disseminate information through computers or other digital devices. New media encompasses many forms, including news websites, mobile news clients, WeChat official accounts, microblogs, mobile terminals, mobile newspapers, short videos, and continues to diversify and evolve with technological updates.

The concept of “all-media” (quan meiti) first emerged in 1999 from the American lifestyle services company Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia, in which “omnimedia” means “all-media.” All-media refers to contemporary media that comprehensively utilizes multiple media forms for all-around, multi-level, and integrated information production, dissemination, and consumption to meet the diverse needs of different audiences.

The concept of “media convergence” was first proposed by Professor Pool of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. After the state issued relevant guidance documents in 2014, research on “integrated media” (rong meiti) proliferated like bamboo shoots after spring rain. Based on scholarly perspectives, integrated media can currently be understood as the comprehensive integration, through full utilization of internet platforms, of different media that share common ground while maintaining complementarity—in terms of human resources, content, and publicity—to achieve “resource connectivity, content compatibility, promotional integration, and interest convergence.”

Current Challenges in New Media Industry Development

Although the rapid growth of new media has brought immediate benefits, the lack of long-term planning has resulted in weak awareness of intellectual property protection. In the early stages of new media development, many producers and publishers lacked IP protection awareness, failing to restrict the forwarding and reprocessing of content, which sometimes changed hands multiple times before becoming someone else’s product. Such practices have led to a flooded and disorderly IP market in urgent need of rectification.

Insufficient Depth of Media Integration

Media convergence relies on the development of information technology to achieve continuous integration in both breadth and depth. In recent years, “media convergence” has gradually evolved from a “development trend” to a “development status,” yet overall integration remains superficial. Many traditional media organizations have launched new media initiatives with much fanfare but little substance—merely establishing a website and calling it new media development.

Talent Shortage

In recent years, enterprises, media platforms, and universities have adopted a wait-and-see attitude toward cultivating new media talent. Higher education institutions have yet to clarify their approach to new media talent development, resulting in a scarcity of professionals with practical new media and operations expertise. Traditional media's existing workforce consists primarily of news editing and reporting professionals focused on newspaper distribution and advertising, leaving them without new media talent reserves or operational experience.[1]

Communication and Promotion Bottlenecks

As traditional media integrate with new media, some mainstream outlets have gradually found new development paths and growth points, achieving considerable breakthroughs. However, many more traditional media organizations, including a large portion of provincial-level outlets, remain at a developmental crossroads, facing bottlenecks in communication and promotion, and have failed to make substantial investments to successfully integrate into new media development.[2]

Immature Profit Models

Faced with a noisy market environment, many traditional media organizations remain hesitant and in the initial stages of new media development. To adapt to the market, some media units allocate a large portion of their limited funds annually to new media development, investing capital, human resources, and technology, yet they remain in an exploratory phase without establishing mature profit models.

Strategic Approaches for Traditional Media Integration

On June 25, 2019, the Institute of Journalism and Communication of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences released the "New Media Blue Book: Report on New Media Development in China No.10 (2019)" in Beijing. The Blue Book indicated that in 2018, as mobile internet coverage continued to expand, China's new media industry market size would exceed 900 billion yuan. Meanwhile, traditional media, particularly print media, saw their audiences shrink dramatically, with newspaper advertising revenue in China dropping by 30.3% in 2018. The sharp decline in customer groups, loss of advertising revenue, and outflow of newspaper talent have forced traditional media to accelerate integration with new media development.

Market Research and Innovation

In the process of integrated development, traditional media must conduct thorough market research, construct new communication frameworks, carry forward

traditions while innovating, and maintain integrity while embracing change. Traditional media should uphold mainstream values, leverage their authoritative value with support from regulatory authorities, and guide public opinion. They should learn from emerging media to accelerate transformation and upgrading, continue consolidating their local market position, actively change mindsets, and intensify reforms in news dissemination and gathering models while ensuring their own authority and rigor, seeking optimal development models.

User-Centered Video Transformation

With the widespread application of 5G technology, customer demands are becoming increasingly refined, requiring new media to continuously enrich user-news information interaction formats. Traditional media must not only hold their ground but also confront the current short-video trend, actively engage with customers, center on user needs, and accelerate video-based transformation, enabling users to become part of the news information chain through reading, recommending, forwarding, and commenting. Video product production requires careful planning, incorporating interactive segments, promotional elements, and advertising nodes to achieve self-development while continuously meeting user demands.

