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## Chronicle of Major Events in Media Deep Convergence (2020) Postprint

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### Abstract

The extraordinary year of 2020 witnessed media deep convergence development characterized by optimized systems, broad convergence, and strong technology. Drawing from practical experience in media deep convergence, the author reviews major events in new directions, new models, and new ecosystems in 2020, serving as a record and review of the media deep convergence process.

### Full Text

#### Abstract

The year 2020, marked by extraordinary challenges, witnessed media deep integration development characterized by optimized institutional frameworks, extensive convergence, and robust technological advancement. Drawing from practical experience in media deep integration, this article reviews major events in new directions, models, and ecosystems that emerged in 2020, serving as a record and retrospective analysis of the media deep integration process.

**Keywords:** media deep integration; all-media; communication system; top-level design; major reporting

### 1. Top-Level Design: A New Direction Blueprint

The year 2020 represented a pivotal transition from “media convergence” to “media deep integration.” Having first entered the central agenda for comprehensive deepening reform in 2014 and becoming a national strategy, and with the “county-level media convergence centers” initiative launched during its second appearance on the agenda in 2018, media convergence reached its third milestone in 2020, ushering in a new journey of “deep integration development.” During this process, institutional frameworks for media convergence demonstrated progressive optimization at the top-level design stage.

On June 30, 2020, the Central Committee for Comprehensively Deepening Reform reviewed and approved the “Guiding Opinions on Accelerating Media Deep Integration Development” (hereinafter referred to as the “Guiding Opinions” ), which established the objectives and tasks for media deep integration development and called for “building an all-media communication system with content construction as the foundation, advanced technology as the support, and innovative management as the guarantee” [?].

In September 2020, the General Office of the CPC Central Committee and the State Council issued the “Opinions on Accelerating Media Deep Integration Development” (hereinafter referred to as the “Opinions”). Serving as the implementation guidelines for the “Guiding Opinions,” this document clarified the overall requirements for media deep integration development from three dimensions: significance, objectives and tasks, and working principles [?]. It articulated the development direction for the next five to fifteen years, emphasizing the need to “promote media deep integration, implement all-media communication projects, strengthen new mainstream media, and build and effectively utilize county-level media convergence centers.”

In October 2020, the Fifth Plenary Session of the 19th CPC Central Committee adopted the “Proposal of the CPC Central Committee on Formulating the 14th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development and the Long-Range Objectives Through the Year 2035,” which incorporated these principles into national planning.

In November 2020, the National Radio and Television Administration issued the “Opinions on Accelerating the Deep Integration Development of Radio and Television Media,” proposing objectives and tasks for a one-to-three-year time-frame and specifying requirements across eight dimensions: “new mainstream media,” “masses,” “content,” “technology,” “system,” “talent,” “management,” and “support” [?]. This document represented the concrete elaboration and deepening of the September “Opinions” within the broadcasting and television sector.

## 2. Major Reporting: New Models Taking Shape

The year 2020 featured numerous major reporting events, but three stood out as exemplifying the achievements of media deep integration: all-media COVID-19 reporting, Two Sessions reporting under special circumstances, and poverty alleviation reporting during a critical period. Through advanced technological support for content construction, these major reports demonstrated new models and highlighted the “strong technology” characteristic of media deep integration.

### 2.1 All-Media COVID-19 Reporting: Party Media’ s Responsibility

Among all major reporting events in 2020, the all-media COVID-19 coverage had the most profound impact, the longest duration, and the broadest reach.

During the most critical phase of epidemic prevention and control at the beginning of the year, party media launched a thrilling battle of public opinion, with authoritative, truthful, rapid, and comprehensive reports from party media at all levels becoming the mainstream voice [?]. As decisive victories were achieved in the battles to defend Hubei and Wuhan, reporting gradually shifted to promoting orderly work resumption and production. As national epidemic prevention and control stabilized, the focus turned to preventing both imported cases and domestic resurgences.

