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Reflections on the Future Development Trends of Traditional Media in the New Media Environment (Postprint)

Authors: Yajie Feng

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Abstract

The rapid development of the Internet has brought significant opportunities to China's media industry. Various new media based on Internet platforms have subsequently emerged, posing considerable challenges to traditional television media. This paper examines the future development trends of traditional media in the new media environment.

Full Text

Preamble

Title: Reflections on the Future Development Trends of Traditional Media in the New Media Environment

Abstract: The rapid development of the Internet has brought significant opportunities to China's media industry. The rise of various new media platforms based on Internet technologies has substantially impacted traditional television media. This paper examines the future development trends of traditional media within the new media environment.

Keywords: new media; traditional media; development trends

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Author: Feng Yajie

The proliferation of new media has profoundly impacted traditional media. As the Internet has evolved, people have gradually become accustomed to receiving information through new media platforms, severely challenging the development of traditional media. Under these new media conditions, how traditional media can achieve better development has become an urgent issue. This paper analyzes the current development status and challenges facing traditional television media in the new media environment, elaborates on the advantages of traditional television media, and explores development recommendations and future trends for traditional media, with the aim of promoting the sustainable development of traditional media.

1. Current Development Status of Traditional Media in the New Media Environment

The current development status of traditional media in the new media environment manifests in several key aspects. First, the timeliness of information dissemination needs improvement. Traditional media primarily includes print, broadcast, and television media, which require professional staff to conduct on-site recording and filming, followed by post-production printing and distribution. Typically, newspapers are issued once daily, while news programs run on one- to two-day cycles. This results in a time lag of over 12 hours between news events and audience reception, highlighting the deficiency in dissemination timeliness. Second, advertising revenue has declined significantly. Advertising income historically constituted a major portion of total revenue for traditional media platforms. However, as public attention has shifted to new media platforms, advertisers now have access to more diverse and personalized advertising formats at relatively lower costs. Consequently, numerous advertisers have migrated to new media platforms such as video and social networking sites. Research indicates that China's newspaper advertising market has shrunk by over 60%, while magazine advertising market share has declined by more than 14%, directly impacting traditional media's revenue streams. Third, distribution costs remain relatively high. In modern society, distribution costs for traditional media have increased while operating revenues continue to decline, pushing many platforms into a difficult position. Sustained deficits have created substantial operational management challenges, including rising labor costs and increasing expenses for raw materials and printing. For instance, the cost of newsprint paper has risen by 1,000 yuan per ton, causing many enterprises to face budget imbalances that hinder further development.

2. Challenges Facing Traditional Media

2.1 Declining Audience Base

As new media continues to develop, television media's audience base is gradually shrinking. According to statistical data, China's cable TV subscriber base declined from 252.168 million households in Q1 2016 to 227.090 million in Q3

2018. Specifically, digital cable TV subscribers fell from 205.778 million to 198.525 million, while paid digital cable TV subscribers dropped from 168.034 million to 147.355 million during the same period [1]. The proliferation of computers, tablets, and smartphones has made mobile Internet an integral part of daily life, particularly among younger audiences who show minimal interest in traditional television media.

2.2 Erosion of Content Resources

Although traditional television media possesses strong production capabilities, copyright protection issues have led to a significant outflow of television programs to online platforms without authorization. While this widespread dissemination expands content reach, it has also accelerated the decline of traditional television media. Since audiences can access these programs online without restrictions, they increasingly abandon television in favor of new media to obtain more diverse content.

2.3 Weakening Competitive Advantages

Historically, traditional media served as the sole platform for public information dissemination. However, the emergence of new media and social platforms such as WeChat and Weibo has made information reception more convenient and efficient, fundamentally altering audience behavior. Furthermore, various government agencies have established official Weibo accounts that release information about major national events and hot topics in real time, severely undermining the privileged position of traditional media [2].

