
AI translation · View original & related papers at
chinaxiv.org/items/chinaxiv-202310.01407

Postprint: Research on Challenges and Countermeasures for County-Level Broadcasting in the Media Convergence Era

Authors: Wang Lijin, Dong Lei

Date: 2023-10-08T00:00:00+00:00

Abstract

County-level media convergence development constitutes a crucial measure for strengthening media convergence and the development of county-level public media. The development of county-level media holds significant importance for reinforcing grassroots public opinion guidance and comprehensively directing and serving grassroots communities. County-level media convergence has initially established a relatively complete communication model, yet remains in its nascent developmental stage, characterized by weak development and facing various challenges. This paper proceeds from the concept of media convergence, systematically examines the localized practices of media convergence and the evolution of government affairs dissemination within integrated media convergence development, and analyzes the theoretical origins and model selections for county-level media convergence development in the contemporary era. Based on the current developmental status of the county-level media convergence era, it precisely analyzes its developmental predicaments and provides effective strategies and recommendations.

Full Text

County-Level Media Convergence in the Era of Integrated Media: Challenges and Strategies

Abstract: The development of county-level integrated media represents a crucial measure for strengthening media convergence and advancing public media at the grassroots level. County-level media development plays a vital role in reinforcing public opinion guidance at the grassroots level and improving governance and service delivery. While a relatively complete dissemination model has initially taken shape, county-level integrated media remains in its nascent stages,

characterized by weak development and various challenges. This paper examines the concept of media convergence, reviews the localized practice of media integration and the evolution of government information release within this context, and analyzes the theoretical origins and model selection for county-level media development in the converged era. Based on the current development status, this study provides a precise analysis of existing dilemmas and offers effective strategies and recommendations.

Keywords: county-level integrated media era; development; dilemmas; strategies

In today's rapidly evolving era of diverse integrated media, the diversification of media forms, multi-functionality, and inclusiveness have become defining characteristics. The integration of various media formats has emerged as a developmental trend. China's media convergence has gradually shifted from large-scale integration among central media organizations and local institutions to precise integration at the county level. This transition requires consolidating the foundation of media convergence development in China based on the actual content needs of grassroots audiences.

County-level media convergence was initially implemented in the radio and television sector. With the rapid development of internet technology, county-level media has followed the digital footsteps of mainstream media to further establish and expand communication channels for county-level media organizations. By mobilizing innovative systems and structures for county-level integrated media and continuously learning new technologies, the functions of integrated media in content production and dissemination have been continuously enriched.

Currently, county-level media is attempting to implement a "pilot first, comprehensive rollout" strategy. However, media resources at various county levels are constrained by factors such as economic development, posing urgent challenges for integrated county-level media development. Based on field surveys and interview findings, this paper systematically reviews and summarizes the fundamental characteristics of current comprehensive county-level media development and proposes corresponding strategies.

1. Theoretical Overview of the County-Level Integrated Media Era

Addressing challenges and strategies for county-level broadcasting in the integrated media era requires a comprehensive understanding and elaboration of the theoretical framework and core concepts.

1.1 Conceptual Foundations of the Integrated Media Era

The converged era represents comprehensive integration built upon new technologies in the new era, linking internet technology, broadcast television networks, and communication technologies. This core technological integration drives the continuous development of new forms of integrated media, advertising, television, lifestyle, and work applications. It addresses the advancement and application of converged media technology and resolves issues related to the transformation and utilization of new integrated media forms.

Based on analysis of relevant theories, data, and technological innovation, the forms and degrees of media convergence are inseparable from socio-economic development conditions. Therefore, defining “integrated media” must first clarify its fundamental elements. The definition comprises four main components: First, the integrated media era represents the convergence of different media forms. Mobile phones as audiovisual terminals and personalized instant messaging carriers via mobile internet are termed the “fifth media.” Second, it represents convergence based on contemporary technological platforms, with new-era internet and communication technologies at its core. Third, it involves the comprehensive integration of resources, content, communication channels, and marketing methods within media. Finally, it constitutes a media entity possessing media resources, content production capabilities, communication channels, and organizational structures.

