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## Transformation and Advancement of Digital Thinking in Publishing Houses in the Context of Media Convergence: Withdrawn Postprint

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### Abstract

With the widespread adoption and rapid development of the Internet, various industries have begun to intersect and merge, making digitalization an overarching trend across all sectors. In the media and communications industry, the impact of digitalization is particularly profound. The channels and methods through which people receive information have become significantly more diverse compared to the past. Consequently, publishing houses must accelerate their digital transformation by embracing multimedia convergence and fully leveraging Internet-centric thinking and technologies to advance the development of digital publishing. This paper examines the current state of digital publishing development, investigates the digital mindset transformation within publishing houses and the promotion of digital publishing under the context of media convergence, and offers reference recommendations for the development of publishing houses in the Internet era.

### Full Text

#### Preamble

**Title:** The Transformation and Advancement of Digital Thinking in Publishing Houses Under the Background of Media Convergence

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**Abstract:** With the popularization and rapid development of the Internet, various industries have begun to permeate and merge with one another, and digitalization has become the prevailing trend across all sectors. In the media and communications industry, the impact of digitalization is particularly profound. People's channels and methods of receiving information have become

more diversified than ever before, compelling publishing houses to accelerate their digital upgrading in conjunction with multimedia convergence and to fully utilize Internet thinking and technology to advance the development of digital publishing. This paper analyzes the current state of digital publishing development and explores the transformation of digital thinking and the advancement of digital publishing in publishing houses under the background of media convergence, providing reference suggestions for the development of publishing houses in the Internet era.

**Keywords:** Internet; media convergence; digitalization; mindset transformation; publishing houses; transformation

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Against the backdrop of Internet-driven digital development and with the support of science and technology, a thorough understanding of the era of media convergence is essential before exploring digital publishing development. From a content perspective, media types are diverse, encompassing text, audio, video, or comprehensive formats combining several of these elements. From a transmission perspective, media channels include both online and offline modes, with the former relying on the Internet as the medium and the latter depending on various print media. While media development can significantly impact the economy, it is also constrained by economic development levels, as each rapid advancement in media has been enabled by breakthroughs in media technology. China's rapid digital economy growth and expanding 5G coverage have rendered traditional single-media forms uncompetitive against emerging multimedia formats that integrate multiple content types [3]. Many scholars and media practitioners regard technology as the foundation of media development. In the early stages of the Internet, bandwidth constraints limited online media transmission primarily to text, but the advent of smartphones made image-text content the mainstream of information exchange. The current boom in short-video platforms further demonstrates technology's profound influence on media.

Media convergence was first proposed by the renowned media figure Nicholas Negroponte, whose theory elucidated the development direction of the media field—not merely as mutual combination but as mutual transformation. He argued that the development of multimedia is dissolving the boundaries between various media, with current media forms trending toward integrated multifunctionality. Andrew Nachison, a prominent American media researcher, contends that media convergence should be an alliance among print, audio, video, and interactive digital media organizations, highlighting the importance of digital

media to media convergence. Chinese media scholars argue that the boundaries between different media types are gradually blurring and merging with the continuous development of modern information technology. This convergence is not simply a collection of various media but represents a deeper, multi-dimensional integration involving the mutual transformation of media technology, functional structures, and model types. Driven by Internet development, converged media present increasingly rich and colorful content and forms online, with greater personalization and orientation [4].

According to National Bureau of Statistics data, China's digital publishing industry reached an overall revenue of over 800 billion yuan in 2018, representing a 17.8% increase from 2017, with a noticeably accelerating growth curve. With the research and popularization of 5G communication technology, network resources are being further exploited, and digital content is becoming more abundant and diverse [2]. Data from an online reading platform shows that users' online reading time is continuously increasing, with purchases of related services and paid conversion rates rising year after year. Traditional publishing houses should seize this Internet development opportunity, transform traditional thinking, closely connect users with content, intensify the development and utilization of digital resources to meet diverse user needs and reading formats, and actively explore a development path that aligns with their own characteristics.

