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## Transformation and Development of County-level Converged Media Management and Operation in the New Media Era: Postprint

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### Abstract

In the new media era, how to advance the convergence development of county-level media constitutes a significant challenge confronting these media outlets. As mainstream media at the grassroots level, county-level media shoulder the important task of guiding the masses. The year 2018 marked an explosive year for county-level media convergence construction; situated at the nerve endings of the Party' s ideological and cultural communication system, county-level media face issues such as weak foundations and funding shortages. By analyzing the policy driving forces behind county-level media convergence development in the mobile internet era and identifying the proper positioning for county-level converged media construction, county-level media should adopt an open and inclusive internet thinking as their reform approach, pursue diversified industrial development through cross-industry collaboration, overcome institutional and technical challenges, and achieve media convergence transformation.

### Full Text

#### Preamble

**Title:** Transformation and Development of County-Level Media Convergence Management in the New Media Era

**Abstract:** In the new media era, advancing the integrated development of county-level media represents a critical challenge. As grassroots mainstream media, county-level outlets bear the important responsibility of guiding public opinion. The year 2018 marked an explosive period for county-level media convergence construction. Situated at the nerve endings of the Party' s ideological and cultural communication system, county-level media face challenges such as weak foundations and funding shortages. This paper analyzes the policy drivers behind county-level media convergence in the mobile internet era

to identify proper positioning. County-level media should adopt an open and inclusive internet-oriented reform approach, pursue diversified industrial development through cross-sector collaboration, and overcome institutional and technical obstacles to achieve media convergence transformation.

**Keywords:** new media era; county-level media; media convergence development

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In 2014, General Secretary Xi Jinping delivered an important speech on media convergence, prompting national-level media to take the lead in integration efforts while county-level media lagged noticeably behind. In 2018, Xi Jinping emphasized the need to strengthen county-level media convergence center construction to better serve the masses. Advancing county-level media convergence requires changing existing misconceptions. Many county media leaders believe they suffer from talent shortages and weak capabilities. However, compared to active self-media, county broadcast talent possesses greater experience advantages in quality consciousness and other aspects. Although county broadcast media lag in equipment and personnel, the universality and operational convenience of the internet enable them to compete effectively. The operational pressure on broadcast media did not originate with mobile internet, and county broadcast media can leverage mobile internet to accelerate management transformation and development.

## 2.1 Progress in County-Level Media Convergence Center Construction

China's county-level media convergence center construction has made significant progress, with several models explored. These centers feature comprehensive service functions, requiring construction to transcend traditional media boundaries and create new platforms that enhance governance capabilities through institutionalization. Localities should select solutions appropriate to their conditions and undertake systematic transformation in concepts and policies. The construction primarily involves provincial and county-level technical platforms, with the county platform manifested as the media convergence center. Provincial media convergence technology platforms have achieved initial success, building extensible convergence technology platforms that generally adopt cloud-based approaches to provide technical support for county-level centers. The Zhejiang Daily Newspaper Group has launched the provincial media convergence tech-

nology platform Tianmu Cloud, which has been adopted by over 80 institutions. Hubei Radio and Television Group's Changjiang Cloud has aggregated 119 prefectural and county-level media ports, such as Cloud Xiaogan and Cloud Qianjiang.

Driven by strong central government encouragement for county-level media convergence center construction, provinces have rapidly advanced this work, with numerous counties achieving full coverage. The Haidian District Media Convergence Center was established in Beijing, with 16 district-level centers officially launched. In Fujian Province, all 84 county-level media convergence centers have been established, while Zhejiang Province has 42 counties with unified media centers.