1.2 Attributes of the County-Level Integrated Media Era

The fundamental attributes of the new county-level integrated media era primarily involve comprehensive development and management of technological, institutional, and principle aspects to address developmental challenges in media technology. The focus lies in comprehensively managing and applying technology, promotion, functions, and roles of new media convergence through positive broadcasting. County-level integrated media in the new era represents mainstream media under the leadership of county party committee propaganda departments and constitutes an important aspect of the mainstream media model.

Its primary promotional attribute involves comprehensively and consistently developing and applying central policies and guidelines through media technology, with emphasis on analyzing and addressing ideological issues in social, political, and economic dimensions. It resolves fundamental problems related to national policies and individual life, study, and work, while comprehensively promoting and applying knowledge in medicine, education, technology, and enterprise in real society.

2. Analysis of Development Status and Challenges in the County-Level Integrated Media Era

Based on practical analysis of real-world issues, the development status and challenges of county-level integrated media must be addressed from two perspectives: current development conditions and underlying challenge factors. Two aspects require particular attention: first, intensive structural integration with dispersed participants; second, non-mechanistic talent management and insufficient professional standards.

2.1 Current Development Status

China's county-level integrated media has exceeded expectations, with development rolled out nationwide covering 93.90% of counties. However, significant variations exist in economic development and people's livelihoods across counties, resulting in uneven levels of media convergence.

2.1.1 Diversified Platform Types with Insufficient Content Development Based on comprehensive analysis of survey data and application issues, county-level integrated media requires systematic classification and application. This involves comprehensive understanding and utilization of relevant information, news, and applications. Major platforms such as Toutiao, news clients, and CCTV broadcast news terminals have been established, along with free viewing accounts and settings.

To effectively apply media technology in county-level broadcasting and solve practical problems, it is necessary to learn from relevant experiences and conduct comprehensive analysis of issues, including the design and resolution of big data integration and processing for actual data. Survey analysis indicates that many county-level media technologies have achieved comprehensive coverage across county networks and the promotion and application of media technology. However, effective promotion requires addressing issues of technological innovation and consumer support. While county-level media platforms require technological innovation and diversification, they also need comprehensive content integration, innovation, and application.

2.1.2 Single Funding Sources and Limited Business Autonomy Although county-level media technology has achieved certain progress in the new era, its development faces challenges of single-source funding and poor autonomous business models, resulting in insufficient innovation. Funding operations primarily rely on government subsidies and institutional support, which are inadequate and require support from customers and the public. Dependence on government fiscal appropriations for independent operation represents a traditional and insufficient development model that requires greater effort in autonomous innovation to truly improve promotion and development of county-level media technology. For example, Wushan County in Chongqing manages

and operates all new media technology platforms at the county level through market mechanisms and generates advertising revenue.

2.1.3 Intensive Structural Integration with Dispersed Participants In terms of organizational structure, county-level integrated media is led by county party committee propaganda departments to carry out independent system integration. Over half of counties adopt a “self-operated” model with unified management departments or agencies for new media technology platform development. Counties with relatively weak funding, technology, and human resources adopt a “joint model.”

During the development of county-level media technology, only a few counties have established personnel mechanisms for new media technology platform operation, resulting in relatively low coverage. Most county-level units follow traditional media personnel operation models, with participants dispersed across various government departments. Overall, the situation remains relatively fragmented, with few direct training mechanisms for new media technology platforms.

Although comprehensive county-level integrated media development is still in its infancy, promotional effects have begun to emerge. Beyond steady content development, media platforms have integrated limited county media resources, adjusted organizational structures, and revitalized traditional county-level media vitality. However, it is also necessary to recognize that various challenges persist due to systemic and practical issues.

With the introduction of various national preferential policies, from the Western Development Strategy to the current “Belt and Road” initiative, regional development imbalances have been significantly addressed. Accelerated urbanization has gradually narrowed gaps between urban and rural areas, and government preferential policies with favorable benefits and development opportunities are attracting increasing numbers of Chinese language and literature professionals.

