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From “Paper” to Converged Future: A Brief Analysis of Gannan Daily’ s Innovative Practices in Media Convergence Development (Postprint)

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Abstract

With the advent of the “5G” era and the growing maturity of technologies such as big data, the media market will unleash a new wave of dividends and usher in a new round of transformation. A comprehensive consideration of social benefits and profitability will become the future state of media convergence. Traditional media, staying true to their original aspiration and mission while seeking development, are forging ahead resolutely on the path of innovative convergence—a journey that remains long and arduous. This paper takes the Gannan Daily Press, a public institution directly affiliated with the CPC Ganzhou Municipal Committee, as an example to briefly analyze the convergence development path of Party newspapers.

Full Text

Preamble

From Paper to Future: An Analysis of Gannan Daily’ s Innovative Practices in Promoting Media Convergence Development
(Gannan Daily Press, Ganzhou, Jiangxi 341000)

Abstract: With the advent of the 5G era and the maturation of big data technologies, the media market is poised to unleash a new wave of dividends and usher in a new round of transformation. The future state of media convergence will be shaped by comprehensive considerations of both social benefits and profitability. Traditional media, staying true to their original aspirations, shouldering their missions, and pursuing development, have marched forward resolutely on the path of innovative convergence, facing a long and arduous journey. This paper takes Gannan Daily, an institution directly affiliated with the CPC Ganzhou Municipal Committee, as a case study to analyze the convergence development path of party newspapers.

Keywords: Party newspaper; Deepening reform; Real-time push; Social benefits; Economic benefits

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1. Challenges and Opportunities in Information Communication

Traditional media refers to conventional mass information dissemination methods, including newspapers, magazines, television, and broadcasting, which have served as the primary mode for public information access for centuries. However, with the rapid development of three major technologies—digital computing, network communication, and mobile smart terminals—mobile intelligent terminals have increasingly become the mainstream channel for information acquisition. This has broken the long-standing communication pattern where audiences relied solely on mainstream traditional media such as newspapers, radio, and television. The future direction of broad traditional media, including party newspapers, networks, magazines, broadcasting, and television, has become a hot topic of social discussion in recent years.

1.1 Inherent Limitations

Traditional media primarily disseminates information through sound, images, and text, and faces temporal and spatial limitations regardless of whether it is newspapers, television, or radio. Information flows unidirectionally: when information is transmitted to audiences, they can only passively receive it without providing immediate feedback. Consequently, audiences were once limited to “reading newspapers, watching television, and listening to the radio.” Traditional media requires physical mediums like newspapers, television, and radio for information dissemination, which demands considerable temporal and spatial costs from audiences. In contrast, fragmented reading better suits the fast-paced lifestyle of modern people.

1.2 Emerging Challenges

1.2.1 Loss of Traditional Audience Recent research data shows that users who extensively read online electronic news have lost interest in traditional media. This loss of traditional audiences has led to continuous declines in television ratings, radio listenership, and newspaper purchase rates.

1.2.2 Copyright Protection Difficulties Audiences can be both pure recipients and information producers and publishers. This new media development trend means that information from traditional media may be directly “used” anytime and anywhere. Therefore, audiences’ instant “take-away” approach and self-media effects directly impact the quality and effectiveness of traditional media communication.

1.2.3 Declining Advertising Revenue The traditional media communication model determines high information dissemination costs. However, due to the loss of traditional audiences, market and client advertising investments have decreased year-over-year, directly causing a decline in advertising revenue for traditional media.

1.3 New Opportunities

The increasingly fierce impact of mobile internet new media on traditional media has also created development opportunities. Seizing major policy and technological opportunities has become key to determining the effectiveness of media innovation and convergence.

1.3.1 Policy Opportunities

1.3.2 Talent Opportunities Rapid technological changes are subtly transforming the working mechanisms and models of media practitioners, changing news reporting concepts, information acquisition channels, interview reporting forms, and news release models, and even prompting traditional media practitioners to acquire new skills from the new media field [1].