## 2.2 Exploration in County-Level Media Convergence Center Construction

Through years of exploration, the Zhejiang Daily Group's Tianmu Cloud provincial convergence technology platform and the Changxing Media County-level Convergence Center have emerged as national leaders. The Zhejiang Daily Group adheres to the concept of "media controlling capital," aiming to become an internet hub group. It has proposed a "news + service" business model, undergone internet transformation, and improved both communication capabilities and profit models. In collaboration with TRS, the group has built the media platform Meilifang, achieving editorial process reengineering for the media group. Changjiang Cloud, a mobile new media platform under Hubei Radio and Television, integrates public opinion guidance, ideological management, and social governance, extending into the public service domain. Through technological innovation, the platform connects back-end systems and follows a "one place, one terminal" layout. It has aggregated 119 official clients from 17 prefectural cities and provincial departments across the province. Relying on the Changjiang Cloud provincial central kitchen, it enables "collect once, produce multiple products." Changjiang Cloud breaks through media boundaries to connect with party and government departments at all levels, with 2,220 government departments already joining the mobile government affairs hall on the client.

## 2.3 Problems in County-Level Media Convergence Construction

Currently, county-level media convergence center construction has become a key focus for governments at all levels. Localities have adopted integration approaches for local newspapers and other media to establish modern information dissemination systems with diversified channels and improve information quality and dissemination speed. Despite considerable progress, with over 1,700 counties undertaking media convergence center construction, numerous management problems exist due to the relatively short construction period.

The primary problems include neglecting content construction, relying on single funding sources, and having dispersed participants. Over half of county-level media use more than three new media platforms, with many counties operating official accounts on self-media platforms, yet county-level news client construction coverage reaches only 31%. While platform construction is substantial, content construction remains inadequate, with numerous columns lacking appeal and no channels for public feedback. Convergence work is typically led by propaganda departments, with most units establishing unified platform management departments for intensive operation. Some counties cooperate with neighboring counties on funding and technology to develop regionally distinctive content, while others, severely lacking media construction talent, outsource new media platform construction to third-party enterprises.

Funding for county-level media convergence center construction primarily comes from government allocations. Economically developed eastern regions emphasize funding investment, with county-level new media platform construction funds reaching 230,000 yuan. Most county-level media operations depend on government financial appropriations, resulting in uneven fiscal resource distribution and relatively low investment in convergence construction. Improving operational models represents a critical point for county-level media convergence construction, as long-term development ultimately depends on media operations. County media must adopt diversified operational approaches and utilize internet marketing. In today's information-saturated environment, the old adage "good wine needs no bush" no longer applies. With the rise of new media, traditional media channels have become narrow and profit models fixed. Most media convergence practices remain superficial, with new and traditional media businesses developing in parallel without new marketing strategies. Simply embedding advertisements in digital formats easily triggers user backlash. As media convergence deepens, media must diligently research quality content production and fully utilize internet community marketing. County-level media convergence can use social media platforms like Weibo to communicate with users, create communication spaces, and obtain timely feedback.

Extending industrial chains and actively introducing social capital is essential. County media should balance social and economic benefits by introducing private capital and advanced technology systems to improve capital utilization efficiency and achieve balanced internal fiscal expenditure.

### **3. Key Development Priorities for County-Level Media Convergence**

County-level media convergence construction is driven by internal and external pressures, including traditional media difficulties, regional development imbalances in media convergence, and internal demands for building new mainstream media. Development must address existing problems with targeted solutions.

To break shackles, county-level media convergence must reform current media

systems. Talent allocation difficulties have created bottlenecks where personnel exist without performance. County media institutions are outdated and lack fresh blood. Most county media have established media convergence center agencies within existing operators, co-locating television stations and other institutions without actual effect. Human resource allocation problems persist, with most county media having both enterprise and public institution staff enjoying different benefits and dual standards that reduce employee enthusiasm. Geographic restrictions mean most existing staff are older employees with insufficient internet understanding and a dearth of professional talent. China's media have dual enterprise-public institution management attributes, and county media reform is administratively dominated. Institutional bloating, backward technology, and policy implementation difficulties create obstacles for county media convergence construction. Only by reforming institutional shortcomings can policies be effectively implemented.

