
AI translation · View original & related papers at
chinaxiv.org/items/chinaxiv-202310.01080

The Path of Editorial Transformation in the Context of Converged Media: Post-print Edition

Authors: Bai Shaohua

Date: 2023-10-08T00:00:00+00:00

Abstract

With the development of the times, media convergence continues to deepen, and the publishing requirements for cultural products are increasingly multifaceted. Traditional media can no longer satisfy readers' demands. To adapt to the rapidly evolving era, editorial personnel must reposition their career planning and enhance their professional competencies. The upgrading and transformation of traditional publishing houses has become an urgent imperative. However, due to the influence of product characteristics, the convergence development process has remained consistently sluggish. Against the backdrop of convergent publishing, what path should editors take? This article analyzes the reasons, objectives, and directions for editorial transformation in response to this issue, providing a reference for publishing professionals.

Full Text

The Path of Editorial Transformation in the Context of Converged Media

Abstract: As media convergence accelerates in the digital era, demands for cultural products continue to multiply, rendering traditional media unable to satisfy contemporary reader needs. To adapt to this rapidly evolving landscape, publishing editors must reposition their career trajectories and enhance their professional competencies. The upgrading and transformation of traditional publishing houses has become an urgent imperative. However, progress toward integrated development has remained sluggish due to inherent product characteristics. This paper addresses the critical question of how editors should navigate transformation under converged publishing conditions by analyzing the motivations, objectives, and directions of editorial transformation, providing valuable insights for publishing professionals.

Keywords: editor; internet thinking; reasons for transformation; transformation objectives; transformation methods

In today's fast-paced technological age, "Internet + Publishing" represents both a critical mission and a significant challenge for traditional media practitioners. Publishing editors must actively engage in supply-side structural reforms, boldly implementing new innovations within the industry. They must keep pace with the times, harnessing the power of the internet to empower technology and contribute to the realization of the Chinese Dream.

The proliferation of internet technology has gradually blurred the boundaries between digital industries and traditional media, fostering a trend of diversified development through continuous integration. This phenomenon constitutes a double-edged sword: while it poses disastrous challenges to enterprises with monolithic development strategies, it serves as a crucial driving force for publishers capable of innovation. In today's increasingly competitive market, publishers require interdisciplinary, comprehensive talent. China's education system produces specialists with theoretical knowledge but lacks professionals with balanced skill sets. Particularly in new media environments, the competencies of traditional editors have fallen behind the times, necessitating comprehensive capability enhancement and knowledge structure optimization to adapt to the publishing industry's evolution.

Under the wave of mobile internet, traditional publishing institutions have embarked on the path of integrated development. Both traditional and emerging media now prioritize user experience and technological innovation. Publishing convergence must therefore consider these two factors, gradually achieving product integration and coordinated development from an internal-external perspective. Regardless of medium, the fundamental purpose remains the transmission of historical culture or technical knowledge. As a vital position in this process, editors must also plan their professional transformation objectives in response to new industry integration trends.

1. The Imperatives of Transformation

In the current internet era, information explosion and redundancy have escalated reader costs. Fragmented reading and socialized reading have become new characteristics that editors must confront. Contemporary publishing editors bear greater historical responsibility, as reading profoundly influences youth values, requiring practitioners to carefully curate content and improve cultural product quality.

Transformation also represents an inevitable development for both industry and enterprise. The publishing industry encompasses extensive upstream and downstream production processes, with entirely new changes occurring in production tools, carriers, and concepts. As the typical path forward, digitalization has be-

come the general trend. However, many publishers' insufficient understanding of digital products has resulted in unclear expression methods and marketing models, leaving readers with certain resistance that hinders industry development. To overcome this disadvantage, publishers have reorganized personnel and significantly altered work patterns. In traditional publishing houses, distribution departments and editorial offices have gradually been replaced or merged, while the responsibilities for marketing planning and editorial processing have grown increasingly important—reflecting both contemporary demands and inevitable enterprise development.

Among all productive elements, human beings are the most active and crucial, and enterprise development depends on human resources. Both internal and external drivers are essential, and as core members of publishing houses, editors are vital to organizational development. The editorial profession has already provided endogenous momentum for the integrated development of publishing. Currently, China's digital publishing talent primarily originates from internal enterprise transfers, with approximately 63% coming from university software programs and internal transfers from internet companies.