1.3.3 Business Opportunities Traditional media has developed within the institutional system, with established patterns and routine operations in mechanisms, systems, and resource allocation. The production and dissemination characteristics of new media have broken the original business model. The comprehensive competition of social benefits and profitability has ushered in innovative opportunities for the market-oriented development of traditional media, whose mainstream brand status and information acquisition advantages make all possibilities attainable.

2. Resource Advantages and Production Bottlenecks

2.1 Resource Advantages

2.1.1 Prominent Personalization New media offers strong interactivity and multiple choices. It can actively push information to audiences, who can also customize the information they need.

2.1.2 Rich Formal Expression New media can integrate text, audio, video, and images to make information dissemination more scene-appropriate.

2.1.3 Real-time Push Capability Unlike traditional media, only new media can process, publish, and push content without time constraints.

2.1.4 Boundless Dissemination Compared with traditional media, as long as computer and network conditions are met, new media information can be pushed and disseminated to every corner of the world and can also be obtained through active audience searches.

2.2 Production Bottlenecks

First, new media information production lacks the “systematic supervision” found in traditional media, resulting in frequent appearances of vulgar content and false information on some new media platforms, which undermines the credibility of information. Second, the dissemination characteristics of new media make copyright protection more difficult, as infringement costs are low while rights protection requires substantial time and money. Third, numerous new media platforms have not established their own profit models [2].

2.3 Entrepreneurial Trends

In 2019, ByteDance launched Douyin, a short-video social platform targeting young people, marking a new milestone in new media entrepreneurship. The first key element is traffic: new media platforms must have sufficient followers, and these fans must be cultivated based on the platform’s actual communication effectiveness, which requires effectively solving the main problems of new media. Douyin achieved this—by June 2020, it had approximately 400 million active users, with over 460,000 families having shot family videos on the platform. The second element is the profit model; only with a sound profit model can anything survive and develop. Over the past five years, major new media platforms have competed for users and their time, while the next five years will see these platforms developing online payment, traffic conversion, and product monetization to form their own profit models.

3. Barriers and Trends in Convergence Development

Conforming to new changes in news communication and trends in media convergence development, improving reading experiences, strengthening mainstream public opinion [3], and serving the overall work center make the integrated development of traditional and new media imperative.

3.1 Development Barriers

3.1.1 Future Work Priorities The purpose of serving the people wholeheartedly is concretely manifested in user thinking. Currently, media convergence development is showing trends of platformization, mobility, and intelligence. All types of traditional media, including party newspapers, need to learn from each other's strengths and pursue a path of symbiotic and prosperous media convergence development with new media.

3.1.2 A Systematic Project Media convergence is a cause that requires joint cooperation across the industry and even society. As of December 2019, China had over 900 million active smartphone terminal users, spending at least 3-5 hours daily on their phones. Smartphones have become the primary tool for people to integrate into society, meaning that audience migration determines that the focus of traditional media work lies in convergent development with new media. However, technological progress is only the technical foundation of media convergence, which also involves mechanisms, systems, and resource allocation methods. After nearly a century of development, traditional media have formed complete, systematic mechanisms, institutions, and resource allocation patterns, while new media, as an emerging communication method, requires changing these original mechanisms, systems, and resource allocation methods. There is an urgent need to establish a new and suitable system that is business-oriented and breaks down departmental barriers and integrates resources through institutional restructuring.

3.1.3 Leveraging Advantages Fully Media convergence involves integration from objects to people. It requires leveraging the respective advantages of traditional and new media to build a “four-all media” that is mutually integrated, interactive, and inseparable. In the media convergence era, newspapers, especially party newspapers, generally face problems of insufficient diversity and weak targeting in public opinion guidance methods. How to temper the “four capabilities” has become an industry-wide consideration. Facing new trends of 5G, artificial intelligence, and media convergence development, building an integrated online and offline mainstream public opinion pattern with coordinated internal and external propaganda [4], continuously enhancing footwork, vision, mental capacity, and writing skills, striving to become all-media and expert-type talents, and creating immersive, experiential converged media that integrates authoritative information, smart services, and social interaction is both urgent and a long-term task.

