

Innovative Paths for New Media News Narrative Strategies in the Era of Media Convergence: Postprint

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Abstract

In the present context, communication media are constantly evolving. We are currently in the stage of mobile network development, and in the process of filtering and receiving information, people have formed specific value orientations. This has also laid a foundation for the development of converged media. Traditional media faces not only opportunities but also challenges. In understanding converged media, it is essential to innovate content strategies for news narrative, continuously introduce new approaches, understand the current audience's value orientation, and accurately leverage the advantages of different platforms in their development process. Only then can new development paths be identified. This paper investigates the strategies of new media news narrative in the converged media era and explores innovative pathways for news narrative strategies.

Full Text

Innovative Paths for New Media News Narrative Strategies in the Converged Media Era

Abstract: We are currently in the mobile internet development stage, where evolving communication media have shaped audiences' distinctive value orientations in information selection and reception. This transformation creates both opportunities and challenges for traditional media while laying a foundation for converged media development. To navigate this landscape, media organizations must innovate news narrative content strategies by understanding contemporary audience values and leveraging the unique advantages of different platforms. This paper examines new media news narrative strategies in the converged media era and explores innovative pathways for narrative strategy development.

Keywords: Converged media; News narrative; Strategy analysis

3.1 Characteristics, Content, and Development of News

Before internet popularization, audiences primarily obtained news through newspapers, television, and radio. Following internet adoption, people could directly access information via WeChat, Weibo, and other platforms while engaging in online communication. The network has become the latest news medium. Literally, “converged media” represents the integration process of different media forms, combining their respective strengths while mitigating individual weaknesses. This integration optimizes resource allocation and enhances information dissemination effectiveness, creating synergies where the whole exceeds the sum of its parts. In the converged media era, understanding these characteristics requires leveraging information technologies such as VR to create immersive, three-dimensional experiences that faithfully replicate news scenes for audiences.

3.2 Characteristics of New Media

New media, supported by emerging technologies, differs fundamentally from traditional media in form. Digital cinema and online news, as entirely new formats, break temporal and spatial boundaries, offering unique characteristics with stronger competitiveness and broader development prospects.

3.3 Evolution of News Narrative and Media Research

Current news narrative patterns are influenced by multiple factors, including economic structures and cultural standards. Against the backdrop of converged media development, news narrative is undergoing transformation and improvement. Technological advancement has impacted news expression, shifting focus from content to distribution channels—a concept that subsequently influences narrative structures.

2. Impact of Communication Media on News Narrative Strategies

Rapid information technology development has transformed communication media, consequently affecting news narrative strategies. How to actively reform these strategies has become a critical consideration. Traditional media primarily disseminated through broadcast and newspapers, emphasizing key content with a fact-heavy, story-light approach. However, evolving media now encompasses television news, online news, and mobile news, fundamentally altering news forms and dissemination characteristics. Corresponding adjustments to narrative strategies are therefore essential.

4.1 Hyperlinearity in Plot Organization

Traditional media typically organized news content according to fixed logic and sequence, presenting linear narrative structures. In the converged media era, digital hypertext characteristics enable hyperlinear narratives. While Aristotle's classic "plot imitates action" theory governed traditional linear text narratives with predetermined plots and ordered node connections, internet hypertext features have disrupted these linear constraints, introducing parallel or causal relationships. This hypertextuality can narrate news content under different plots and organizational modes, transforming traditional centralized or staged concepts.

4.2 Interactivity in Narrative Direction

Communication theory identifies interactivity as a crucial element. The primary distinction between converged and traditional media lies in enhanced interactivity and transformed narrative objects. New media technology continuously evolves, altering news narrative approaches without changing its essential nature. Although narrative media differ, expression and influence remain possible through content adjustment. The news production process now incorporates users who actively construct news texts rather than passively receiving information. Connections between content authors and receivers have become bidirectional, strengthening interactivity. News narrative has shifted from traditional unidirectional to interactive models.

4.3 Diversification of Voice Positions

In traditional news narrative models, journalists and editors served as essential authors while audiences remained narrative objects. Most narratives employed third-person perspective to maintain objectivity and fairness, resulting in relatively single-voiced presentations. Many practitioners considered voice balance, making single-voice positions common. However, in the internet environment, news authors can utilize multiple character voices within stories and interact with users. Traditional models featured unequal status between journalists and audiences, but converged media enables equal status and interaction. News narratives can even achieve collective voice.