Throughout this process, numerous party media professionals disregarded personal safety and ventured to the frontlines, becoming part of the ranks of “beautiful countermarchers.” As one *Dazhong Daily* report aptly titled, “Those who wield pens can also go to battle, because their predecessors once carried guns.” The unique nature of the pandemic imposed significant constraints on traditional interview and dissemination methods, making cloud-based interviews, talks, and livestreams the new normal. All-media reporting formats based on multimedia technologies—such as short videos, Vlogs, infographics, and H5—became routine practices. Mobile new media platforms of party media, including apps, WeChat/Weibo accounts, and self-media channels, became primary channels for the public to access epidemic information and learn about prevention measures. In 2020, cumulative new downloads and user activity on party media mobile platforms increased significantly. For instance, data from seven media apps under the Dazhong Newspaper Group and major apps under the Shanghai United Media Group all demonstrated this pattern during the pandemic [?]. Interactive data news reports integrating technological development and content creativity gradually became standard features across media outlets. The deep integration and collaboration between technical developers and content editors jointly explored a new content production approach closer to internet thinking [Figure 1: see original paper].

## 2.2 Two Sessions Reporting: Party Media’ s Commitment

Compared with previous years, the Two Sessions reporting in May 2020 faced greater challenges: ensuring safe and orderly epidemic prevention and control while timely conveying the voices of the Two Sessions under complex and changing circumstances. These challenges stimulated innovation across media organizations, revealing new trends in media deep integration.

First, **cross-boundary convergence to address weaknesses.** During the Two Sessions, an increasing number of mainstream media, commercial platforms, and technology companies engaged in mutual cooperation. Through cross-regional collaboration with peer media, cross-domain partnership with commercial platforms, and cross-industry cooperation with technology companies, media organizations rapidly addressed weaknesses in talent, dissemination, and technology, thereby advancing new mainstream media construction.

Second, **technological support for innovative expression.** With technolog-

ical support, media expression methods continuously diversified—ranging from immersive experiences using VR and AR to automated presentations through virtual anchors and voice broadcasting; from H5 integration of text, images, audio, and video to interactive presentations enabled by technology development.

Third, **all-staff transformation to unleash vitality**. Reporters who wrote articles leveraged their planning strengths to write short video scripts; commentators utilized their research expertise to become on-camera analysts; journalists with musical hobbies sang news to audiences; and TV anchors employed their hosting skills to produce Vlogs. These visible transformations came from an increasing number of traditional media professionals crossing boundaries. The underlying logic remains media deep integration, which, on one hand, promotes the formation of all-media communication systems and ecosystems, and on the other hand, facilitates new mainstream media construction [?].

### 2.3 Poverty Alleviation Reporting: Party Media’ s Strength

The year 2020 was crucial for China’ s comprehensive poverty alleviation and building a moderately prosperous society in all respects, making it a top priority for news and publicity work. Beginning in June 2020, the five-month “Toward Our Moderately Prosperous Life” large-scale interview campaign involved nearly 500 media organizations and 3,000 journalists who traveled across the country to report from the frontlines of poverty alleviation [?]. In September, the Central Publicity Department launched the “Hundred Cities, Thousand Counties, Ten Thousand Villages Research Activity,” with media at all levels showcasing touching moments from poverty alleviation efforts at the grassroots level.

Technological innovation drove new reporting models. Xinhua News Agency employed interactive video technology to design and develop the interactive micro-documentary *Her Story Is Touching Everywhere*, which told the inspiring story of Li Jinlian, a post-1990s NPC deputy from the Lisu ethnic group in Diqing Prefecture, Yunnan Province, who worked on the frontlines of poverty alleviation. Through interactive choices, audiences could explore different poverty alleviation storylines, creating a multi-dimensional narrative approach. Xinhua also used holographic remote co-screening technology to interview Cheng Ju, a post-1990s Party branch secretary in Dashi Village, Chongyang County, Xianning City, Hubei Province, about her grassroots work in revitalizing mountain villages. Guizhou Daily utilized VR and multimedia technologies to design and develop the *2020: Poverty Alleviation in Guizhou* VR cloud exhibition, suitable for mobile presentation. Based on a VR immersive environment, the exhibition assembled precious reports with photos and text from General Secretary Xi Jinping’ s inspection of Guizhou, while integrating various report materials including text, images, audio, and video from Guizhou’ s poverty alleviation efforts. The virtual exhibition featured three-dimensional display walls and screens, presenting Guizhou’ s arduous poverty alleviation journey and the beautiful picture of moderately prosperous life [Figure 2: see original paper].

