

## Operations Research on the Book Publishing Industry from the Perspective of Converged Media: Postprint

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### Abstract

With the vigorous development of new media and continuous advancement of digital technology in China, media convergence is progressively deepening, drawing considerable attention to integrated media. Integrated media not only entails the comprehensive integration of advantages across personnel, content, platforms, and interests, but also signifies a critical transitional phase in China's publishing and media industry's transformation from traditional to new media. Although China's news publishing industry has initiated its transformation and upgrading toward new media, the understanding of integrated media concepts and application of related techniques among publishing professionals remain at a nascent stage. Consequently, promoting the integrated advancement of book publishing and new media has become an essential step that the publishing industry must inevitably take in the future. This article will employ an exemplification-based methodology to analyze and examine the current state, challenges, and strategies for the book publishing industry's operations within the integrated media landscape.

### Full Text

## Research on the Operation of the Book Publishing Industry from the Perspective of Integrated Media

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**Abstract:** With the vigorous development of new media and continuous advancement of digital technology in China, media convergence is progressing in depth, drawing significant attention to integrated media. Integrated media not only signifies the comprehensive integration of advantages in personnel, content, media, and interests, but also represents a crucial transitional phase for China's

s publishing and media industry as it transforms from traditional to new media. Although China's press and publishing industry has begun its transformation and upgrading toward new media, publishing professionals' understanding of integrated media concepts and application of related techniques remain at a primary stage. Promoting the integrated advancement of book publishing and new media will inevitably become an essential step for the publishing industry's future. This article employs case study methodology to analyze the current status, problems, and countermeasures of book publishing industry operation from the perspective of integrated media.

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China's traditional publishing industry is undergoing continuous transformation, with most conventional processes shifting toward digital upgrading. Although the trend toward digital publishing has largely taken shape, the majority of publishing enterprises still lack the capability to flexibly operate digital networks and integrate multiple media channels. This capability deficit represents a critical challenge constraining the sustainable development of the publishing industry. A profound understanding of integrated media concepts and the rational application of integrated media technologies are therefore urgent issues demanding attention in current book publishing operations.

## 1. Concept and Context of Integrated Media

Integrated media consolidates multiple media types to fully leverage their respective advantages and complementary relationships. It utilizes media carriers to comprehensively integrate different media—such as radio, television, and newspapers—that share commonalities yet possess complementary features, covering personnel, content, and promotion to construct a new media model characterized by “resource integration, content compatibility, promotional synergy, and shared interests” [1]. Only when the advantages of various media are concentrated and operated efficiently and with high quality can the integrated media concept be considered successfully applied to industrial development. As a newly emerged concept, integrated media has become essential knowledge and practice for the press, publishing, and broadcasting industries.

## 2. Current Status and Marketing Transformation

### 2.1 Industry Status

The timeliness and influence of traditional books have significantly diminished. In the era when networks were underdeveloped, information dissemination channels were relatively limited, and books served as the primary pathway for acquiring knowledge and information. However, the information age now offers people more personalized access through diversified media channels, making traditional books noticeably less timely than online information and substantially reducing their influence. Additionally, traditional book publishing suffers from insufficient content capacity. Publications typically contain content that has been elaborated by authors and processed by professional editors, yet both creation and editing are constrained by length limitations, resulting in readers receiving very limited firsthand information. In contrast, modern networks provide massive amounts of information, much of which consists of event recordings without personal viewpoints, offering readers far greater access in terms of both methods and volume compared to traditional books. Furthermore, traditional book publishing struggles to attract young audiences, who constitute the largest proportion of internet users and prefer fragmented reading and current affairs. New media platforms attract young people with their novel content, rapid news updates, and short viewing/reading times, placing traditional book publishing at a distinct disadvantage.

### 2.2 Marketing Transformation Journey

Radio media has a massive audience in China, particularly among drivers who listen during commutes, and marketing through radio requires significantly lower investment than television. Consequently, early book publishing marketing often chose radio for its higher cost-effectiveness. However, radio's relatively homogeneous audience created obvious limitations. The year 2010 marked the "Weibo Era," and WeChat emerged in 2011. Both platforms offered low operating costs and broad audience reach, providing new ideas for book publishing marketing. Weibo typically operates on a "one-to-many" or "many-to-many" model, while WeChat usually functions as "one-to-one" or "one-to-many" [2]. Nevertheless, publishing enterprises commonly suffer from low update frequency, minimal fan interaction, and insufficient content innovation when utilizing these "two micro-platforms," resulting in less-than-ideal promotional effects. Douban, launched in 2005, and Zhihu, founded in 2011, represent another marketing option. The difference between them is striking: Douban focuses on reviews while Zhihu emphasizes Q&A. Both platforms initially gathered high-quality users whose comments and answers held substantial reference value, but as their user bases became more mainstream, marketing authority gradually declined. QR code advertising marketing emerged only in recent years and has been widely applied across all aspects of life. By adding QR codes to book covers, belly bands, or interior pages, consumers can access substantially richer information resources via smartphone scans. Much of this additional content appears in