4.4 Fragmentation of Narrative Expression

Traditional media employed serious and solemn narrative language. However, as social stratification diversified media development, audiences began pursuing personalized or niche expression methods. Narrative expression on Weibo and other public platforms has become increasingly civilian and popular. Network narrative language is fragmented due to character limits and interface constraints on digital media. Additionally, audiences primarily consume content on mobile devices with small screens that update 24/7. Lengthy pieces

requiring significant reading time deter audiences, driving narrative expression toward greater fragmentation and conciseness.

4.5 Dynamic Narrative Tense

From a narrative perspective, new media technology influences news narrative. Traditional news texts generally combined text and images for professional editorial publication, creating fixed narrative structures. New converged media forms have evolved toward personalization, diversification, and dynamic change. Increasing participants, including news users, create strong text fluidity and increasingly diversified content.

5. Innovative Paths for News Narrative Strategies Under Media Convergence

While evolving new media technology changes news narrative methods, it does not alter its fundamental nature. Narrators can still express and influence content through different media by adjusting narrative approaches. This requires continuous exploration of content and mastery of news narrative development patterns. Since different development patterns and media significantly affect narrative modes and strategies, platform-specific research can provide diverse user experiences. In summary, traditional media should align with converged media development, cooperate with new media, adjust narrative strategies and methods while mastering media platforms, apply more new technologies, precisely understand new media content, and meet diverse user needs.

5.1 Plot and Story Innovation

As media technology continuously enriches, news reporting forms evolve. However, the fundamental purpose remains unchanged: telling good news stories. Semantically, although media differ, plot and story content remain consistent, with only presentation methods varying. Innovation can begin at the plot and story level. For example, newspaper media, detached from audience interaction, primarily focuses on content expression. Traditional plot structures follow an inverted pyramid model, while television emphasizes plot narrative. In the converged media context, fusion news utilizes hypertext and hyperlinks to present and enrich textual narrative. This new media form breaks traditional narrative systems by reorganizing basic elements into new narrative methods. These foundational elements are jointly selected but arranged differently to compose new stories. For instance, Toutiao's news client employs a distinct algorithm differing from traditional media. Some traditional media have adjusted program formats for core media integration to better adapt to the new environment. Jiangsu Radio and Television launched the large-scale cross-media platform program "China You Don't Know," adjusting narrative structures for cross-platform dissemination and creating fragmented reporting that de-emphasizes length. Thematic short videos lasting 3-9 minutes feature concise yet rich content that satisfies audience demands.

5.2 Narrative Frame Innovation

Different media employ different narrative frames for story presentation and expression—comics use a single frame, while television and film use shots. Narrative techniques can therefore be studied from a grammatical perspective. The 2012 *New York Times* online news work “Snow Fall” represents a classic media convergence masterpiece. This report utilized multimedia and interactive technologies to present unified content, after which increasing numbers of news works adopted multimedia technology. During the 2016 U.S. presidential election, many reports employed VR virtual reality technology to live-stream the entire election process using advanced media technology. Beyond virtual reality, news reporting should innovate content and presentation methods across different media, selecting more reality technologies when possible. During reporting, real stories and worlds undergo information integration and are presented through multimedia fusion using audio, images, video, and other methods. Major newspapers such as the *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal* have employed methods integrating mobile media with print newspapers. In the converged media era, news reporting demonstrates strong media convergence, producing concepts of multimedia news and cross-media news through continuous integration. Increasing numbers of television media have begun cross-media television program creation, with works like *The Beijing News* and BBC serving as classic examples of cross-media narrative in the converged media era.

5.3 News Narrative Mode Innovation

News narrative modes are diversifying, with many new modes emerging and being widely adopted by traditional media. However, different new media platforms push similar content, allowing the same news to be accessed across various media. This prevents platforms from acquiring loyal audiences and retaining viewers, creating a current challenge. Therefore, narrative modes require innovation. For major reports, large themes can be broken into smaller ones to attract younger audiences. This approach shortens duration and allows tone adjustment. Different themes and styles can meet diverse audience needs and enhance content impression. New technologies can broaden video perspectives and liberate image forms. Many foreign media have begun using comics to present news, attracting certain audiences. In 2016, the *Washington Post* used a game format to describe the U.S. presidential election, increasing interest and attracting young people. This approach broke political stereotypes, enabling young people to understand news content and exercise their voting rights according to their needs. These examples warrant reference and experimentation. News workers should grasp new media platform characteristics and advantages to innovate news narrative modes and render news events more vivid.

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

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