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## The Impact of New Media on Traditional Media: A Case Study of Online Media (Postprint)

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### Abstract

With the advancement of science and technology, various industries have ushered in a period of vigorous development. As a product of scientific and technological development, it quietly changes our lives. The network is a component of the media field. The Internet (also known as international network) began in 1969, with the United States' ARPANET as its prototype, representing a vast network of interconnected networks. The popularization of the Internet facilitated the birth of new media, posing a challenge to traditional media such as television, radio, and newspapers, with the dominant position of traditional media gradually being replaced by new media. As a new communication carrier, online media has demonstrated extraordinary leadership and influence since its inception, becoming the dominant force in shaping public opinion. The functions of online media have become increasingly powerful with the development of information technology, covering every corner of daily life and becoming deeply ingrained in people's minds. This paper, from the author's personal perspective, offers an in-depth interpretation of contemporary new media, analyzes the impact of new media (represented by online media) on traditional media, and proposes corresponding solutions to provide reference for the transformation of traditional media.

### Full Text

## The Impact of New Media on Traditional Media: A Case Study of Online Media

**Abstract:** With the advancement of science and technology, all industries have entered a period of vigorous development. As a product of technological progress, new media is quietly transforming our daily lives. The Internet—originating in 1969 with the United States' ARPANET as its prototype—represents an interconnected network of networks that constitutes a significant component of the media landscape.

The proliferation of the Internet has catalyzed the emergence of new media, challenging traditional outlets such as television stations, radio, and newspapers, whose dominant position is gradually being supplanted. As a novel communication carrier, online media has demonstrated remarkable leadership and influence since its inception, becoming a primary force in shaping public opinion. Its capabilities have grown increasingly powerful alongside information technology, permeating every corner of daily life and becoming deeply entrenched in the public consciousness. From a personal perspective, this paper offers an in-depth interpretation of contemporary new media, analyzes its impact on traditional media using online media as a representative case, and proposes corresponding solutions to provide reference points for the transformation of traditional media.

**Keywords:** new media; traditional media; online media; impact; communication carrier

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**By Wu Shuang**

According to incomplete statistics, television viewership has declined by 35%-40% compared to previous years, radio listenership has dropped by 25%-30%, and newspaper subscription rates have fallen below 5% among non-enterprise and non-government subscribers. This massive audience exodus does not stem from diminished public interest in news and entertainment, but rather from the allure of new media, which continuously broadens information access channels. In the new media landscape, platforms such as WeChat, Moments, and Weibo constantly capture public attention. Audiences can access breaking news 24/7 through networked terminals like mobile phones and computers, participating in socio-economic and national political life while expressing their demands on relevant platforms—functions that traditional media cannot provide. In traditional media, the public served merely as news recipients, whereas in new media, they become active participants. This elevation of the public's role represents the most significant impact on traditional media and an unprecedented attraction for audiences. Today, new media has become an integral part of daily life. To break through and regain public attention, traditional media must transform their operational philosophies, keep pace with the times, and strive to catch up with and surpass new media development.

### 1.1 Definition of New Media

New media represents an environment where everything can function as media, also known as digital new media. This broad concept primarily employs digital and network technologies, utilizing wireless communication networks, satellites, the Internet, and broadband local area networks as transmission channels, with mobile phones, computers, and digital televisions as terminal platforms to pro-

vide news and entertainment information to the public. New media constitutes an entirely new media form supported by novel technologies with ever-changing manifestations, encompassing digital newspapers, broadcast, magazines, SMS, MMS, online platforms, large screens, in-vehicle television, and touch media. Traditionally, we categorized broadcast, newspapers, outdoor advertising, and television as major media, with new media representing the “fifth media” beyond our conventional understanding.

New media is characterized by its novelty—innovative concepts, forms, and technologies—with conceptual innovation playing the dominant role. The mediums that facilitate new media are diverse, including online media, mobile media, and interactive television. Its rapid development and constant changes make its connotation, extension, boundaries, and scope difficult to define. This conceptual confusion indicates that new media research remains in its preliminary and immature stages. While no unified definition of new media currently exists, excessive focus on this is unnecessary. From a pragmatic perspective, new media possesses advantages of “high value, strong originality, extensive effect, and vigorous vitality.” Using communication and technological dimensions as classification criteria, new media can be divided into mobile media and online media, with the latter being the primary focus of this study.

## 1.2 Characteristics of New Media

The main characteristics of new media are its novelty in concept, form, and technology. Among these, conceptual innovation dominates while others serve it. New media’s rapid development and frequent changes represent typical features, making its definition and boundaries challenging to establish. The current confusion in conceptualizing new media demonstrates that research in this field remains in its early, immature stages. Although no universally accepted definition exists, we need not dwell excessively on this issue. From a practical standpoint, new media offers advantages of high value, strong originality, extensive impact, and robust vitality.

