

## Research on the Predicament and Transformation Strategies of Traditional Television Media in the New Media Era: Postprint

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### Abstract

With the continuous development of social economy and advancements in science and technology, China's comprehensive national strength has been steadily enhanced. Under this developmental trend, the Internet era has emerged as the mainstream, with the construction of Internet environments and the application of technologies becoming increasingly pervasive across various industries, yielding notable achievements. In the domain of television media development, the new media era has arrived, supplanting numerous developmental spheres of traditional media. For traditional television media to secure a position and achieve stable, healthy development in the new media era, certain transformations are imperative. Accordingly, this study investigates the challenges and transformation strategies for traditional television media in the new media era.

### Full Text

## Research on the Dilemma and Transformation Strategies of Traditional Television Media in the New Media Era

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### Abstract

With the continuous development of social economy and scientific and technological progress, China's comprehensive national strength has been steadily increasing. Consequently, the Internet era has become the mainstream trend, with the construction of Internet environments and technological applications becoming increasingly widespread across industries and yielding notable results.

In the field of television media, the new media era has arrived, displacing many traditional media domains. For traditional television media to secure its position and achieve stable, healthy development in this new landscape, fundamental changes are imperative. This paper examines the dilemmas confronting traditional television media in the new media era and proposes corresponding transformation strategies.

**Keywords:** traditional media; new media; fast dissemination speed; large storage capacity; broaden channels

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## 1. Drawbacks of Traditional Television Media

The primary drawback of traditional television media compared to new media is its lack of interactivity. New media leverages Internet technology to achieve real-time interaction with audiences, receiving their opinions and feedback instantaneously to optimize content accordingly. Traditional television media cannot fulfill this function; viewers can only watch programs passively without expressing their thoughts, creating a communication barrier between broadcasters and audiences. Additionally, constrained by production conditions, traditional television suffers from long production cycles and a single linear broadcasting model. Once viewers miss a program, they have no means to revisit it, significantly diminishing their viewing experience. The information transmitted is often outdated, as most news requires processing before broadcast, transforming it into “old news” that loses its initial impact by the time it reaches audiences. The dissemination speed is relatively slow and its reach limited, preventing many citizens from promptly accessing important national news and policies.

## 2. Advantages of New Media

### 2.1 Audience Autonomy and Choice

New media endows audiences with greater autonomy. First, viewers can select program content and viewing time according to their preferences. Even if they miss the scheduled broadcast, they can search for and rewatch programs online, freeing them from programming constraints. Second, audiences can repeatedly view content of interest, satisfying diverse viewer needs.

## 2.2 Convenient Interaction

In traditional television media, program organizers and audiences exist as completely separate groups. Viewers have no channel to convey opinions or suggestions, resulting in poor viewing experiences, while organizers cannot understand genuine audience sentiments or make effective improvements based on feedback. In the new media era, however, audiences can discuss programs with friends or strangers through Weibo, forums, and danmaku (real-time comment overlays) while watching, greatly enhancing their sense of participation. This convenient interaction also enables organizers to understand audience perspectives and refine their programs accordingly.

## 2.3 Rapid Instant Dissemination

One of new media's inherent advantages is its rapid dissemination speed. Regardless of the significance of an event, it can be instantly shared through images, Weibo, WeChat, and other platforms, achieving swift and extensive distribution. This immediacy authentically conveys news events, allowing broad audiences to perceive developments quickly. New media transmission resolves numerous communication barriers, enabling more people to access the latest events and news.

## 2.4 Massive Storage Capacity

New media functions like an enormous warehouse, storing news, information, and events from all fields and categories—an all-encompassing repository. Audiences can search for desired information anytime and anywhere according to their preferences, and share it with others in real time.

While new media offers numerous advantages, it remains a double-edged sword. Traditional television media must objectively understand new media, drawing upon its strengths while avoiding its pitfalls. Through objective evaluation and scientific integration, traditional media can achieve proper transformation without over-reliance on new media or abandoning its own foundations.

# 3. Dilemmas Confronting Traditional Television Media

## 3.1 Declining Viewing Time

Recent big data analyses reveal that television viewership is steadily decreasing. Many households no longer consider television a necessary appliance, while the proportion of audiences using the Internet and other new media continues to increase annually, alongside rising Internet penetration rates. These trends pose significant development challenges for traditional television media. If traditional broadcasters cannot “bloom anew” on their existing foundation, their situation will become precarious. In recent years, ratings across major television stations have shown a downward trend, even popular networks like Hunan, Zhejiang, and Jiangsu facing increasingly bleak outlooks, demonstrating that transformation is imperative.

### 3.2 Decreasing Advertising Revenue

Advertising constitutes the primary revenue source for traditional television media. However, new media impact has severely affected this income stream. Declining viewership and ratings have inevitably diverted audiences to new media platforms, resulting in advertising client loss—the main cause of revenue reduction. Currently, enterprises increasingly prefer investing advertisements in new media to maximize economic benefits. With new media's advantages of lower advertising costs and greater influence, it is gradually dividing traditional television media's market share.