3.2 Coordinated Development

“Accelerating the integration of media and AI technology, improving the productivity of converged media, and promoting coordinated human-machine development” is the era's requirement for media innovation and development. Through the maturation and widespread application of big data technology, the dream

of “interconnection of all things” has become an experience at the fingertips of millions of households, enabling personalized content delivery to individual audiences and achieving organic integration between the converged media industry and big data technology, thereby bringing a whole new world to audiences.

3.3 Industry Grafting

The essence of media platforms is to provide information services, and media convergence realizes infinite possibilities for service. Media convergence can graft content, platforms, and industries in unlimited ways, providing content services to audiences through big data [5]. In the converged media era, content services are often accompanied by industrial services, including government affairs, people’ s livelihood, lifestyle, entertainment, and other industrial chains, forming a comprehensive ecosystem together.

4. Gannan Daily’ s Integration and Innovation

4.1 Upholding Audience Service Consciousness

Since its founding over 70 years ago, Gannan Daily has adhered to the principle of “politicians running the newspaper,” upheld audience service consciousness, followed internet logic, and closely aligned with the municipal party committee and government’ s central work and the reading needs of readers in the new era. The newspaper has optimized layout and column settings, innovated platforms and channels, and kept pace with the times. In January 2015, Gannan Daily established a New Media Center to operate the two newspapers’ Weibo and WeChat official accounts; in September 2016, it launched a comprehensive news client “Qian Duan” ; in February 2018, it established an Audio-Visual News Department to transform and build a video production team, becoming one of the earliest party newspapers in Jiangxi Province’ s prefecture-level cities to embark on the path of media convergence.

4.2 Building a Holographic Media Matrix

In 2020, the New Media Editorial Department of Gannan Daily innovated its thinking, seized opportunities, and produced a large amount of rich and fresh content. Statistics show that over 100 WeChat articles from the two newspapers exceeded 100,000 views, with total reads and plays across new media platforms breaking through 1 billion, reaching a historical high. Gannan Daily’ s four major short-video platforms reached 4 million followers, with the total followers across the new media matrix exceeding 6 million. Gannan Daily’ s WeChat account was selected as one of the top 10 media WeChat accounts in Jiangxi in 2020, and its Douyin account was selected as one of the “Top Ten Douyin Accounts in Jiangxi.” Since 2020, Gannan Daily’ s Toutiao and Douyin accounts

have maintained high activity levels, ranking among the top party newspapers nationwide.

4.2.1 Exploring Interactive Holographic Reporting “Where the audience is, there lies our work focus.” Through eight new media matrix communication channels, Gannan Daily achieves full coverage of target audiences, laying a solid foundation for the Ganzhou Municipal Party Committee and government to occupy mainstream public opinion channels. The key to media convergence lies in user integration, moving from “addition” to “integration.” Only by being oriented toward users’ real needs and producing fresh, rich content can vitality be maintained. Since 2018, many readers who have maintained the habit of reading newspapers have noticed that key news reports in the print version of Gannan Daily are often accompanied by a small QR code. When users are interested in a particular news story, they can break free from layout limitations and scan the code with their phones for more detailed and in-depth extended reading. This extended reading represents the culmination of media convergence and user integration. After scanning, users can see unrestricted images, text, videos, and other forms of fresh content, enjoying an instant experience and sense of interaction with personalized information services. Gannan Daily has completed a batch of video products and panoramic VR products, attempting to produce and release short videos and conduct live broadcasts on platforms such as Youku, Tencent Video, and Douyin for major theme reporting, hot event attention, and traditional festival atmosphere creation, achieving good communication effects and social response.

4.2.2 Continuously Building Quality Columns Since 2020, Gannan Daily has continuously focused on brand building across its converged media matrix, creating a batch of popular quality columns. To further strengthen internet content and position construction, Gannan Daily and the Ganzhou Municipal Party Committee Cyberspace Affairs Office jointly launched the “Ganzhou New Media Communication Power Ranking List,” aiming to measure the communication power level of Ganzhou’s online media, promote internet + government services, and continuously improve the communication power, service capacity, and interaction capability of government new media. The converged media works and brands produced through innovative measures have been welcomed by audiences and affirmed by competent authorities such as the party committee and government.

