

## An Analysis of Converged Media Development Strategies for Prefecture-level Radio and Television Stations: Postprint

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### Abstract

Compared with regional mainstream television media, prefecture-level radio and television stations still exhibit certain disparities in human resources, financial capacity, and technological capabilities. The rapidly expanding new media market and increasingly fierce competition among television media have posed significant challenges to prefecture-level radio and television broadcasting. For prefecture-level radio and television stations, converged media development represents both an opportunity and a challenge, necessitating that local television media fully leverage their local resource advantages and adopt context-specific approaches, thereby enhancing their discursive power throughout the process of converged media construction.

### Full Text

#### Analysis of Converged Media Construction Strategies for Prefecture-Level Radio and Television Stations

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**Abstract:** Compared with regional mainstream television media, prefecture-level radio and television stations still face gaps in human resources, financial capacity, and technical capabilities. The rapidly evolving new media market and increasingly fierce competition among television media have presented enormous challenges to prefecture-level broadcasters. For these stations, converged media construction represents both an opportunity and a challenge, requiring local media organizations to fully leverage their regional resource advantages and adapt measures to local conditions to enhance their discursive power in the process of media convergence.

**Keywords:** Prefecture-level radio and television stations; converged media construction; news production; platform development; converged media management

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## 1. Significance of Converged Media Construction

The continuous application and development of broadcast television information technology have significantly propelled the informatization of radio and television stations, with converged media serving as a crucial indicator of this progress [1]. The advancement of new media technologies, particularly the internet, has accelerated the technical transformation of broadcast media dissemination. Widely adopted media applications such as WeChat and Weibo have facilitated the integration of traditional and new media. Converged media construction has become an essential direction for broadcast television development, especially in the era of big data where the application of new media technologies in broadcast station convergence actively promotes the formation of diverse media models. From traditional television sets to today's smartphones and computers, these technologies have greatly facilitated public access to news and information. However, declining broadcast television audiences have severely impacted ratings and economic returns, necessitating that broadcast media actively embrace emerging media models, innovate program dissemination patterns, and effectively leverage the role of converged media to better respond to intense market competition. In this new era, to enhance program visibility and ratings while maximizing economic benefits, broadcast stations must integrate traditional media with emerging technologies, capitalizing on the strengths of various media platforms to meet audience demands in the converged media era.

## 2. Transformation of Converged Media News Production

### 2.1 Transformation of News Production Workflow

Traditional television news production primarily involved journalists and editors as the main actors. Beyond assigned beat reporting, journalists conducted independent interviews, with the latter typically requiring editorial planning beforehand [2]. In addition to news gathering, editing constituted part of journalists' daily responsibilities. At live news scenes, rapid reporting was the primary task, though news 稿件 organization still relied heavily on post-production integration and optimization by editors to form layouts and program segments. Traditional television news production involved numerous isolated stages with poor intercommunication, requiring substantial financial investment. However,

the emergence of new media gathering and editing operations has successfully broken down these barriers. Compared with the fragmented approach of traditional media news gathering, the integrated converged media production environment offers clear advantages by dismantling silos between gathering and editing stages, creating collaborative and unified dissemination synergy that significantly improves media product production efficiency. For instance, in 2015, *People's Daily* established the “Central Kitchen” all-media platform, achieving integration of gathering and editing operations encompassing news content resource sharing and news processing technologies.

## 2.2 Reorganization of News Production Structure

Television news gathering and editing organizations have traditionally operated independently, primarily through program groups, each fully staffed with editors and journalists. While new media departments also participated in news production, they belonged to no specific news group. When breaking news events occurred, multiple journalists from different program groups competed not only with external media but also among themselves, causing significant human resource waste and severe content homogenization. This multi-layered organizational structure also substantially hindered the free flow of news production resources and limited resource sharing. Given the integrated and three-dimensional characteristics of new media dissemination, there is an urgent need to reorganize news production media organizations, break traditional structures, and achieve collaborative gathering and editing with unified operations rather than fragmented approaches. This would not only significantly enhance media professionals' news production concepts but also effectively reduce news production costs.