Top-Level Design and Matrix Communication

While maintaining existing customer groups and consolidating their traditional market position, traditional media must extend their customer base and cultivate new user markets to achieve new growth points as new media integration progresses. With the development of internet and mobile communications, the young and middle-aged user demographic is essentially saturated, and Chinese mobile phone users are expanding toward elderly and young children groups—new markets that new media should focus on cultivating. In today's internet-popularized environment, middle-aged and elderly groups will also become a major force in information consumption. New media must not only nurture this consumer market but also bear the responsibility of guiding information consumption among middle-aged and elderly groups, demonstrating social value. The tremendous changes in the media environment present both challenges and opportunities for traditional media. In their development process, traditional media must find their own path, leverage their advantages as mainstream media, maintain their position as primary news platforms, and learn from the strengths of group new media. Particularly in integrated development, they should focus on reconstructing editorial processes to achieve multi-point matrix communication.

Technology Training and Capacity Building

The new media industry is developing rapidly, with content and communication methods changing daily, requiring practitioners to continuously update their knowledge and adapt to new demands through strengthened technology

training. Traditional media personnel cannot merely follow existing operational models; they must also implement top-level design, identify appropriate technological entry points, focus on applying flagship communication products, intensify technology training, improve professional quality, and innovate training mechanisms. Through personnel training that strengthens mindsets and continuously updates knowledge, traditional media can achieve continuous content enrichment and diversified innovation in communication methods in new media research and production, thereby promoting further integrated development of new media.[3]

Expanding International Market Presence

The development and application of new media have brought traditional media closer to international markets, forcing faster new media integration to seize the international new media market and enhance international discourse power. Through development, data journalism reporting has shown significant changes in traditional mainstream media, continuously exploring the integration of data and converged media practices, aligning with world-class media by integrating news skills such as interviewing, editing, proofreading, publishing, and analysis with information communication technology, merging data exploration with media convergence. As China's international status rises, voicing China's perspective becomes increasingly important, and integrated new media reporting can effectively solve challenges in international communication, mastering initiative in international media markets.

Talent Cultivation and Recruitment

Through years of development, traditional media has cultivated and accumulated a large number of cultural professionals with rich media experience—a valuable asset. In the process of new media integration development, user experience and sharing play important communication roles, with some arguing that “commentary and viewpoints are the soul.” Therefore, traditional media should effectively utilize these cultural professionals, leveraging their expertise and employing their incisive perspectives and sharp writing. While new technologies have greatly enriched information publishers, information explosion has highlighted the value of information differentiation. Traditional media's adherence to mainstream values, cultural foundation, and distinctive commentary, opinions, and viewpoints have become scarce commodities in new media.

The integrated development of traditional media requires substantial talent, and the positive role of human resources in the new media framework is decisive. Traditional media must implement comprehensive human resource planning and formulate long-term development strategies. Integrated development requires not only versatile media journalists but also traditional management personnel to learn new knowledge, acquire new skills, assume new missions, and take on new positions. As media changes rapidly, traditional media must keep pace with the times, even staying ahead of the curve, to transform in a timely manner.

Integrated new media development also requires large numbers of new-type talent, as human resources are the most important force for integrating new technologies. Traditional media must update their talent philosophy, strengthen talent recruitment, and catalyze transformative new media development. New media applications require different talents than traditional media, such as information technology specialists, platform operation experts, algorithm promotion professionals, etc.—these are the main drivers of new media development. Human resource investment is both a crucial factor for development and a primary constraint on traditional media development.

Building Media Convergence Centers

In August 2018, President Xi Jinping pointed out at the National Conference on Propaganda and Ideological Work: “We must solidly grasp the construction of county-level media convergence centers to better guide and serve the masses.” New media construction cannot proceed without equipment investment; media convergence centers should be equipped with professional equipment to leverage new media capabilities, achieving a full production process from gathering to editing to broadcasting for radio, television, newspapers, websites, and new media platforms under unified command and coordinated operation. By improving media platforms to achieve resource interconnectivity, breaking down data silos in old production processes and organizational barriers, sharing data assets, and connecting media communication chains, new media development capabilities can be enhanced.[4]

Resource investment has created conditions for traditional media integration development and continuously enables the creation of more mobile terminal products to better serve society and countries along the “Belt and Road.” Good communication tools require even better content, as media content is the core of new media development, with different tools requiring different approaches. Emerging new media formats such as H5, VR, micro-videos, and mobile live streaming, after going through an attention-grabbing phase, now emphasize content as king—substantive and authentic material. When narrating stories, traditional media should strengthen creative construction, employ new media technologies, innovate news reporting forms, and enhance the informativeness, interest, and intuitiveness of news programs.

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

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