### 3. Communication Ecosystem: A New System Emerging

The year 2020 marked the gradual formation of mainstream media communication systems and ecosystems, representing a significant milestone in the progressive implementation of the central media convergence strategy. The mainstream public opinion landscape and all-media communication system gradually took shape through arduous exploration, with the “four beams and eight columns” of new mainstream media being progressively established.

#### 3.1 The Xuexi Qiangguo Platform: Building a Mainstream Ecosystem

By December 31, 2020, Xuexi Qiangguo had achieved cumulative downloads of 1.919 billion across ten major Android app markets, with 1.031 billion new downloads added in 2020 alone (data source: [www.kuchuan.com](http://www.kuchuan.com)). Its cumulative downloads surpassed those of some national commercial clients. In 2020, Xuexi Qiangguo adopted an “open platform” strategy, continuously strengthening its capacity to connect various resources. Building upon provincial-level platforms, it launched “prefecture-level platforms” and “county-level media convergence” channels, attracting mainstream media, government institutions, and social organizations to establish “Qiangguo Accounts.” The platform integrated applications such as “Qiangguo Mall,” “Qiangguo Video Conferencing,” “Qiangguo Apps,” “Qiangguo Sports,” and “convenient services,” while aggregating media and educational resources from books, newspapers, journals, and broadcasting stations [Figure 3: see original paper].

A distinctive feature of Xuexi Qiangguo is that, as a platform promoted by Party committees and governments, its user base consists primarily of real-name registered Party and government officials. When this author newly registered an account and logged in on January 15, 2021, after earning 30 points, the “Learning Report” showed a national ranking of “100,914,583” in total points and “37,796,833” in annual points for 2021. This indicates that registered users had already exceeded 100 million, with nearly 38 million users active in the first 15 days of 2021. In practice, these users mostly use real institutions and real names—a real-name mechanism unmatched by commercial platforms. As an hundred-million-user learning platform for real-name Party and government users featuring mainstream themes and positive energy, Xuexi Qiangguo has become a flagship leading Party media clients nationwide.

#### 3.2 County-Level Media Convergence Centers: Completing the Four-Tier System

In 2020, the nationwide construction of county-level media convergence centers was essentially completed, forming a four-tier all-media communication system encompassing central, provincial, municipal, and county-level media. Based on the principle that “when counties are governed well, the nation is at peace,” the central government deployed the comprehensive launch of county-level media convergence center construction in 2018, with the goal of achieving nationwide

coverage by the end of 2020. By early November 2020, 2,484 county-level media convergence centers had been established across the country, with 28 provinces having completed all construction and licensing work [?].

In 2020, county-level media convergence centers entered their final construction phase, transitioning from construction to acceptance and then to qualification registration. As the most grassroots and largest-scale component of the four-tier communication system, these centers are mostly affiliated with local county-level Party committee publicity departments. They are institutions that closely center on the work of county-level Party committees and actively provide convenient services to the public. Consequently, county-level media convergence centers have engaged in extensive convergence and cooperation with various social sectors within their counties. In 2020, provincial Party committee publicity departments successively organized expert panels to conduct acceptance evaluations of completed centers. Provincial cyberspace administration departments, based on preliminary assessments, legally approved and issued Internet news information service licenses. Through this qualification licensing approach, all county-level media convergence centers were incorporated into a unified management system, enabling them to legally gather, edit, and publish news information to better guide and serve the masses [Figure 4: see original paper].

## Conclusion

The year 2020 was a year of deepening development for media integration in China. The online-offline integrated and domestic-international publicity coordinated public opinion landscape gradually took shape, along with the central-provincial-municipal-county four-tier communication system. The “four beams and eight columns” of new mainstream media have been progressively established. The critical question now is how mainstream media can continue to fulfill their mission of “gathering public support, warming people’s hearts, and building consensus,” and how they can serve as the “ballast stone” in advancing the modernization of governance systems and capabilities, as well as in the new journey of building a modern socialist country.

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