## 3. Problems in Prefecture-Level Radio and Television Station Converged Media Construction

### 3.1 Conceptual Gaps

After years of development, most prefecture-level radio and television stations have operated based on traditional media models involving multiple frequencies and channels, simply migrating broadcast and television program audio and video content to websites. Consequently, under the coexistence of traditional and emerging media, many believe this constitutes “media convergence.” Due to this misconception, numerous prefecture-level stations remain at the initial “Internet Plus” stage without achieving substantive progress.

### 3.2 Lack of Integrated Production and Distribution Platforms

Driven by internet information technology, media types have become increasingly diverse, forming numerous columns and sections that provide creative themes and works while expanding creative space. However, for converged media construction, different columns and sections require different presentation

forms and production methods, creating difficulties for media integration. To strengthen converged media construction at the prefecture level, it is essential to actively build integrated gathering, production, and product distribution platforms, which represent the core of converged media construction. Yet due to various factors, prefecture-level stations lack such integrated platforms during construction, hindering smooth progress. Moreover, independent operation of different media prevents journalists' gathered materials from being used across multiple platforms [3]. From an objective perspective, audio and graphic materials obtained by radio and newspaper journalists through interviews cannot be easily utilized by television news, while video and audio materials gathered by television journalists can be provided to radio, newspapers, and new media. However, this requires television journalists to consider the characteristics and requirements of other media during filming; otherwise, ideal results cannot be achieved.

### 3.3 Incomplete Converged Media Systems

Traditional media and converged media differ in development, operation, and management, making traditional media systems inapplicable to converged media. Therefore, prefecture-level stations must build comprehensive and targeted converged media systems during construction. Integrated operation represents the primary goal of broadcast station converged media construction, which can optimize processes including gathering, editing, reviewing, and broadcasting, establish editor-centered planning teams, and create fully integrated, flattened, and open news operation management systems. Currently, most broadcast stations operate based on media segments, with newspaper, television, and broadcast media operating independently with minimal interaction. This independent operational system for newspaper, television, and broadcast media affects the completeness of converged media systems during integration and impedes successful converged media construction.

### 3.4 Lack of Converged Media Operation Talent

The integrated operation of converged media requires prefecture-level stations to simultaneously consider news dissemination, media markets, and new media development, thereby imposing higher demands on talent. Before establishing converged media, broadcast media primarily adopted independent management and operation models with lower requirements for composite talent. Currently, composite talent represents the key to driving prefecture-level station converged media construction. However, influenced by compensation, working conditions, and other factors, serious staff turnover occurs, making the lack of operational talent a major challenge for prefecture-level station converged media construction.

## 4. Strategies for Prefecture-Level Radio and Television Station Converged Media Construction

### 4.1 Shift Mindsets and Emphasize Converged Media Development

During converged media construction, prefecture-level stations must shift their mindsets, clarify the concept and connotation of converged media, strengthen differentiation between converged media and simple multimedia addition, pay greater attention to converged media development, and adopt scientific and rational development approaches to promote stable and sustainable growth while actively addressing various challenges with targeted solutions. Specifically, when building converged media centers, prefecture-level stations can establish scheduling command platforms using large screens. According to different needs, software UI interfaces can be custom-designed, with modules for large-screen display freely selectable in terms of position, size, and content, generating modules for direct use. The number of information display pages can be self-configured to maximize the utility of large screens.

### 4.2 Establish Lean and Efficient Converged Media Centers

Converged media construction follows certain objective laws. If radio and television platforms are built separately, substantial financial investment is required, creating a significant burden for resource-limited prefecture-level stations that cannot allocate excessive human and material resources to converged media construction. To address this issue, it is necessary to move beyond the current parallel operational architecture of audio, screen, newspaper, network, microblogging, and terminal platforms, concentrating personnel originally dispersed across different positions and departments to establish a converged media center. This center should include gathering, editing, broadcasting, and technical staff recruited and trained according to converged media requirements to ensure they develop into specialized multi-skilled or multi-specialized composite talent. In practice, converged media focuses primarily on news, encompassing planning and topic selection, information gathering, and resource integration. Although the converged media center distributes news products to audio, screen, newspaper, network, microblogging, and terminal platforms, organizationally it constitutes a single department or unit—a unified entity whose members are managed and evaluated by the center rather than by frequency or channel departments. Given existing conditions, prefecture-level station converged media centers should not be too large but must be lean and efficient, gradually expanding scale based on actual conditions.