2.2 Analysis of Development Challenges and Factors

2.2.1 Fragmented County-Level Institutions with Difficult Coordination Currently, the operation and management of county-level integrated media platforms exhibit characteristics of “nine dragons governing water,” lacking platform linkage. In counties without established integrated media, radio stations, news agencies, and internet information offices independently operate and manage new media technology platforms, making unified coordination difficult. Counties with integrated media institutions typically only allow news, television, and other media propaganda departments to “co-locate” without forming unified leadership teams or establishing formal organizations with official designations to deploy work.

2.2.2 Blind Platform Expansion with Weak Follow-Up Operations

Since the 2015 implementation of the “Guiding Opinions on Promoting the Integrated Development of Traditional Media and Emerging Media,” county-level news websites, Weibo accounts, WeChat public accounts, and news clients have grown substantially. However, widespread problems exist of “many but not refined, uneven quality, and unsustainable operation.” Regarding the development of “two micros and one end and one account” media technology, some counties have over a dozen official WeChat public accounts and Weibo accounts. However, after establishing numerous new media technology platforms, operational capacity is weak, with over half having fewer than 10,000 users or followers and extremely limited actual influence. New media technology platforms belong to different government departments and media organizations with institutional barriers, resulting in information fragmentation and resource waste that only achieves formal integration.

2.2.3 Simple “Add-On” Content Production with Missing Original

Links County-level integrated media generally emphasizes content management but lacks attention to content production, resulting in insufficient original content that fails to meet users’ actual needs and produces poor dissemination effects.

Analysis of new integrated media materials reveals that content primarily focuses on leadership activities, general work dynamics, and summary reports, lacking timeliness. Reporting methods and presentation techniques are outdated, lacking diverse forms and innovative structures that fail to attract audiences. County-level radio and television stations’ new media technology departments cannot independently produce content and mainly rely on processing materials and online manuscripts for publication. This has led to serious content homogenization across county media channels and the emergence of “zombie accounts” in media organizations.

This “safe and stable” approach based on borrowing lacks sufficient richness and attractiveness, fails to reflect the diversified and rapidly disseminating promotional advantages of new media technology forms, and does not enhance the actual influence of county-level units.

2.2.4 Non-Mechanistic Talent Management and Insufficient Professional Standards

Talent team development and management represent a prominent issue in current county-level media convergence. County-level media institutions have not yet established talent management mechanisms for new media technology platform operation, lack professional operation teams, and face serious problems of personnel aging and brain drain.

The development of comprehensive county-level integrated media is closely related to professional platform operators. Over half of county-level integrated media platform operators are part-time or non-regular staff, with some counties having entirely part-time new media technology operation teams. They

must undertake their original position work while also managing daily content publication and platform maintenance.

Furthermore, county-level integrated media operators and managers are relatively old, with most platform operators in the 30-49 age bracket and few “post-90s” young people. Staff understanding of integrated media remains stuck in the traditional media era, lacking internet thinking and weak in accepting and using new technologies. The content they produce cannot adapt to the new media environment.

3. Strategies and Recommendations for County-Level Integrated Media Development in the New Era

Strategies and recommendations for county-level integrated media development under the new era background require comprehensive analysis and resolution of several issues: strengthening ideological construction and establishing innovative convergence concepts; enhancing personnel integration technology to create versatile “multi-skilled” professionals; developing dissemination convergence technology to build a “central kitchen” model; and strengthening platform technology development to enrich service functions.

3.1 Strengthen Ideological Development and Establish Convergence Concepts

Thought guides action. To effectively develop county-level integrated media, new integrated development concepts must be established. Convergence development represents the trend of the times. We must unwaveringly follow the path of media convergence development, establish internet thinking, and fully utilize internet technology to transform traditional media. Establish user awareness throughout the entire convergence development process: acquiring users, developing users, retaining users, and serving users. Establish product awareness, focus on products, build teams around products, redesign workflows, innovate mechanisms, and provide news products adapted to different audiences to meet diverse needs. Establish convergence thinking, abandon separatist thinking, and coordinate operations with various media.