## 1. Overview of Media Convergence

Media convergence development is influenced by various factors, primarily including policy guidance, capital operations, market competition, and consumer demand. First, policy guidance: Because media serves a propaganda function, China regulates media through relevant policies and regulations to strengthen public opinion guidance and, through state endorsement, better facilitate the transformation and upgrading of traditional media to create media groups with strong vitality. Second, capital operations: Media exerts enormous influence on the economy, particularly since entering the 21st century. In the era of media convergence, capital's value to media has become increasingly prominent, profoundly rewriting the development rules of the media industry and providing innovative momentum for media convergence. Third, market competition: Many traditional media outlets have begun exploring transformation in response to Internet impact, engaging in competition with various emerging media. In this process, all media types have kept pace with innovation, accelerating the digital, networked, and group-based transformation of the media industry. By embracing the Internet, traditional media can better transmit their voice through media convergence and effectively enhance the competitiveness of the media industry. Fourth, consumer demand: Consumers are the ultimate service targets of media, and content is the service product. Media convergence must optimize user experience by relying on big data and cloud computing technologies to break temporal and spatial limitations, enabling precise interaction between people and network information and increasing user stickiness.

## 2. Overview of Digital Publishing

Faced with the digital trend of the Internet, traditional publishing houses must continuously adjust their operations, integrate online and offline resources, and achieve transformation from print publishing platforms to content provision platforms—that is, strengthen their Internet thinking or digital thinking capabilities and clarify digital publishing as their future development direction. Regarding this emerging industry, from a publishing perspective, the three elements of editing, reproduction, and distribution remain relevant. The current domestic model of publishing houses engaging in digital resource exchange via the Internet is termed “digital publishing.” Chinese scholars have developed several perspectives on the emergence and characteristics of “digital publishing.”

First, from a storage perspective, digitalization essentially involves binary processing of content for storage, retrieval, and browsing via computers. This broader definition of digital publishing encompasses content stored on mobile hard drives, optical discs, and numerous mobile terminals, all of which can become publishing objects. Second, from a distribution perspective, traditional publishing houses follow standardized publishing procedures requiring review and approval from various aspects before obtaining book numbers for public distribution. Digital publishing opens up Internet development space on this traditional foundation, transforming content dissemination through Internet technology. Third, from a transmission perspective, digital publishing breaks down barriers between individuals and resources, enabling information exchange via the Internet with rapid, diverse, and abundant dissemination. Fourth, from a management perspective, traditional publishing houses have developed mature publishing systems over the years, and digital publishing implements the publication and management of digital product content based on this foundation. The primary management objects refer to the content resources that publishing houses have digitized.

### 2.1 Advantages of Digital Publishing

First, policy advantages: In the national “Internet Plus” strategy development, promoting the digital transformation and upgrading of the publishing industry and achieving integrated development between traditional and emerging formats have been established as important development plans, with clear goals and directions, as well as policy and financial preferences and guarantees [6]. Second, instant transmission: Compared with traditional publishing, digital publishing possesses immediacy and transmissibility. While print publications from publishing houses are relatively lagged in dissemination, Internet-based digital platforms can achieve instant and rapid transmission. From this perspective, Internet development will not diminish publishing houses’ influence but can instead expand their reach and duration through Internet technology. Third, rich content: The Internet breaks temporal and spatial limitations, enabling digital publishing to accommodate and share massive amounts of content. People can read online anytime and anywhere, selecting content according to their

preferences, thereby satisfying the information and communication needs of the Internet information era. Fourth, good economic returns: The economic benefits brought by digital publishing have been rising year after year. According to relevant statistics, China's e-book market output value has shown explosive growth, with increasing numbers of people browsing and engaging in online reading. Compared with single-format print media, the rich video and graphics online can deliver more information to people, and solving market demands yields substantial returns.

## 2.2 Problems in Digital Publishing Development

Although digital publishing represents the future development direction for publishing houses, traditional publishing still occupies an important market position in China, and online reading cannot completely replace print reading.

**2.2.1 Uneven Development of Digital Publishing** This unevenness manifests in several ways. First, uneven service coverage: Although China's internet user population has reached 829 million, with a comprehensive reading rate across media exceeding 80%, these contributions primarily come from adults under 45 years old, with insufficient coverage of student groups and elderly populations, or service content that fails to meet their needs. Second, uneven product categories: Among digital publications, the most popular content types are fantasy and science-fiction web novels, while other literary genres and types have smaller audiences, leading to structural imbalances in digital publishing. Finally, digital publishing service providers' understanding of digital publishing remains at an initial stage, with inadequate market services and regulatory systems, causing digital publishing to remain constrained by traditional publishing mindsets that require optimization and structural adjustment along with digital development [7].