2. Objectives of Editorial Transformation

The integration of traditional and emerging industries is not merely content innovation or technological progress alone, but a product of their combination. Since 2002, emerging educational products such as MOOCs have brought significant changes to university education and management systems, providing valuable references for the digital upgrading of traditional publishers. Despite industry differences, all require editors to possess outstanding comprehensive abilities. From this, we can identify the direction of editorial transformation.

2.1 Role Transformation

In the context of converged publishing, editors have transformed from purely text-oriented professionals to composite, innovative talents. Traditional editors cannot fully grasp the requirements of new editorial positions, which demand sensitivity to evolving user needs, internet thinking, and proficiency with various digital products. This substantial shift moves from a singular role to that of a project manager.

2.2 Work Content Transformation

Under the current educational model, all education is shifting online, with paper-based textbook publishing gradually decreasing. On one hand, textbooks must return to daily teaching practice; on the other hand, online instruction is increasingly dominant, presenting editors with challenges that require leveraging information-based teaching and the opportunities of online education to transform and upgrade teaching materials. Therefore, editors must adapt from simple

textbook revision to course upgrading and transformation—an objective requirement of the digital media convergence era.

2.3 Capability Upgrading

To promote deep integration of content management between traditional and emerging publishers, it is necessary to construct an integrated construction and management mechanism for copyright, talent, and technology. Transformation in this context requires not only conceptual shifts but also capability upgrades to excel in educational work and cultivate composite talent.

3. Approaches to Transformation

How should we cultivate excellent composite talent who possesses both traditional editorial literacy and profound understanding of digital products and services?

3.1 Cultivating Internet Thinking

Traditional editors, constrained by the depth and breadth of their knowledge, often lack internet concepts and converged media awareness, necessitating the cultivation of internet thinking. This requires a cross-disciplinary, cross-domain professional spirit, deep integration with industrial development concepts, sensitive analysis of user needs in design, and correction of product deficiencies.

3.2 Editorial Identity Transformation

Taking educational publishing as an example, we can analyze how editorial identity should transform. Education cannot be separated from teachers and schools, so editors must immerse themselves in frontline teaching activities, communicate with teachers about instructional design details, understand real teaching scenarios, and stand in the shoes of both teachers and students to comprehend course details and development content. For MOOCs, editors must possess not only traditional text editing and layout skills but also capabilities in course design and operation. Course design requires subject background knowledge appropriately combined with MOOC PowerPoints and teacher lecture videos. Comprehensive operational capabilities involve communicating with teachers about material processing, online integration, and using developed software to assist teaching activities. Additionally, editors need promotional, redevelopment, and operational support capabilities. The rise of online courses has fundamentally transformed editorial roles from simple paper-based instruction to open activities and courses, complicating and diversifying editorial work and imposing new capability requirements.

3.3 Mastering Core Internet Technologies

Many understand editing, many understand technology, but few master both. Compared with traditional editors, today' s internet education editors require project planning experience, understanding of product requirement analysis, product positioning, visual design operations, and multiple processes. Individuals possessing such comprehensive interactive capabilities are truly rare. These capabilities can be divided into technical and managerial aspects. With these skills, editors can design products that better integrate into teaching environments. Initially, during the requirement analysis phase, editors need keen market insight and clear profit analysis capabilities. During product positioning, they must control user experience and macroscopically manage information architecture and product structure. Interaction design requires flowchart drawing and fluent explanatory and communication skills to transform abstraction into concrete form. Finally, visual design requires certain artistic foundations and stylistic control and adjustment techniques. This converged publishing background demands that editors possess multi-faceted, deeply integrated capabilities in content, form, and technology. Under these circumstances, editors still have many areas requiring improvement. They need a sense of urgency, continuously strengthening their skills to develop alongside the times, thereby maintaining an invincible position. In today' s media convergence context, the capability requirements for editors are increasingly high. Qualified editors should possess interdisciplinary knowledge, rich professional literacy, and sufficient communication skills—an inevitable requirement for publishing industry development.

3.4 Information Judgment Capability

In modern society, information is the source of all things, and writing articles in isolation is incompatible with being a qualified editor. Under the major trend of media convergence, information exchange methods are increasingly abundant, and information sources themselves are becoming more divergent and multi-directional. Consequently, publishing editors must more diligently collect, discriminate, and screen information, selecting useful information for their editorial work. Information judgment primarily includes collection, refinement, and comprehensive processing capabilities—the ability to gather information from multiple channels and directions, evaluate it, process it for promotion, and sometimes even perform marketing work. While information judgment is a pre-editing task commonly encountered in traditional work, marketing and promotion may be less familiar to editors in traditional media. Faced with constantly updated new media technologies, editors must also achieve a certain level of mastery, optimizing and selecting information to filter content that aligns with societal values for the public. This requires high media literacy. Only by continuously improving media literacy can editors adapt to societal demands, achieve overall information mastery, keep pace with technological development, and create more value for readers.