#### 4. Management Strategies for County-Level Media Convergence Construction

Media convergence essentially reconstructs communication relationships under network society morphology, with county-level media playing an important role. As a governance issue, county-level media convergence center construction represents an important means of grassroots governance. This long-term task offers considerable space for regions to build distinctive convergence centers according to local conditions, with specific problems requiring localized solutions.

##### 4.1 Building Characteristic Light-Asset Media Convergence Centers

Many media emphasize grandeur and fall into construction traps, spending heavily on large screens with excessive investment and low returns. County-level media convergence construction does not require fancy physical spaces; the key is changing management concepts and reengineering content forms based on broadcast media characteristics. Breaking traditional broadcast production thinking, the editor-in-chief should command the convergence center, coordinating all-media collection and production, controlling content form and distribution order, transforming traditional single dissemination into multi-platform social fusion dissemination, and connecting with influential media like CCTV News and Tencent Video to expand reach and influence [1].

In new media matrix construction, the focus should be short video product forms. Short videos represent a new opportunity in the mobile internet domain, allowing broadcast media to leverage traditional advantages and become the optimal choice for county-level media convergence to overtake competitors. County broadcast media produce limited self-made television programs, and live broadcasting cannot become daily reporting. Using micro-broadcasting supplemented with images and text, news programs can move toward live presentation to enhance user presence and audience identification. Zhejiang Media Group ad-

heres to a mobile-first strategy, launching various convergence media products including short videos, micro-live broadcasts, and VR, establishing a presence in the new media domain.

#### 4.2 Enhancing Media Convergence Influence

Regardless of technological changes, content remains king in cultural industry media product production. In the internet era, content should be expressed as network product forms—internet media forms integrating audio, video, images, and interactive functions. Media content production should incorporate advanced technologies such as drone collection, virtual reality, and robot writing to efficiently produce content for dissemination carriers.

The winning formula for party media lies in adhering to party principles and social responsibility, always serving the overall situation and user needs, and playing a leading role in guiding public opinion. Many grassroots county media emphasize regional uniqueness, and indeed the grassroots level is most distinctive. County media, being close to grassroots masses and familiar with local affairs, should adopt localization strategies to provide more local news. Grassroots media can focus on producing content products in local culture and other areas, as many counties possess major IP characteristics [2].

#### 4.3 Enhancing Overall Strength of County-Level Broadcast Media

Business operations constitute an important component of media convergence development. As advertising market regulation becomes normalized, traditional advertising models cannot sustain development. Media must break single extensive advertising patterns through flexible cooperation services, develop diversified business forms, shift to full-media operations, and provide integrated news planning and marketing services to enhance media integration strength [3].

When new media readership reaches certain levels, advertising value emerges. With 10,000 fans, each promotion can charge 2,000 yuan. County broadcast media should accumulate more fans through quality supply, actively explore markets, and form a full-media business pattern across official websites, WeChat, and short video platforms to monetize traffic. Government departments at all levels hold various cultural festivals annually, and county broadcast media can leverage their familiarity with government affairs. Wenzhou Newspaper Group has accumulated considerable experience, with its media holding large-scale cultural fashion expos and auto shows generating 60 million yuan in revenue. Its Science and Finance Times has created a new 派驻式办公 (stationed office) model, stationing personnel at enterprise associations to co-host awards for technology-based small and medium enterprises, achieving good social and economic benefits. Government-business services open new business opportunities, enriching content and increasing fan activity.

#### 4.4 Convergence Media Talent Introduction and Training

Traditional media staff are mostly establishment personnel, and clinging to old talent cooperation models makes retaining professional talent difficult. Convergence media requires flexible talent cooperation models that combine establishment and non-establishment staff, breaking identity and file restrictions, recruiting external excellent talent through talent dispatch or intellectual involvement to broaden talent cooperation channels and improve utilization efficiency.

To keep pace with media convergence, convergence media must provide specialized training for personnel. Training methods can be innovative, such as inviting experts and scholars for systematic explanations to obtain cutting-edge professional guidance, meeting talent needs for integrated development and improving news propaganda work levels in the media convergence era.

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

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