audio or video formats that strongly attract readers, though production difficulty and costs are generally high. In recent years, short videos have developed exponentially in China. Platforms like Douyin and Kuaishou have produced marketing accounts with tens of millions of followers, with live-streaming sales repeatedly exceeding hundreds of millions. Although the book publishing industry entered the short video platform space relatively late, facing disadvantages such as small initial followings and similar creative concepts, publishers continue working to 开拓 this phenomenal marketing channel.

### 3. Recent Developments, Opportunities, and Goals

#### 3.1 Recent Developments in Integrated Development

President Xi Jinping has stated that “promoting media convergence and building all-media represents an urgent task before us” [3]. The transformation of book publishing technology involves shifting from traditional editing to digital technology. In terms of dissemination forms, the transformation moves from paper books to various media including the internet and mobile devices. At the industry level, the transformation represents the integration of book publishing with digital technology and other media. The publishing industry is in and will remain in a long-term process of digital transformation and upgrading. The traditional publishing industry must identify its position in the digital publishing value chain and select appropriate development paths by leveraging its own characteristics and advantages. Integrated development in book publishing is manifested in the convergence of channels and terminals. In the integrated media era, digital technologies such as 5G, big data, and artificial intelligence are developing rapidly. Publishing content now incorporates not only text and images but also integrates audio, video, and other dissemination forms, giving rise to various new formats including e-books, audiobooks, AR/VR books, and modern paper books.

#### 3.2 Development Opportunities

Since the 21st century, global science and technology have continuously advanced. Publishing enterprises have already applied emerging technologies such as digital printing, AR/VR/MR, and QR code technology. With the gradual development of China’s 5G technology and the maturation of existing technologies, publishing enterprises are expected to achieve integrated media transformation and upgrading in the coming years, centered on content, supported by technology, and delivered through media channels. The popularization and rapid development of networks have propelled short videos and live streaming to unprecedented heights. Unlike traditional marketing methods that rely on short video works to attract fans and later realize profits through live-streaming sales, this approach has gained public recognition and achieved remarkable results across multiple fields. The publishing industry must also explore this domain.

### 3.3 Transformation Goals

The ultimate goal of transformation is to establish a complete integrated media industry ecosystem. During the initial stages of transformation, traditional book publishing enterprises mostly introduced digital technology into existing industrial processes. While this approach is relatively safe, it cannot be considered efficient integration in the long term and merely represents the digitization of traditional publishing. Understanding the new concept of integrated media and reforming traditional publishing concepts to consistently build an integrated media industry ecosystem throughout the entire process represents the ultimate transformation objective. Additionally, expanding new marketing channels is crucial. As networking levels continue to increase, e-commerce platforms have matured, relevant national laws and regulations are continuously updated and improved, and the convenience of mobile payments has driven massive numbers of users into online consumption environments. These changes provide new marketing concepts for the transforming publishing industry, with each media type having the potential to become a new marketing channel. Furthermore, integrated media transformation will enable deeper and broader expansion of overall brand value. Traditional book publishing brand structures typically consist of corporate brands and product sub-brands. Under integrated media transformation, publishing brands will achieve more profound and extensive expansion. Since products and services must be produced across multiple media, the brand composition will incorporate additional media service brands. Integrated media brand operations will become more systematic and professional, substantially contributing to the enhancement of overall publishing brand value. Finally, multi-media products and services help 挖掘 users' potential value. Audiences for different media exhibit differences in concepts, habits, needs, and consumption behaviors, providing publishers with various entry points for developing targeted products and services. Publishers can use media as a basis for segmenting markets, as even the same users will have different needs when experiencing services through different media channels.

## 4. Key Challenges

### 4.1 Unchanged Traditional Concepts

The transition from traditional publishing to integrated development presents significant challenges. The traditional editing-printing-distribution model merges poorly with new technologies, and most book publishing industries have only achieved superficial digitization.

### 4.2 Serious Content Homogenization

Although the digital publishing market continues to mature, the fast-paced nature of integrated media has led to serious content homogenization. For example, among approximately 200 VR/AR children's books published in 2016, more than 40 had titles containing AR coloring elements, and another 40-plus

featured dinosaur themes [4]. Most publishing units merely act as “content transporters,” simply copying content from print to digital publications without deeply 挖掘 high-quality content, thus failing to achieve complementary effects between integrated media and traditional book publishing.