2.4 Declining Revenue

According to data released by the National Radio and Television Administration, China's television advertising revenue has continuously declined since 2014, falling below 100 billion yuan for the first time in 2017—a 3.46% year-over-year decrease. Television advertising's share of total advertising revenue has also dropped precipitously, from 87.30% in 2014 to 58.64%, representing a decline of over 30 percentage points that has caught broadcasters off guard. Meanwhile, new media advertising's share continues to rise, and this revenue decline has hindered the development of traditional television media.

3. Enduring Advantages of Traditional Television Media

3.1 Authority in Information Dissemination

Although audiences now access information through diverse channels such as WeChat, Weibo, and news aggregators, traditional television media remains the primary source for authoritative release of major national events and critical information. For significant personnel adjustments, politically sensitive news, natural disasters, and major social incidents, audiences still rely on mainstream

television media for verification. Even when such information circulates online, its authenticity and development status are only confirmed through authoritative television releases. From this perspective, traditional television media maintains a clear advantage over new media in terms of credibility and authority.

3.2 Normalized Live Broadcasting

Through decades of development, traditional television media has developed robust live broadcasting capabilities that integrate images, sound, text, and commentary while enabling simultaneous online streaming. This is particularly evident in major events, important current affairs, and cultural activities, such as the annual CCTV Spring Festival Gala. Although online live streaming has gained popularity, television broadcasting maintains significant advantages in content authority, signal clarity, and multi-dimensional reporting [3].

3.3 High-End Production Capabilities

Traditional mainstream television media continues to dominate high-end, large-scale productions such as major news coverage and television dramas. New media platforms currently lack the production capacity and quality standards of traditional television media, and major documentaries and significant news events still rely on traditional television channels for dissemination.

4. Development Strategies for Traditional Media

4.1 Developing Converged Media Through Active Cooperation

Converged media refers to the effective integration of traditional and new media to achieve complementary advantages, content compatibility, and mutual promotion. In modern society, traditional media has evolved from single-medium outlets into comprehensive platforms, forming complete commercial ecosystems that include content providers, integrators, broadcasters, telecom operators, community access networks, terminal manufacturers, and Internet enterprises, thereby achieving cross-boundary integration. As national media markets rapidly dissolve physical boundaries, China's traditional media industry remains overly dependent on conventional market pathways and lacks sufficient transformation momentum. Traditional media must mobilize various positive factors, leverage new media's dissemination channels to achieve information 传播 goals, promote deep integration between traditional and new media, consolidate resources, and establish a cooperative ecosystem characterized by comprehensive elements, multi-domain coverage, and high efficiency to enhance international competitiveness and support sustainable development.

4.2 Innovating and Optimizing Profit Models

In the current era of rapid development, traditional media's advertising revenue decline has gradually eroded its traditional profit model. Innovation is essential to counteract this impact. First, traditional media must transition from single-point content production to multi-industry development. Historically focused on news content production, traditional media established authoritative and professional influence in journalism but neglected to develop audience and brand resources, leading to increasingly fierce market competition and emerging problems. To address these issues, traditional media should grant greater operational autonomy to corporate departments, enabling them to develop paid external services while fulfilling news production tasks. For example, marketing departments could undertake paid advertising production and promotional copywriting, while technical departments could provide paid technical services. This multi-business approach optimizes channel and content resources, builds strong brand images, enhances market competitiveness, and forms a broad, multi-industry value chain. Additionally, traditional media must replace homogeneous content and services with personalized offerings based on audience needs to ensure development in the new media environment.

4.3 Optimizing News Production Workflow in the New Media Era

In this rapidly evolving period, the traditional media industry must adopt advanced technologies and innovate news production workflows to adapt to modern society. Currently, conventional newspaper reporting follows this process: information reception, material organization, background research, field interviews, material compilation, report writing, editorial layout, and news release. In the new media era, traditional media must expand its influence by abandoning outdated workflows and optimizing production processes while maintaining quality. For instance, during interviews and post-production editing, the editing phase should be integrated earlier into the interview process to compress workflows and improve efficiency. Additionally, journalists should effectively utilize video and audio materials, promptly transmitting footage through live streaming to deliver first-hand news to audiences, further compressing conventional processes and disseminating news about the same event through multiple channels to expand reach.