### 4.3 Strengthen Integrated Production and Distribution Platform Construction

To ensure efficient and stable converged media operation, prefecture-level stations must adopt advanced converged media technologies as their foundation. Currently, some developed regions' television stations have built integrated

gathering, production, and product distribution platforms known as “Central Kitchens” [4]. The “Central Kitchen” represents an integrated gathering and editing operation platform involving new spaces, technical platforms, and efficient organizational structures, serving as the primary guarantee for content product production. During “Central Kitchen” construction, emphasis must be placed on designing connotation, extension, and processes, integrating video, audio, and PC network content to connect large and small screens and online-offline channels while strengthening interaction between broadcast, television, newspaper, television, and new media platforms. This approach enhances resource aggregation, integration, distribution, and control to achieve “gathering-editing integration, content aggregation, multi-channel transmission, and multi-terminal unification.” In the construction and operation of the “Central Kitchen,” content gathering is crucial. Regardless of integration approaches, content remains “king.” Content products represent the core of converged media construction, with compatibility as the basic requirement, necessitating publication across radio, television, newspaper, website, microblogging, and terminal platforms. Therefore, prefecture-level broadcast converged media construction should deeply cultivate local areas, understand people’s living conditions, present issues of public concern through diverse media forms, and display them through different ports to achieve better converged media construction results and development.

#### 4.4 Cultivate Professional Media Talent

Prefecture-level stations require professional talent in converged media construction, making talent recruitment and cultivation key priorities. Vigorously introducing and cultivating new media talent while leveraging talent advantages promotes converged media construction and development. To this end, prefecture-level stations must actively recruit corresponding professional talent, establish scientific and efficient talent incentive systems, create favorable development opportunities for young people, and broaden professional media talent workspace to avoid brain drain and talent gaps. Concurrently, media workers must regularly participate in training and learning to enhance their professional technical capabilities and actively acquire various new media knowledge. Additionally, optimizing the talent working environment, improving communication systems, and creating relaxed communication review environments can improve the overall communication atmosphere. Regular anonymous job satisfaction surveys should be conducted to integrate employee suggestions, enabling the formulation of targeted optimization measures, promptly addressing areas of dissatisfaction, enhancing internal cohesion within traditional media, optimizing the traditional broadcast television industry environment, and boosting practitioner confidence.

#### 4.5 Improve Integrated Converged Media Management

The independent operation of prefecture-level stations results in different journalists’ materials being usable only for single purposes, with gathered informa-

tion difficult to share [5]. Because information cannot be shared across multiple media types, it serves only individual platforms, hindering converged media construction and integration. To address this issue, it is necessary to integrate information from different media, build integrated platforms, enable communication between different information sources, transform constraints imposed by traditional operational systems and frameworks, and achieve information sharing between modern networks and broadcast stations. During specific integration processes, a converged media management center must be established to uniformly edit and manage materials gathered by different journalists. Materials obtained through interviews should be produced and then distributed across different platforms. When integrating new and traditional media, resource complementarity should be strengthened and communication channels broadened to enhance news dissemination power and influence. News 稿件 without “three-level review” signatures and filing may not be uploaded or broadcast. For temporarily broadcast programs, the undertaking department must follow the “three-level review” procedure, with approval from station leaders at or above the deputy director level before release. Additionally, various equipment should be designated for custody or use by specific personnel assigned by dedicated managers, with journalists using equipment according to authorized scope and following a reservation system. For example, journalists must obtain cameras with assignment orders; in special circumstances such as temporarily notified interviews, weekends, or holidays, producers may negotiate with equipment managers by telephone before collecting cameras. After interviews, cameras must be promptly returned to the equipment department for inventory management and, except under special circumstances, may not be kept by journalists to ensure resource waste is avoided.

In summary, converged media has emerged from the influence and advancement of information technology on various media types, emphasizing the correct use of media carriers. Based on converged media, effective utilization of resources and technologies can be achieved to deliver the effects of newspaper, broadcast, and television media. To address current deficiencies exposed in prefecture-level station converged media construction, development attitudes must be clarified, traditional media advantages leveraged, weaknesses overcome, systems improved, integrated gathering and distribution platforms established, and stable, sustainable development of prefecture-level stations ensured.

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

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