

Exploration and Practice of Digital Transformation in Publishing (Postprint)

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Abstract

For publishing enterprises to better adapt to the developmental demands of the era, accelerating the digital transformation of publishing houses has become a focal point of discussion at the current stage. Based on this, this paper analyzes the necessity of digital transformation for publishing houses, expounds upon the current conceptual framework for such transformation, and proposes practical pathways including constructing a digital publishing business advancement mechanism, establishing digital brands to deliver new knowledge service functionalities, and leveraging modern technologies to enhance competitiveness, aiming to provide constructive recommendations for further expediting the digital transformation of publishing houses.

Full Text

Preamble

Exploration and Practice of Digital Transformation in Publishing Houses

(People's Medical Publishing House, Beijing 100021)

Abstract: To better adapt to the demands of contemporary development, accelerating the digital transformation of publishing houses has become a key focus of discussion among publishing enterprises. This paper analyzes the necessity of digital transformation in publishing houses, elaborates on current transformation strategies, and proposes practical approaches including establishing digital publishing business mechanisms, building digital brands to provide new knowledge service capabilities, and enhancing competitiveness through modern technologies. The aim is to provide constructive recommendations for further accelerating the digital transformation of publishing houses.

Keywords: publishing house; digital transformation; digital products; digital publishing; digital brand

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Changing publishing carriers and dissemination methods constitutes an important means of promoting digital transformation in publishing houses, laying a solid foundation for better adaptation to digital publishing development. Digital transformation not only enhances the fluidity and accuracy of digital resources but also provides significant convenience for traditional publishing. It addresses issues such as severe waste and poor preservation associated with traditional paper publications while creating favorable conditions for the portability of contemporary publishing content. Typically, a single server can store and carry all content to be published, providing readers with convenient access. Using mobile phones, computers, and other devices, readers can access content anytime and anywhere, free from temporal and spatial constraints, which greatly satisfies the demand for downloading knowledge resources. How to effectively achieve digital transformation is a question that publishing professionals must currently consider.

1.1 Facilitating Commercial Development of Publishing Enterprises

With the development and progress of the times and science and technology, the emergence of new technological products such as fragmented reading platforms and smart speakers has greatly promoted the development of the audiobook market. Related artificial intelligence technologies have also been widely applied in this market, creating favorable conditions for publishing houses to build digital reading platforms and opening a new path for actively carrying out digital transformation. From the perspective of work efficiency, digital transformation not only alleviates the workload of editorial positions but also further improves editing and proofreading quality, optimizing publishing processes to the greatest extent. The deployment of intelligent editing, proofreading, and typesetting equipment enhances the efficiency and quality of traditional publishing houses while providing technical support for promoting commercial development.

1.2 Optimizing Publishing Procedures

Digital transformation enables increasingly advanced and sophisticated data fragmentation processing. Combined with internet technology, it can digitize previously published knowledge services to achieve effective resource integration. By reorganizing and planning digital content, with datafication and fragmentation as the criteria for purifying and integrating knowledge units, publishing houses can continuously improve the fluidity and accuracy of knowledge re-

sources, elevating general-value resources to higher-quality ones. This approach upholds the “service-first” philosophy, enhances knowledge service awareness, and leverages the advantages of digital publishing to optimize traditional publishing procedures.

1.3 Enhancing the Timeliness of Publishing Content

Digital transformation not only solves problems of waste and poor preservation in traditional paper publications but also creates favorable conditions for the portability of contemporary publishing content. If readers wish to obtain relevant content from traditional paper publications, they must search page by page, wasting considerable time and greatly reducing work efficiency. In contrast, digital book products provide convenient functions such as copy, paste, and scan for quickly locating and obtaining needed information. This represents an important manifestation of how digitization facilitates content reuse and extraction, significantly enhancing the timeliness of publishing content [1].

2. Examining Problems in the Digital Transformation Process

2.1 Lagging Topic Selection and Planning

Good topic selection and planning are key to ensuring the rationality of publishing content. Traditional publishing houses, deeply influenced by conventional publishing models, exhibit a certain lag in their topic selection concepts. Their content planning has no direct connection with the technologies required for publishing, and they overly emphasize traditional publishing formats while neglecting the use of digital publishing methods. To some extent, relevant personnel have not fully recognized the importance of digital publishing for their current development. Moreover, communication between editors and authors typically adopts paper publishing formats without considering digital publishing, which fails to truly meet readers’ needs for portable and fragmented reading. Therefore, publishing houses should base their topic selection planning in the digital era on readers’ reading habits and interest preferences to provide more comprehensive information services, fully highlighting the comprehensive and three-dimensional characteristics of digital transformation.