**2.2.2 Unbalanced Digital Publishing Industry Chain** This industry chain imbalance primarily results from market disorder and unequal development. Digital publishing has initially formed an industry chain encompassing creation, submission, review, processing, and publication release. However, in market development, top-tier publishers dominate by leveraging their influence and business advantages to rapidly disseminate resources with industry-specific tendencies, while small and medium-sized enterprises and individuals occupy awkward positions in the publishing industry chain, facing problems such as lagging content supply and services and lack of dissemination channels for individual high-quality resources. Establishing a healthy and sustainable industry chain development mechanism is urgently needed.

**2.2.3 Other Issues in Digital Publishing** Publishing houses face many other problems in their digitalization process. For instance, they still adhere to traditional old thinking when building digital platforms, believing that digitalization simply involves converting books and other materials into digital

formats and uploading them online without profound understanding of digital publishing content services. Additionally, copyright issues are prominent, with insufficient clarification of intellectual property ownership, redundant information, and nominal copyright protections becoming major obstacles to digital publishing construction.

### 3. Directions and Measures for Digital Publishing Under Media Convergence

Since digital publishing represents the future development direction for publishing houses, how to achieve business transformation and actively integrate with the Internet has become a challenge facing all publishing professionals. Digital publishing is by no means as simple as uploading content online for dissemination. Early digital publishing attempts by many regional publishers and publishing houses show that uploading traditional publishing resources unchanged to the Internet has not resulted in significant improvement or objective returns. Digital publishing should be content-driven and service-oriented, achieving precise information delivery to users through secondary content processing, big data analysis, and Internet technology. This means starting from users, analyzing their needs, and then processing the vast resources of publishing houses to package creativity, products, content, and services together for sale to users—realizing the concept of “one content, multiple creative developments; one creative development, multiple products; one product, multiple formats; one sale, multiple channels; one investment, multiple outputs; one output, multiple value additions.” This is the true essence of digital publishing.

#### 3.1 Fully Leverage Content Advantages

In the context of media convergence, to leverage their advantages and achieve digital upgrading, publishing houses must reintegrate their current publishing markets, existing users, available resources, and services. First, they should identify user needs for digital publishing, conduct digital processing based on their existing resources, and refine content meticulously to support high-quality product services and management. Compared with content from other Internet media, publishing houses possess significant advantages in their own content. Therefore, once online business is established and preparations for digital publishing and future responses are clarified, selecting appropriate Internet technology for support and promotional channels for operations can quickly establish a comprehensive digital content provision platform for future development layout. For example, in the textbook industry familiar to publishing houses, they can conduct online promotion in connection with education departments to provide content services for their regions, with publishing houses playing the roles of product agents and regional service providers [8].

### 3.2 Fully Utilize Policy Support

The current “Internet Plus” initiative is a national development strategy. A major challenge facing digital publishing is the significant difference between online and offline profit models, which cannot be simply replicated. New profit models must be developed—on one hand, reducing input costs, and on the other hand, actively opening new revenue channels. The government continuously increases its support for the cultural industry, and many projects that demonstrate clear industrial promotion effects can obtain substantial government support, which not only reduces input costs but also integrates resources through government coordination to accelerate digital publishing platform construction. Regarding the development of new revenue projects, the preferential policies brought by government support during the initial development stage of digital publishing as an emerging media can be leveraged. Through digital construction, products meeting user needs can be developed, and corresponding loans and tax reduction support can be obtained according to policies.

### 3.3 Scientifically Operate to Guide Users

Digital publishing is not simply about opening online stores for sales but requires continuous utilization of Internet technology and scientific operation models to achieve precise content delivery, strengthen online and offline product experiences, and increase revenue through multiple channels. A marketing system should be established with users as the priority, content as the foundation, products as the body, and service as the king, forming a main digital publishing business line led by traditional publishing, creating brand digital products released in multiple forms and channels. Through user purchase of services, profitability and revenue generation can be achieved, thereby ensuring reasonable input-output ratios for traditional publishing and the healthy, sustainable development of digital publishing.

The future development potential of digital publishing is enormous, but the process is extremely challenging, requiring both breakthroughs in Internet technology and sound intermediary channels, as well as convergence of various media. For publishing houses, whether focusing on content as king or implementing Internet strategy, they must be user-centered and oriented toward satisfying user needs. Through comprehensive online services, a grand digital publishing landscape can be created, thereby achieving continuous optimization and development of the digital publishing industry to better meet the spiritual and cultural needs of the broad populace.

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

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