3.5 Internet Thinking Capability

In the new media era, people's study and life are increasingly inseparable from the internet, and different media must influence and transmit information through the internet. In the internet age, thinking depth and breadth continuously expand, and materials can be freely integrated through networks. Editors should therefore possess internet thinking capabilities, exploring and mastering the patterns of new media and applying them.

3.6 Comprehensive Gatekeeping Capability

In the current stage, information transmission and interaction between the public and editors are emphasized. While the public expresses opinions through many channels, editors can only adopt one or two, requiring strict gatekeeping. In this era of diversified culture and multi-channel media technology impact, editors' comprehensive gatekeeping capabilities become particularly important. Cultural transmission belongs to the humanities domain, but as publishing professionals, editors must also possess political sensitivity, improve political literacy, adhere to mainstream ideology, and uphold the Party and state's principles and policies. They must deeply recognize the importance of such content as the lifeline and bottom line of a magazine or publishing house. From topic selection and processing to final article compilation, this is not a simple technical issue but requires editors' rich experience and ultimate professional excellence. Only with solid professional literacy can editors create high-quality spiritual products for the people.

4. Implementation Strategies

4.1 Strengthening Job Training

In the converged media era, human capability is paramount, and competition among new media is largely talent competition. The reconstruction of cultural products means that single editorial capabilities can no longer meet contemporary needs. Therefore, strengthening on-the-job practice and optimizing editorial work concepts enables publishers to maintain a leading position. Individual training should be placed in a critically important position, encouraging employees to regularly participate in training and professional forums. Experts should address frequently occurring problems, encouraging employees to plan their career development effectively. Additionally, editors' personal political literacy should be regularly enhanced through organized online learning and standardized understanding practice. When necessary, assessment mechanisms can be established to rank examination results. After each training session, appropriate summaries should be conducted, prompting editors to reflect on their deficiencies and gains during the period, thereby comprehensively improving professional capabilities.

4.2 Innovating Thinking Literacy and Enhancing Insight

As editors, individuals should continuously keep pace with the times and enhance their capabilities. They must identify and solve problems, possess innovative abilities, and correctly understand enterprise development directions. Under the current media convergence background, paper media, radio, and television no longer have clear boundaries, as network communication amalgamates various media and information sources become more extensive. Throughout the entire process from manuscript planning and topic selection to processing and final publication, editors should possess comprehensive product awareness. When traditional concepts are inappropriate, editors are encouraged to identify and break through them, establishing themselves in multi-media markets, understanding consumer tendencies and characteristics, and aggregating dispersed audiences across the new media industry. To become industry leaders, they must possess considerable innovation and benchmarking awareness.

4.3 Deeply Learning Media Technology

Digital technology has fundamentally promoted new media development and will profoundly influence the entire publishing industry in the foreseeable future. It has already produced significant changes in content and methods. Editors should adapt to current events, understand digital publishing characteristics, and strive to meet audience audio-visual needs. For example, many books now include QR codes that provide access to richer electronic reading experiences, book explanations, search videos, and comprehensive knowledge services when scanned—precisely what the new era requires. The most important value of paper books today lies in providing a pure reading environment that allows readers to contemplate meaning, though this process often generates many questions. QR codes and other link forms undoubtedly provide supplementary effects, truly enabling readers to thoroughly comprehend books while experiencing comprehensive knowledge services. Such diversified functional configurations significantly optimize reading experiences. Therefore, editors must master not only traditional media workflows and characteristics but also new media technologies to enhance comprehensive skills. Today's media convergence encompasses not just text but also sound and video, imposing higher requirements on editors' business capabilities. They also need to master content planning, editorial selection, and multi-media platform utilization—capabilities requiring long-term accumulation. Media convergence has substantially promoted enterprise transformation and market expansion. The application of various technologies has also enriched talent cultivation, and publishing editors should strengthen their learning and enhance professional literacy to better serve the publishing industry and establish a more solid foundation for their career development.

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

Source: ChinaXiv – Machine translation. Verify with original.