4.2.3 Strengthening Internal Management and Training In 2020, Gannan Daily strictly implemented comprehensive orientation management requirements, insisting on one standard, one ruler, and one bottom line for both new and traditional media, and thoroughly implementing correct public opinion orientation across all new media platforms. The newspaper standardized news title production, strengthened judgment of news topics, improved content review and gatekeeping systems, and clarified key points and procedures for review and

gatekeeping. It strictly implemented a “24-hour” instruction reception system, strengthened the scheduling of new media propaganda instruction groups, improved instruction implementation and feedback mechanisms, and continuously enhanced the brand influence of new media.

4.3 Reform and Innovation in Converged Development

4.3.1 Media Convergence To adapt to audience migration, Gannan Daily integrated with its group’ s urban paper media, the Ganzhou Evening News. For traditional print media, Gannan Daily and Ganzhou Evening News merged into one; for new media, they respectively launched WeChat official accounts for Gannan Daily and Ganzhou Evening News, as well as eight new media matrices including Weibo, Douyin, and client apps.

4.3.2 Talent Convergence In recent years, Gannan Daily has established systems and innovated practices, pioneering the development of a versatile all-media editing and reporting team capable of fighting tough battles in Jiangxi Province. Gannan Daily established a “New Media Editorial Department” and a “Qian Duan News Editorial Department” in the editing center, beginning the transformation of news product editing teams from “paper-based” to “paper + digital” thinking with an all-media mindset. Simultaneously, Gannan Daily established an “Audio-Visual News Department” in the interview center, training short-video news journalists from existing photojournalists and text reporters to build an all-media reporting team integrating interviewing, filming, and post-production.

4.3.3 Technological Convergence Media convergence has only a starting point, no end point. In advancing media convergence, Gannan Daily continuously strengthens mobile-first thinking, uses deepening reform as the starting point, and promotes the construction of technical platforms to innovate news gathering, editing, and distribution processes. It decomposes and assigns tasks to individuals, achieves both internal and external considerations, and gradually forms an all-media production process of “one-time collection, multiple generation, and diversified distribution.” Technological innovation has achieved gradual results and noticeable changes in Gannan Daily’ s media convergence development path. On one hand, Gannan Daily has equipped the New Media Center and Audio-Visual News Department with advanced professional editing equipment such as cameras, photography gear, image processing tools, and drones; on the other hand, it has upgraded network bandwidth to improve the transmission speed of new media products and strengthened business skills training, enabling all editors and reporters in Gannan Daily’ s New Media Center to have handy “weapons” and confidently participate in the practical wave of technological convergence.

4.3.4 Industrial Convergence Building holographic brands that fit Ganzhou’ s reality enables industrial convergence where everything can be

interconnected. Gannan Daily comprehensively integrates media resources and has gradually launched a holographic series including “Holographic Newspaper,” “Holographic Tourism,” “Holographic Agriculture,” “Holographic Industry,” and “Holographic Lifestyle,” creating a comprehensive platform of “Converged Media + Government Affairs + Services” –the Qian Duan client and Qian Duan news website. This comprehensively improves the efficiency of collaborative editing and release across various platforms, providing new possibilities for industrial convergence development. In 2020, Gannan Daily newly established a Digital Industry Department. Since late May, the Digital Industry Department attempted to host the 2020 Ganzhou “Gan Products Online” poverty alleviation product online exhibition and e-commerce poverty alleviation live broadcast festival. “Let’s work together to help poverty alleviation and support the Ganzhou Soviet area” –Gannan Daily’s all-media reporters transformed into live-streaming hosts, with over a hundred types of Ganzhou specialty products displayed and sold online, independently completing the entire event process from start to finish, taking a solid step toward cross-border business operations and industrial convergence for the newspaper industry.

Starting from paper and creating the future through convergence, Gannan Daily has dared to innovate and boldly transform, continuously enhancing the core competitiveness of party newspapers, strengthening and expanding mainstream public opinion, and continuously improving the communication power, guidance power, influence, and credibility of news and public opinion, providing strong public opinion support and powerful spiritual motivation for promoting the construction of a high-quality development demonstration zone in the old revolutionary base area of southern Ganzhou.

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

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