## 1.3 Reasons for New Media’s Popularity

New media emerges as a product of productivity development at a certain stage and a derivative of people’s material and cultural needs. As work and life rhythms accelerate, people struggle to find continuous leisure time, forcing entertainment activities to be squeezed into fragmented moments. New media satisfies this demand for fragmented leisure time, allowing relaxation amidst busy schedules. As the third-generation medium, the Internet enables personalized expression and interactive communication of public appeals. Tools such as Internet television, mobile phones, and apps transform the public from mere recipients into participants. New media offers richer and more varied content forms with greater personalization, allowing users to engage with more purpose and selectivity. In essence, new media combines immediacy with interactivity,

massive capacity with shareability, and personalization with community formation.

The proliferation of smartphones and 4G networks has opened an entirely new world where traditional media can no longer satisfy public curiosity. Even the cheapest domestic mobile phones now feature Internet access, reading capabilities, app login, and news retrieval functions, serving as information reception terminals. New communication methods such as live streaming, WeChat interaction, and forums have become integral to daily life, catering to contemporary curiosity and expanding information access channels. In comparison, traditional media appears inadequate. Although many media professionals have recognized this issue and actively sought change, their efforts remain insufficient to keep pace with online media.

## 2. Inherent Flaws of Traditional Media

In traditional mainstream media, television, radio, and newspapers have long maintained a tripartite balance, each achieving considerable success in its domain while harboring various problems such as one-way communication without feedback mechanisms, space constraints, and fixed broadcast times lacking flexibility. These defects become increasingly magnified in the face of new media.

### 2.1 Newspapers

Newspapers serve as carriers of text and images, transmitting information through written and visual forms. Their shortcomings include: First, regardless of a news event's complexity, journalists can only describe it through text and images, with the quality of writing directly affecting news value. As members of society, journalists inevitably inject personal emotions into their reporting, potentially compromising impartiality. Second, severe space constraints limit coverage. As paper-based carriers, newspapers have strict page limitations that prevent extensive coverage of all news, forcing journalists to select only brief, high-value information that struggles to meet diverse reader needs. Third, significant news delays occur. Speed has always been journalism's pursuit, but newspapers' publication schedules prevent timely reporting, diminishing news value. Fourth, geographical restrictions are pronounced. Newspapers typically focus on local news with limited distribution ranges. Fifth, preservation is difficult. Like other paper documents, newspapers occupy space, are susceptible to moisture and mold, and are inconvenient to search.

### 2.2 Radio

Radio uses sound as its news carrier, transmitted via radio waves. Sound travels quickly but also disappears rapidly, making it difficult to leave lasting impressions and inconvenient to retrieve. During broadcasts, listeners passively accept verbal descriptions lacking visual intuitiveness, making authentic news scene reconstruction difficult and causing comprehension discrepancies. The public

must follow the broadcast sequence without autonomous selection. Wireless signals are vulnerable to external interference from thunderstorms, building obstructions, and electromagnetic waves, all affecting reception quality.

### **2.3 Television**

Compared to newspapers and radio, television holds significant advantages through its combination of sound and images, attracting large audiences. However, it still pales in comparison to online media. Unlike television programs that rely solely on sound and images, online media can effectively integrate sound, video, pictures, text, and animation, creating more memorable impressions. Similar to radio broadcasting, television programming faces strict limitations on timing, sequence, and content, prohibiting arbitrary changes, selective broadcasting, or replay. Viewers passively accept content without channels to express personal opinions or insights.

## **3. Impact on Traditional Media**

### **3.1 Immense Pressure on Traditional Media**

While enjoying the convenience brought by online media, we must not overlook traditional media's advantages. With long formation periods, professional teams of high caliber, and brand influence accumulated over time, traditional media possesses rich production experience that online media cannot match. Constrained by self-regulation, traditional media maintains strong credibility, capable of identifying valuable information from unclear and mixed sources, discarding the dross and selecting the essential to ensure authenticity and healthy content. When browsing online information, much content cannot be verified for authenticity, requiring authoritative media to help us distinguish truth from falsehood. Although online media dominates in functional retrieval and interaction, traditional media should not easily negate itself but should learn new technologies while preserving tradition to aid its own development.

### **3.2 Significant Decline in Traditional Media Audience Numbers**

People are generally more interested in emerging phenomena, particularly youth groups. Energetic and active, young people pursue novelty and excitement, constantly craving more updated information and closely following social changes. As the strongest proponents of the Internet, youth groups find online media more attention-grabbing than traditional media. For media outlets, the total public audience is fixed. When large numbers of young people shift to online platforms, traditional media audiences decline substantially. With new media's rapid development, this loss has become nearly irreversible.