### 4.3 Talent Shortage

Most Chinese editing and publishing units lack new media technology talent. Traditional publishing personnel have unclear mastery of digital technologies in integrated media publishing. The basic workflow of traditional publishing units primarily involves three steps—editing, printing, and distribution—which has long 固化 staff thinking patterns. This causes them to cling to old approaches even after the integration process begins, merely attempting to digitize editing, printing, and distribution.

### 4.4 Insufficient Funding

The development and application of new technologies require enormous upfront investment, while simultaneously managing products and services across multiple media demands additional human, material, and financial resources. Many publishing enterprises cannot handle cash flow flexibly. Integrated media structural transformation is slow with long operating cycles, making capital recovery timelines unpredictable and deterring numerous publishing enterprises.

### 4.5 Imperfect Integrated Media Mechanisms

The integrated media concept emphasizes the organic integration of various media to fully leverage respective advantages and compensate for weaknesses. Currently transitioning publishing enterprises remain in the initial stages of mechanism construction, finding it challenging enough to simply expand publishing products to multiple media. Publishing enterprises must further improve integrated media mechanism construction.

## 5. Strategic Recommendations

### 5.1 Strengthen Brand Building

In the integrated media era, publishing units should carry forward fine traditions to create branded book series, such as Guangxi Normal University Press’s “Imagist” series. Furthermore, brand marketing construction for book publishing should have a systematic framework to maximize the value of both master and sub-brands. The integration of traditional book publishing with multimedia, centered on users, makes brand construction a vehicle for expressing user needs and realizing value.

## 5.2 Optimize Media Integration

According to the 2018 “China Internet Network Development Statistics Report,” Weibo users exceeded 337 million, making Weibo marketing a viable option. Publishers can also utilize live-streaming platforms like Douyin and Kuaishou to construct integrated media communication systems. Additionally, publishing units no longer rely solely on physical bookstores but can also leverage e-commerce platforms, such as having e-commerce anchors sell books through live streaming or using WeChat mini-programs for book sales.

## 5.3 Utilize New Technologies

Big data analytics can accurately predict changes in the book market. For instance, “modern paper books” —a fusion product—refer to paper books with interactive design elements that enable consumers to access expanded services by scanning QR codes. Furthermore, Wangti Technology combines OCR technology with full-text retrieval to achieve automatic page positioning, allowing users to simply “photograph what they don’t understand,” significantly enhancing learning and work efficiency.

## 5.4 Maintain Fan Communities

In the integrated media era, “those who gain fans gain the world.” Publishing units can share classic book content with readers, solicit suggestions, and adjust content accordingly. Activities such as reader recommendations, resource sharing, and WeChat Moments forwarding, combined with promotion through mainstream media like radio, television, and internet, and invitations to professional book reviewers, can enrich book signing events.

## 5.5 Improve Content Quality

Content must ensure correct orientation, healthy ideas, and accurate information. As the main battlefield of cultural industries, publishing should release high-quality boutique publications that can guide readers forward, introduce advanced technologies, innovate content formats, and reflect the rich attributes of spiritual products through high-quality content that achieves both social and economic benefits.

## 5.6 Accelerate Talent Cultivation

To better respond to new technologies, editors must cultivate composite talents with digital technology thinking to fully utilize the multimedia functions of official accounts, such as page layout design, background music addition, and linking text-related videos. Article design should prioritize clear hierarchy, appropriate color matching, and balanced complexity to achieve all-media content development, transforming from book creators to creative innovators. This requires strengthening in-service editor training while vigorously recruiting new

media talent to build an editorial team centered on “scholar-editors” and progressively advancing toward “composite” editors.

### 5.7 Emphasize Thematic Publishing

Digitalization of thematic publishing can satisfy heavy users’ learning needs. The People’ s Daily Press’ s “Series of Integrated Media Publications on Xi Jinping’ s Use of Classical Allusions” was selected for the National Press and Publication Administration’ s 2020 Digital Publishing Excellence Recommendation List, demonstrating the publishing industry’ s thorough implementation of President Xi Jinping’ s important discussions on promoting media convergence and driving high-quality development.

## Conclusion

The integrated media era presents tremendous challenges and unprecedented opportunities for the book publishing industry. Publishing units must strive to build brands, cultivate composite talent, integrate new media marketing while ensuring high-quality topic selection, and innovate amidst changes to promote the high-quality development of both traditional and emerging media, thereby achieving steady enhancement of overall value in the book publishing industry.

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

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