3.2 Enhance Personnel Integration Technology and Develop Versatile “Multi-Skilled” Professionals

Regarding the promotion of new media convergence technical personnel, comprehensive consideration of new media development experience is required, focusing on developing versatile “multi-skilled” professionals to solve practical problems. Comprehensive integration of news media requires strengthening training for news collection and editing teams in gathering, filming, and promotion, as well as cultivating technical skills and innovative awareness.

3.3 Develop Dissemination Convergence Technology and Build a “Central Kitchen” Model

For new media convergence dissemination technology, county-level new media convergence creation requires technological reform and construction of a “central kitchen” system. Development of new media convergence must address practical issues comprehensively. The “central kitchen” should serve as the brain of the integrated media era, coordinating content aggregation, multi-tool production, and media management to fully leverage platform stability and reliability. This enables big data access, analysis, presentation, operation, and application to produce effective results.

3.4 Strengthen Platform Technology Development and Enrich Service Functions

The promotion of county-level integrated media technology requires integration with local county media technology, addressing practical issues through new-era technological development. This involves comprehensive design and analysis of relevant strategies, content production, problem resolution, and service provision for local populations based on their living habits. Comprehensive analysis of grassroots issues and integrated construction should enhance the functional role of new media technology platform development.

County-level integrated media plays a fundamental role in national media convergence strategy, necessitating attention to its development. The key to establishing county-level integrated media lies in “integration,” which enables comprehensive sharing of reporting resources, interconnecting various media, and achieving timely and effective news dissemination to enhance media service capacity. Actively promoting diversified media development is essential.

References: [1] Li Liangrong, Zhou Kuanwei. Media Convergence: Old Patterns and New Explorations[J]. *Journalism Review*, 2014(8): 16-20. [2] Editorial Department. Review of the Triple Network Convergence Process[J]. *Radio & Television Information*, 2016(2): 18-19. [3] Liu Shan, Huang Shengmin. Interpreting Chinese-Style Media Convergence[J]. *Modern Communication (Journal of Communication University of China)*, 2015, 37(7): 1-5. [4] Ding Baiquan. Development Prospects, Dilemmas, and Innovation Paths of Media Convergence[J]. *Media Observer*, 2018(5): 11-17. [5] Wang Junfeng. County-Level Integrated Media Era Strides Forward with Benchmarks[N]. *China Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television Journal*, 2018-12-25(6). [6] Zhang Cheng, Zhu Tian, Qi Xiangnan. Discussion on County-Level Integrated Media Development as a County Governance Hub—Based on Field Research in City A[J]. *Press Circles*, 2018(12): 27-32. [7] Song Jianwu, Qiao Yu. Developing County-Level Integrated Media to Create a New Platform for Governance[J]. *News Front*, 2018(23): 67-70. [8] Wang Fenmei, Fangshan County Radio and Television Station, Shanxi Province. Current Status, Dilemmas, and Solutions for County-Level Integrated Media Development[N]. *Science Guide*, 2018-11-27(1). [9] Mao Zhenyu. Clar-

ifying Internal and External Causes and Relationships—Reflections on Several Practical Issues in County-Level Integrated Media Development[J]. Radio & TV Journal, 2018(6). [10] Shen Yang, Yan Jiaqi. Reflections on County-Level Integrated Media Development[J]. China Publishing Journal, 2018(22): 20-24. [11] Wang Xiangqian, Jiang Hanwen, Zheng Yan, et al. Conceptual Framework for Building a Provincial County-Level Integrated Media Technology Framework Based on Provincial Media Convergence Cloud Platforms[J]. China Digital Cable TV, 2018(11): 1247-1252. [12] Zhang Ling. Overview of Current Development Status of China's Municipal and County-Level Integrated Media[J]. Radio & Television Information, 2018(11): 13-14. [13] Wang Yan. County-Level Integrated Media Platform Development for All-Media Collaborative Production[J]. Radio & Television Technology, 2018, 45(11): 18-24.

(Author Affiliation: Ju County Integrated Media Center, Shandong Province)

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

Source: ChinaXiv –Machine translation. Verify with original.