2.2 Relatively Rigid Editorial and Publishing Processes

Due to the lack of effective communication and exchange among internal departments, the initial digital transformation of publishing houses is significantly impacted. The editorial and publishing processes are relatively rigid, and a feasible publishing procedure has not yet been established during the transformation, resulting in insufficient understanding of new media publication formats among various departments, with continued emphasis on traditional paper book editing and publishing. To effectively solve this problem, it is necessary to strengthen

coordination and communication among internal departments while actively introducing other production formats to ensure smooth digital transformation.

2.3 Weak Copyright Protection Awareness

As digital transformation deepens, copyright protection awareness needs to be strengthened. However, during actual transformation, some publishing houses have not paid attention to this issue. Additionally, China's laws and regulations in this area are not yet perfect, and publishing houses lack corresponding legal protection, leading to serious piracy problems that damage both authors' legitimate rights and publishers' own interests. This is very detrimental to the development of digital publications in the later stages. Relevant personnel should further strengthen copyright protection awareness, establish legal departments to protect copyrights, and reduce infringement issues during digital transformation [2].

2.4 Inappropriate Publishing Distribution and Marketing

The digital transformation process brings new profit growth points, requiring attention not only to publishing and distribution issues but also to appropriate adjustments in marketing strategies. However, most publishing houses currently have significant problems in marketing, such as hard-sell promotion and incompatibility with new media marketing methods. The disconnect between publishing distribution and marketing reduces effective communication with consumers and lowers target readers' participation. Moreover, excessive emphasis on marketing in physical bookstores greatly affects the distribution and marketing of digital publications. In response, publishing houses should actively build brand effects, enhance interaction with consumers, construct a new marketing system, enhance stability during digital transformation, actively utilize new media such as WeChat public accounts and webcasting to promote products, and gradually form a stable profit model.

3. Stages of Digital Transformation

3.1 Initial Stage

As an important part of cultural construction, digital publishing has gradually become the hottest topic of concern for publishing enterprises. The main factors affecting the digital transformation of traditional publishing enterprises are how to better meet the needs of the times and truly build an integrated and innovative publishing enterprise. With the rapid development of the internet, extremely strict requirements have been proposed for mass data storage. In the initial stage of digital transformation, the required funding mainly comes from existing internal resources, with a small portion obtained through social fundraising and strategic investors. By renovating computer rooms, upgrading official websites, iterating EPR hardware, and building relevant data platforms, publishing houses can promote the digital transformation of existing content

resources, strengthen product development and project construction, gradually improve storage capacity, provide technical support for enriching publishing content in the future, and achieve digital transformation in content for traditional publishing houses. Additionally, for transformation at this stage, publishing house managers must fully consider various factors affecting digital transformation, using the ability to efficiently select effective information for readers as the criterion for digital transformation. This can not only lay a solid foundation for accelerating digital transformation but also create opportunities for priority development.

3.2 Development Stage

When publishing houses carry out digital transformation work, they enter the development stage after the initial phase. At this stage, both the publishing house' s official website and ERP information systems have been constructed, relevant data platforms have been established, and some publishing products and digital platforms already have certain operational scale and sales performance. Through the digitization of paper book content, publishing houses have generated certain income and can now undertake related project construction. Specifically, although publishing houses have opened up certain online markets through digital transformation and achieved financial balance, the transformation products are relatively primary, mainly consisting of classic e-books or databases. Relying solely on these cannot further achieve digital development. Therefore, at this stage, publishing houses can use internal funding to build technical development teams for undertaking projects, increasing the proportion of project revenue in overall marketing income to further achieve technical transformation [3].

3.3 Mature Stage

When digital transformation reaches the mature stage, the operation mechanism of digital platforms has entered a mature phase. The publishing house' s official website and ERP systems can operate smoothly with multiple service functions, providing solid support for informatization. Both product transformation and information platform operation have become routine work, achieving integrated transformation between traditional publishing and digital publishing. Simultaneously, after reaching this stage, the publishing house' s data platforms and integrated products can operate benignly, with sustained growth in revenue from relevant departments and digital products, no longer requiring reliance on internal funding. Therefore, at this stage, publishing houses should further enrich product ideology, focus on introducing and using new technologies, further build technical development teams, and enhance market competitiveness of integrated publishing. Meanwhile, they should gradually reduce undertaking projects for integrated publishing products and invest more resources and capital into integrated products and data platforms to achieve coordinated development of traditional paper products and digital products.

