

Topic Selection Planning and Approaches for University Textbooks in the Era of Media Convergence (Postprint)

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Abstract

The advent of the integrated media era has exerted tremendous impact on the traditional book publishing industry. However, distinct from other publications, university textbooks possess unique characteristics within the book market, and consequently have undergone distinctive transformations in this era. This article commences with an overview of the integrated media era, compares the differences in topic selection and related aspects of university textbooks between the traditional and integrated media eras, analyzes the existing deficiencies in topic planning and conceptual approaches for current university textbooks, and proposes corresponding improvement strategies.

Full Text

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Research on Topic Selection Planning and Strategies for University Textbooks in the Converged Media Era

(Zhengzhou University Press, Zhengzhou, Henan 450000)

Abstract: The advent of the converged media era has profoundly impacted the traditional book publishing industry. However, unlike other publications, university textbooks possess unique characteristics in the book market, leading to distinctive changes in this new era. This article begins with an overview of the converged media era, compares differences in university textbook topic selection between traditional and converged media contexts, analyzes current deficiencies in topic selection planning and conceptual approaches, and proposes improvement strategies.

Keywords: converged media; publishing industry; university textbooks; topic selection planning; topic selection strategies

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1. Overview of the Converged Media Era

The concept of converged media has become a practical reality under the material conditions of continuously developing network information technology. The converged media era is formed relying on the development of the internet, making “Internet +” an obvious trend in the development of higher education textbooks today. In this era, radio, television, and the internet are integrated together, each playing to its advantages and values. Converged media can be said to integrate the functions of different media forms to maximize their combined value. In the converged media era, the same news is not released on a single medium alone, but is transformed into multiple forms, channels, and methods across different media platforms simultaneously. Simply put, the converged media era has changed the single-channel information dissemination of the past; all media develop not in isolation but by maximizing their respective advantages for mutual benefit to meet consumer demands.

Therefore, textbook planning editors must invigorate their thinking and fully adapt to characteristics such as the rapid turnover of knowledge in the internet era. Meanwhile, they must also establish internet thinking and cannot remain stuck in the static and authoritative mindset of print-media-era publishing. In the internet age, no textbook can become a permanent classic. Especially for traditional print-based university textbooks, planning editors should attempt to innovate their forms and transition them toward digital publishing. Additionally, editors should actively learn internet technologies such as big data, incorporating big data into the workflow of textbook topic selection planning to maintain the advancement and innovation of publishing planning. Textbook planning editorial teams must also strictly supervise and control the quality of topic selection, avoid falling into the stalemate of traditional publishing work, actively use the internet to enliven traditional publishing thinking, fully embody the content and use value of higher education textbooks, and lay a foundation of teaching resources for cultivating new-era talent in higher education.[2]

2. Research on Topic Selection Planning and Conceptual Approaches for University Textbooks in the Converged Media Era

For higher education textbook publishing, a publishing house' s grasp of textbook topic selection planning and disciplinary planning largely reflects its competitiveness. Currently, facing the impact of the network media era and the rapid development of education, university textbook planning and publishing have changed significantly compared to the past. In response to changing demands from university faculty and students, as well as transformations within the higher education sector itself, university textbook planning editors must confront innovation directly and change their professional philosophy based on an understanding of market demands and higher education reforms.[1]

2.1 Enhancing the Comprehensive Competence of Textbook Planning Editors and Updating Editorial Work Philosophy

For most textbook planning editors, fixed work processes have become habitual. To better adapt to the arrival of the converged media era, editors should transform and upgrade the traditional publishing industry while maintaining conventional publishing workflows. Textbook planning editors must strengthen training and learning, actively drawing experience from outstanding professionals in domestic and international book industries to improve their comprehensive competence. Meanwhile, against the backdrop of the converged media era, digital publishing technologies continue to develop; textbook planning editors cannot remain confined to past achievements and work models but must actively update their professional philosophy and enhance their vocational capabilities. Furthermore, editors should not only advance their theoretical literacy and specialized technical knowledge but also actively apply this theoretical knowledge to practical publishing work.

2.2 Opening Suggestion Channels and Listening to Market Demand from Multiple Perspectives

In the past, university faculty and students were largely passive recipients of textbooks—whatever was available on the market was what schools selected, leaving limited choices for institutional users. However, with the arrival of the converged media era, the internet has provided university faculty and students with abundant educational resource options. If they wish, they can easily access excellent educational resources from around the world, breaking the authoritative status of textbooks. Therefore, to meet market demands, traditional textbook publishers, especially planning editors, must confront market needs directly, break past monopolistic and authoritative mindsets, and actively adapt to market competition.