5. Future Development Trends

5.1 Convergent Media Development

Facing new media development, many traditional media outlets have begun integrating with new media platforms. Both traditional and new media possess distinct advantages, and only through integration and mutual learning can traditional media better develop and mitigate new media's impact. Currently, television stations, newspapers, and radio stations have actively launched WeChat and Weibo accounts, enabling comments on official websites and leveraging new

media dissemination methods to broaden traditional media' s reach and facilitate transformation. For example, *Qilu Evening News* has launched a “cloud newspaper” service through new media platforms, providing audiences with enhanced services. As China' s major television network, CCTV has accelerated its integration with new media by establishing a network resource integration team to consolidate all internal network resources and strengthen its online brand presence. Not only television and print media but also traditional radio are integrating with new media. For instance, Shanghai Media Group collaborated with Sina to launch “BesTV Viewpoint,” enabling audiences to comment on programs and interact with content via smartphone remote controls. This demonstrates that integration with new media represents a crucial pathway for traditional media development [4].

5.2 Mobile Terminal Development

Traditionally, media dissemination was limited to fixed terminals with significant temporal and spatial constraints, which have become obstacles in the new media environment. With the development of mobile terminals, traditional media must increasingly adopt mobile strategies, enabling audiences to watch programs on electronic mobile devices to attract broader demographics. Currently, the “triple-network convergence” of broadcasting, Internet, and telecommunications has provided technical support for traditional media, prompting the launch of dedicated mobile apps. For example, Hunan Television established the Mango TV platform, making all its broadcast programs available on mobile clients with strong copyright protection, restricting some content to television or official mobile apps only. Similarly, Suzhou Radio and Television developed a mobile app compatible with Android, iPhone, and iPad platforms, providing local audiences with news, public transportation queries, and lifestyle services, which has received widespread acclaim. Mobile terminal development can increase audience engagement and enhance traditional media' s effectiveness. As network technology advances, more traditional media will embrace mobile strategies.

5.3 Normalized Video Development

Compared to new media, traditional media lacks obvious advantages in dissemination speed. As various new media formats emerge, audiences increasingly demand real-time news updates, expecting immediate access to the latest developments. Traditional media still has considerable room for improvement in this regard. Video live streaming offers a practical solution that eliminates distance between television news and audiences, fully demonstrating journalism' s appeal. In recent years, important news events have increasingly adopted live video formats, indicating that traditional media will develop toward normalized video broadcasting. For example, the 2017 Two Sessions utilized live video streaming to become a hot topic, with People' s Daily Online and Tencent launching the “Two Sessions Live” program for continuous daily broadcasting, attracting audiences with key information. The live broadcast continued until the Two

Sessions concluded, accumulating 138 million total views. Short videos were also produced incorporating important data from the Two Sessions, integrating data with background context. As video technology advances, traditional media will increasingly adopt normalized video development [5].

5.4 Market-Oriented Production and Broadcasting

As new media continues to develop, traditional media's market competitiveness is gradually declining. Therefore, traditional media must continuously adjust its development strategies, transforming past management and operational models to drive progress. For example, Hubei Radio and Television has adjusted content themes and expression methods to fully meet user needs and habits, providing audiences with multiple dissemination methods and allowing them to watch programs in their preferred ways. Program production and broadcasting increasingly incorporate audience feedback and suggestions, with targeted reporting on socially significant issues. Traditional media must fully consider audience preferences and characteristics of different age groups, developing targeted programs based on diverse audience needs to enhance viewership and foster positive development.

Conclusion

In summary, the rapid development of social economy has presented challenges across many industries. In this new era, the new media industry is developing rapidly, while traditional media faces numerous difficulties. Although the new media environment has severely impacted traditional media, it has also brought opportunities and challenges. In this environment, the traditional media industry must fully recognize its strengths and weaknesses, leverage its advantages, continuously strengthen integration with new media, and implement adjustments and innovations based on problem analysis to achieve sustainable development.

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Author Affiliation: Gansu Jinchang Radio and Television Station

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