### 3.3 Advertising Market Division

The term “click-through rate” is familiar to us all, accurately recording public usage frequency of online media. Faced with high click-through rates, enterprises seeking to maximize value cannot resist this temptation, representing both a test of marketing psychology and a transformation of contemporary marketing philosophy. Many major brands have shifted to online markets, continuously reducing advertising investment in television. Online media advertising typically appears before program starts, and viewers can shorten ad duration by purchasing memberships, offering greater choice. This has divided the advertising market.

### 3.4 Declining Attractiveness to Investors

Since most traditional media operate within institutional frameworks, they face numerous constraints. Before new media emerged, investors had limited single-channel options. New media immediately attracted widespread investor attention, with platforms like Youku and Tudou receiving massive investments. Online media holds higher market value in dissemination and marketing, making it more attractive to investors.

### 3.5 Enormous Transformation Pressure

Simplification and transparency represent development trends for online media, attracting broader public participation. Browsers, QQ accounts, and social spaces are simple, accessible software that can be logged into anytime via mobile phones. Faced with increasingly simplified yet powerful functions, the public finds them increasingly indispensable, leaving traditional media struggling to respond. This adds obstacles to traditional media’s transformation path.

## 4. Strategies for Responding to New Media Impact

Truthfulness, objectivity, and credibility have long been traditional media’s magic weapons for maintaining monopoly status, enabling correct guidance of public opinion—a responsibility of media professionals to society. Programs with political overtones typically broadcast on traditional media, also indicating traditional media’s political status in our country.

### 4.1 Preserve and Carry Forward Tradition

With technological progress, smartphones and 4G networks have brought us to a brand-new world where traditional media can no longer satisfy public exploratory desires. Even the cheapest domestic mobile phones now feature Internet access, reading capabilities, app login, and news retrieval functions as information reception terminals. New functions such as live streaming, WeChat interaction, and forums have become integral to daily life, catering to contemporary curiosity and expanding information access channels. In comparison,

traditional media appears inadequate. Although many media professionals have recognized this issue and actively sought change, their efforts remain insufficient to keep pace with online media.

#### **4.2 Integration with New Media**

In summary, both traditional and new media possess distinct advantages while harboring unavoidable defects. The two should coexist harmoniously and integrate with each other. Online media, as the third media generation, has learned from traditional media while using modern technology to lead industry transformation. Traditional media can similarly learn from this experience, continuously exploring transformation pathways by disseminating content through multiple channels such as Internet television, Internet radio, and online newspapers. Currently, most traditional media have established their own websites and created public communication platforms, segmenting communication methods. Under online media's pressure, e-books have quietly emerged, reversing the previous difficulties of paper-based information retrieval, space waste, and preservation challenges. These represent integration between traditional and new media, with change beginning from small steps.

#### **4.3 Taking Online Media as the Leading Force**

Simply put, media convergence combines the advantages of traditional and online media to launch a new form providing comprehensive information to the public. On this platform, traditional media's resource advantages and credibility must fully integrate with online media's technical capabilities and appeal. No transformation succeeds easily, just as every new drug requires years of research and clinical trials before market launch, inevitably involving sacrifice. Media convergence is no exception. Traditional media typically suffer from bloated institutions, insufficient work capacity and responsibility, stubborn adherence to outdated practices, and inadequate innovation. To achieve perfect integration requires sacrifice, taking online media as the dominant force to leverage its novel concepts, flexible institutions, and strong technical characteristics.

#### **4.4 Respect and Highlight Individuality**

In today's rapidly developing technological environment, technical challenges no longer constitute the main factor limiting media development; content selection is the key. Technology can be learned, but valuable content is difficult to discover. To compete with new media, traditional media must leverage its strengths and avoid weaknesses, using content to seize opportunities. Speed represents new media's primary advantage—one that traditional media cannot easily challenge—but traditional media can focus on depth to excavate intrinsic value in reported content. While online media uses technology to shorten distance with the public, achieving zero-distance communication, traditional media can leverage its official background to authoritatively respond to online

content and guide public opinion. Traditional media can also use streamlined information to counter online media' s powerful retrieval functions.

#### 4.5 Effective Utilization of Information Resources

Compared with online media, traditional media holds advantages in funding, credibility, and connections, which can be fully leveraged in program production. Integration with new media must remain rational rather than blind. Strong technologies such as digital resources should be utilized rationally and developed in-depth. This forms the foundation for market competition and a necessary means to effectively explore new markets.

#### 4.6 Firm Belief in Brand Influence

The reform of traditional media is imperative, requiring constant attention to market competition. While consolidating existing brands, traditional media must seek breakthroughs to build powerful brands, as brand represents the core of enterprise participation in market competition. Through careful analysis of differences with other media, traditional media should identify market targets that align with their characteristics, maintain a certain number of target audiences, and use brand power to maintain an invincible position in market competition.

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