First, publishers, particularly textbook planning editors, should leverage internet advantages to establish efficient textbook information community platforms,

enabling faculty, student readers, and publishers to share textbook planning information and allowing more readers to participate in the entire textbook planning and publishing process. During textbook topic selection planning, editors can effectively invite renowned experts in relevant fields to participate, thereby obtaining more valuable publishing information resources. Meanwhile, editors should actively reference suggestions from community platforms, gain close-up understanding of teaching and reading habits among university faculty and students, and respect their position as the main market subjects for textbooks. Throughout the entire topic selection planning process, publishers must actively apply collected resources to their work, striving to gain unanimous recognition from faculty and students for both topic selection planning and editorial publishing.

2.3 Textbook Editors Should Establish Advanced Educational Concepts and Timely Update Textbook Content

With the rapid development of the national economy and deepening exchanges between domestic and foreign universities, teaching reforms in Chinese universities have become increasingly active, with new teaching concepts continuously emerging. These concepts are reflected in textbooks through accelerated content update frequencies. Particularly for science and engineering textbooks, the curriculum system essentially requires updating every 3-5 years. Rapidly recognizing and grasping the developmental direction of teaching reforms represents a new requirement for editorial work. Therefore, editors must not only “work with their heads down” but also “look at the road ahead.” Through converged media such as the internet, newspapers, and academic conferences, editors should actively grasp textbook content, especially by communicating with authoritative experts involved in decision-making, to understand national higher education development trends from different perspectives.[3]

2.3.1 Understanding Policies from Education Management Departments Documents from the Ministry of Education and speeches by relevant leaders serve as guidelines for national higher education reform and play a directive role in the development of various disciplines. For example, in recent years, the Ministry of Education has continuously emphasized improving higher education quality and promoting the cultivation of diverse talents, clearly guiding universities to strengthen their construction according to different requirements for research-oriented, teaching-research, and teaching-focused institutions. Against this backdrop, requirements for cultivating application-oriented talents have been highlighted, and the integration of the internet with different majors has also become an important developmental direction for teaching reform.

2.3.2 Understanding Disciplinary Development Trends Different stages of disciplinary development will present different trends, and the development of related industries in China will directly influence university program settings. Taking computer science as an example, it has evolved into

several branches including computer science, computer engineering, information technology, software engineering, etc., consequently leading to corresponding adjustments in program offerings. With these program adjustments, teaching research and textbook publishing planning face a long and arduous road ahead.

2.3.3 Understanding Social Demands The rapid development of the national economy has driven the emergence of new industries while also facilitating the transformation of traditional industries through new technologies. Industrial development has placed new demands on university talent cultivation and significantly impacted program settings and talent training models.

For instance, after the introduction of national macro-policies, the software industry has accelerated its development, creating a huge talent shortage. Numerous software colleges and software vocational technical institutes have emerged, with rapidly expanding enrollment in recent years. However, current software college teaching lacks necessary standardization, and traditional textbooks are ill-suited for the further development of these programs. Research on software engineering curriculum systems and teaching standards has become a current hot topic.

Therefore, textbook editors should, with the help of experts, understand and grasp higher education development trends to propose new concepts for textbook planning, thereby better guiding systematic theoretical research and textbook compilation. This represents fundamental experience for improving the overall construction level of textbooks. Although optimization of editorial work itself cannot directly produce teaching effectiveness, updates in editorial planning concepts can often play a role in optimizing textbook systems, exerting an underestimated influence on the elevation of teaching quality.

2.4 Understanding University Program and Curriculum Settings and Clarifying Reader Positioning

Reader-oriented textbook topic selection planning involves segmenting textbook readers based on research and investigation, clarifying the target users of textbooks, and thereby providing a foundation for determining textbook frameworks and basic content. Through internet-based information collection, editors can directly understand details of university programs and curricula. They must have a clear grasp of the characteristics of teaching targets and the teaching objectives to be achieved, considering whether the book targets junior college students, undergraduates, or graduate students, and whether it is a student-oriented or teacher-oriented book. Facing different requirements from readers at different levels, the depth and breadth of content will also differ. Therefore, textbook editors must understand both teachers' teaching psychology and students' learning psychology to promote better understanding and use of textbooks by both parties. Meanwhile, the nature of the course determines textbook content selection. University courses are generally categorized into theoretical courses, specialized courses, experimental textbooks, electives, required courses,

etc. Different course types have different disciplinary statuses and requirements, as well as different syllabi and content depth and breadth. Consequently, textbook editors must consider these relevant factors when selecting and arranging textbook content.[4]