### 3.3 Aging Audience Demographics

Traditional television media's audience is gradually shrinking, with the remaining viewership comprising approximately 90% elderly individuals—a concerning trend. Many young people, even when owning televisions, prefer using mobile phones and tablets to watch programs and browse news. Television has become dispensable for younger generations, often serving merely as decoration in their homes. This demographic shift renders information transmission less effective, as elderly audiences have poorer ability to accept novel content compared to younger viewers.

### 3.4 Incomplete Media Convergence

Traditional television media has recognized the necessity of transformation and has attempted integration with new media, but results have been unsatisfactory. Incomplete convergence stems from three primary factors: first, funding issues—low ratings fail to generate sufficient advertising revenue, causing capital chain supply problems; second, scarcity of specialized talent lacking the ability and experience to effectively integrate traditional and new media; and third, institutional constraints—traditional television media's long-established systems are deeply entrenched, making them difficult to break. Achieving effective integration requires introducing new concepts, technologies, and talent to deliver good communication effects. Incomplete media convergence is a key constraint on traditional television media's transformation.

## 4. The Necessity of Transformation for Traditional Television Media in the New Media Era

The current era belongs to new media, which has spawned numerous influencers, online celebrities, micro-business entrepreneurs, bloggers, and even grassroots stars. These individuals benefit from new media, which has democratized communication and allowed many to profit from its promotional models. Most traffic has flowed to new media platforms. With today's fast-paced lifestyles, people no longer have time to wait in front of televisions for programs. Instead, audiences prefer self-directed scheduling over program-directed timing—a crucial factor in new media's success and a primary reason for declining television

ratings. Successful television stations, such as Hunan, Zhejiang, Shanghai, and Jiangsu, have all cooperated with new media to innovate and gain public recognition. Hunan Television even launched its own app—Mango TV. Therefore, traditional television media must integrate with new media, using the new media wave to propel its own development. This mutual assistance and win-win cooperation represents the contemporary trend, making strengthened integration essential.

## 5. Transformation Strategies for Traditional Television Media in the New Media Era

Transformation strategies for traditional television media should consider two major aspects: first, innovating traditional television media itself by excavating and amplifying its inherent advantages to “bloom anew”; and second, reasonably introducing new media advantages to organically integrate both in a balanced manner.

### 5.1 Leveraging Traditional Television Media’ s Inherent Advantages

First, traditional television media should strengthen online platform construction, simultaneously broadcasting programs on television and online. Many broadcasters have begun moving in this direction, though penetration remains limited and paid features attract few subscribers, requiring continuous optimization. Second, traditional television must create flagship programs, remembering that “content is king.” While new media possesses many advantages, content quality ultimately determines development outcomes. Many online programs are popular precisely because of their excellent content and novel formats, such as *Keep Running* and *Great Escape*. Traditional television media must continuously develop its own brand programs, achieving successful transformation while generating revenue and satisfying audience tastes. Third, traditional television should expand profit models beyond advertising, particularly to address “advertising restrictions” by exploring alternative revenue streams.

### 5.2 Enhancing Influence Through New Media

In its transformation journey, traditional television media must learn to “leverage others’ strength,” using new media to enhance program influence and dissemination power, achieving a “1+1>2” effect. While some new media functions are beyond traditional television’ s capabilities, broadcasters can use Internet technology and various new media platforms for program promotion. Through Weibo, WeChat, websites, and other online platforms, they can publicize upcoming programs, fully attracting audience attention and stimulating curiosity before broadcast to achieve better results upon release.

### 5.3 Transformation of Media Professionals' Roles

All traditional television media professionals—including reporters, editors, and post-production staff—play crucial roles in transformation. In the new media era, their roles must evolve to drive successful transformation. First, media workers can no longer rely solely on a notebook and pen; they must continuously learn and master new technologies to complete more sophisticated media work, enhancing their information literacy. While traditional television media previously required only writing and filming skills, the new media era demands versatile talent proficient in writing, editing, filming, and post-production. Second, media professionals must deeply engage with the public, developing the ability to accept and excavate any program types favored by audiences, navigating between highbrow and popular content to satisfy diverse needs. Finally, all media workers must possess data organization and information analysis capabilities, seeing through phenomena to reflect social realities through minor incidents, genuinely addressing people's problems and needs—such programs will truly resonate with audiences and reflect the state of people's livelihoods.

### 5.4 Broadening Advertising Dissemination Channels

In the new media era, traditional television media must broaden advertising dissemination channels by building upon its own advantages while leveraging new media strengths, enabling traditional media to deliver new value. New platforms such as online television and mobile TV represent the fusion of new media and traditional television. Under this premise, traditional television media can establish official websites to promote programs, advertise, and add video search engines and other functions to enrich content and formats. Simultaneously, traditional broadcasters can create online TV stations featuring synchronized live broadcasts, gradually adding on-demand viewing, video sharing, and interactive communication functions. For instance, Hunan Television has opened Mango TV Weibo accounts and mobile client apps, broadening advertising channels and generating revenue through these diversified forms.

## Conclusion

The new media era has arrived as the dominant trend, persisting for the foreseeable future, and posing significant challenges to traditional television media. Traditional broadcasters must recognize their current dilemmas and, while preserving their original advantages, achieve effective integration with new media to facilitate successful transformation. Only through such innovation and transformation can traditional television media continue to survive and develop. Transformation is the sole path forward.

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

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