3.4 Ultimate Stage

After developing to the mature stage, publishing houses should add value-added products to reach the ultimate stage. Specifically, at this stage, both digital products and platform operations have become important revenue segments with relatively rich product forms. However, to achieve sustainable development of digital publishing houses, value-added products should be added on the basis of integrated publishing products to form an industrial chain suitable for the publishing house's own development, thereby thoroughly achieving digital transformation.

4. Practical Approaches to Digital Transformation

4.1 Establishing Digital Publishing Business Mechanisms

When exploring practical paths for digital transformation, institutional support is needed to guide all employees to change their mindsets and recognize the importance and practical significance of digital transformation, thereby carrying out high-quality transformation work. Specifically, publishing houses should establish specialized digital publishing departments based on their actual conditions to promote digital publishing business and enhance the standardization of transformation development. This department's main responsibilities include overall planning of digital publishing activities, collecting advanced transformation experiences, and constructing digital transformation plans based on their own development status. The department should also have certain decision-making powers to ensure rapid and effective implementation of relevant decisions. For example, employees can learn from the digital transformation experiences of foreign publishing houses. Compared with other countries, China is still in the initial stage of digital transformation. Therefore, relevant managers should learn from excellent transformation experiences to build their own digital transformation framework, scientifically and reasonably fill in content based on actual conditions and market situations, and handle details properly. Additionally, relevant management systems should be established, and hardware equipment should be purchased to ensure smooth implementation of transformation measures and lay a good foundation for subsequent work [4].

4.2 Innovating Product Formats Based on Content

Whether paper or digital products, content is what truly attracts consumers. For publishing houses, the fundamental purpose is to provide excellent content knowledge to readers. Therefore, the principle of "content is king" must be upheld during digital transformation. In the current information age, various new media platforms and integrated products have emerged. Some publishing houses, in pursuit of economic benefits, overemphasize marketing forms and channels while neglecting content importance, ultimately disappearing from the market after obtaining short-term economic returns. Therefore, to achieve stable digital transformation, publishing houses should be based on content, explore content

depth, and achieve the purpose of promoting culture and transmitting knowledge through appropriate dissemination channels. Specifically, when selecting integrated products, publishing houses should maintain publishing direction, strictly control product quality, and extend the content resource advantages of traditional products to digital product fields, thereby providing excellent reading materials for readers during transformation and establishing brand images to lay foundations for subsequent work. Additionally, product formats should be innovated by integrating the spirit of innovation into content carriers and presentation forms, organically combining information technology with content resources to improve benefits from integrated products.

4.3 Building Digital Brands to Provide New Knowledge Service Momentum

The most critical task in digital transformation is building a digital brand. Brands occupy an important position in digital publishing houses, and providing new knowledge service functions can give consumers good consumption experiences and further shape positive brand images. From a marketing theory perspective, consumers are very sensitive to brands when making purchases. For the same product, those with better brand images often have higher sales volumes and can command higher prices due to brand premium effects. This demonstrates the important guiding role of brand effects in consumer behavior. For digital products, although they exist on network information platforms, they are still commodities. Therefore, to promote better digital transformation, publishing houses should use innovative product formats to build strong digital brands, enhance brand influence, improve economic benefits, and lay a solid economic foundation for subsequent transformation work.

4.4 Combining Modern Digital Technology to Enhance Competitiveness

For digital transformation, information technology means and application effects are the core content of digital publishing houses. To achieve long-term development, publishing houses should keep pace with the times, insist on using modern digital technology as the cornerstone, and present content knowledge and integrated products in novel forms. However, this is relatively difficult for traditional publishing houses. Therefore, they can enhance their technical advantages by purchasing technical services. In this process, publishing houses should change their mindsets, base themselves on readers' actual needs and high-quality content resources, and achieve integration between traditional publishing and digital publishing to provide integrated works that meet reader demands. To achieve digital transformation development, high-quality preliminary research should be conducted, and multiple processes including technical development, testing, launch, and content operation and maintenance should be strictly implemented to leverage the resource advantages of core businesses. Finally, integrated publishing teams should be established to strictly control

all aspects from planning to promotion, improve digital product quality, and promote complete and smooth transformation [5].

In summary, the digital transformation of publishing houses is both an era requirement and a need for self-development. Therefore, traditional publishing houses should base themselves on value innovation, combine modern technologies to enhance competitiveness, build digital brands, and innovate product formats to achieve stable digital transformation and promote sustainable development.

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