2.5 Understanding Textbook Publishing Status and Analyzing the Introduction of Similar Textbooks

To plan new topics, it is first necessary to understand the publication status of similar textbooks from both one's own publishing house and other publishers, analyze similar textbooks on the market, and identify the strengths and weaknesses of existing textbooks. Understanding the status of similar topics helps research whether new topics have distinctive features and avoid low-level repetition, while also requiring in-depth understanding of relevant textbook marketing channels. Regarding the introduction of similar textbooks, different situations should be analyzed by combining author resources, disciplinary development levels, and student acceptance capabilities. To improve students' professional and foreign language proficiency, it is recommended to introduce foreign textbooks directly and rapidly into China's higher education classrooms through methods such as photocopying, translation, and compilation. For some traditional disciplines, particularly those with obvious regional characteristics, domestic author resources are more suitable.

However, even for disciplines suitable for introduction, blind adoption should be avoided; the authority of original textbooks and their applicability to China's context must be considered.

2.6 Optimizing Textbook Design and Enhancing Applicability

The design of publication content and form constitutes an important aspect of textbook planning. Excellent technical editors should be introduced to optimize publication design. As mentioned above, in the converged media era, digital technology continuously integrates with the traditional publishing industry, greatly expanding the scope of topic selection planning. The involvement of converged media means that selected topic design encompasses not only paper-media-related factors such as size, format, and binding, but also covers other media attributes including interface design, applications, user experience, and interactive forms. Facing these new challenges, traditional print textbook planning editors often struggle to cope, and technical editors should be introduced to collaborate on book planning. The following example from a foreign language textbook planning case specifically explores practical strategies for textbook topic selection planning in the converged media era.

In recent years, with the vigorous development of internet technology, the trend of media convergence has become an undeniable reality. It can be said that the era of traditional print media has become history, and the converged media era has arrived. Against this backdrop, people increasingly spend time on electronic

devices. Whereas information was previously received through newspapers and books, nowadays users are accustomed to reading and learning on electronic devices during fragmented time slots. Consequently, the arrival of the converged media era has profoundly impacted the traditional book planning and publishing industry. As fundamental teaching resources for university instruction, university textbooks occupy an important position in higher education and have also undergone certain changes in the converged media era.

China has a vast territory with numerous universities, creating a huge market for university textbooks. Adapting to the times and innovating the topic selection planning and publishing of traditional university textbooks in the converged media era will not only significantly impact the traditional publishing industry but also affect the development of China's higher education.

Therefore, through technical intervention, the quality of digital publications in terms of programming, functionality, interface, and user experience can be ensured, thereby improving the overall quality of textbook publishing in the converged media era.

2.7 Textbook Planning Editors Should Actively Introduce Advanced Teaching Concepts to Guide Compilation of Excellent Textbooks

After forming basic planning concepts, editors need to translate advanced teaching concepts into concrete implementation plans through specific work. To ensure that research outcomes are advanced, original, and authoritative, it is necessary to organize first-rate domestic experts to conduct research work. Editors should clarify their position and must not overstep their authority during the research process. The editor's primary responsibilities include not only ensuring textbook publication but also guaranteeing the research direction of textbooks. The final research outcomes can provide references for university teaching reforms and offer specific guidance for textbook compilation.[5]

2.8 Achieving Unity Between Topic Selection Planning and Market Planning

Textbook planning must align with education department policies and disciplinary development trends while also meeting social demands, providing fundamental conditions for market planning. After editors propose planning concepts, organize research work, and compile related textbooks, they should fully recognize that the advancement of textbooks lies in the advanced teaching concepts they represent.[6] Therefore, for textbook promotion, the teaching concepts behind the textbooks should first be showcased to facilitate the development of research outcomes. Publishers' editorial and marketing personnel must adapt to changing circumstances, diligently study the spirit of relevant professional field reports, and on this basis, publicize and promote advanced teaching concepts while creating related textbooks. From another perspective, a publishing house's core competitiveness depends on whether its published textbooks can reflect

advanced teaching concepts and teaching achievements. Thus, disseminating advanced teaching concepts also lays the foundation for establishing a brand image for the publishing house, ultimately enhancing its core competitiveness.

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

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