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On the Innovation of Journalists' Professional Thinking in the Media Convergence Era: Post-print

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Abstract

In the contemporary context of continuous emergence and convergence of new media, journalists must not only strengthen their professional capabilities, but also adopt novel attitudes and mindsets in their work. Based on this premise, this paper analyzes how journalism practitioners should undertake mindset innovation within the media convergence environment.

Full Text

Preamble

Theoretical Research: Media Convergence

On the Innovation of Journalists' Professional Thinking in the Era of Media Convergence

Abstract: With the continuous emergence and convergence of new media, journalists today must not only strengthen their professional competencies but also adopt entirely new attitudes and modes of thinking in their work. Based on this premise, this paper analyzes how journalists should undertake thinking innovation within the context of media convergence.

Keywords: media convergence; journalism profession; professional thinking; thinking convergence; thinking innovation

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As the media environment undergoes constant transformation and new media continue to emerge, the developmental position of traditional media has become precarious in the current era. Within this converged media environment, journalists from traditional media must innovate and adjust their work philosophies and professional thinking, integrating them rationally with new media to perfect their conceptual awareness and work systems. This will effectively strengthen their developmental foundation and promote the stable development of traditional media.

1. Integration and Innovation of Unidirectional and Cross-Media Professional Thinking

With the continuous innovation of the media environment and the ongoing convergence of various media channels, integrating traditional media with emerging media represents a crucial pathway for today's media industry development. This integration can effectively enhance the development strength of new mainstream media and promote the presentation of diverse trends. Against this backdrop, new media development has gained effective protection, while traditional media faces significant challenges. Consequently, practitioners in traditional media must adjust their unidirectional professional media thinking and innovatively transform it into cross-media professional thinking to strengthen overall work effectiveness. Simultaneously, in this era of continuous development and improvement of digital information technology, traditional media journalists must also make rational adjustments to their work concepts and models.

First, in their work, journalists should focus on adjusting their thinking patterns and strengthening their cross-media awareness. They should disseminate news through different channels and develop corresponding work thinking for different media types, transforming themselves into comprehensive all-media journalists.

Second, within the media convergence environment, traditional media journalists must not only innovate their media thinking but also enhance their judgment and selection abilities to choose reporting methods rationally, thereby strengthening overall reporting effectiveness. For example, during its development, *Xinming Evening News* began promoting new media businesses, striving to strengthen its development structure and media matrix, gradually achieving an integrated newspaper-network development model and enabling effective communication with the public through various online platforms [1].

Finally, during this thinking transformation, journalists should also focus on strengthening their conceptual awareness, advancing with the times, and continuously enriching their planning, design, analytical, and editing capabilities to meet the reporting needs of various news stories. Taking the coverage of the 2017 Two Sessions as an example, most news journalists chose video reporting to stimulate public interest, integrating footage from different camera positions for large-scale dissemination. For instance, CCTV.com launched the program *Xiao V Talks About the Two Sessions*, while *China Daily* produced the

video *A British Guy's Selfie View of the Two Sessions*. These videos could be transmitted via the internet directly to people's mobile phones, bridging the gap between the public and the Two Sessions and satisfying public curiosity, thereby strengthening the development capacity of the media industry. These approaches all represent applications of cross-media thinking.

2. Integration and Innovation of Product-Oriented and User-Oriented Professional Thinking

First, product-oriented professional thinking refers to a work mindset that creates products based on audience needs [2]. Compared with other work thinking patterns, this form exhibits strong product characteristics and economic orientation, as producers focus their attention on product benefits during production, demonstrating strong industrial characteristics.

In contrast, user-oriented professional thinking possesses strong “humanistic” qualities. When applying this thinking to work, practitioners analyze issues from the user's perspective and concentrate their attention on users' interest and needs, demonstrating strong pragmatism. To some extent, user-oriented thinking aligns with the developmental demands of the contemporary new media environment. Within the concept of user thinking, belonging, respect, and self-awareness constitute the main developmental principles. Therefore, in the media convergence environment, journalists must transform their product-oriented professional thinking into user-oriented professional thinking, using this as the foundation for innovation. They should base their media work on public demand and dig deep into news authenticity.

For example, in recent years, *Xining Evening News* has gradually shifted its attention from products to users, taking serving users as its work purpose and analyzing and thinking about issues from the user's perspective [3]. First, in specific work, journalists should focus on grasping public user needs and provide targeted news services based on this foundation, striving to fully address public emotions and needs. Simultaneously, at this stage, journalists must also understand the readership, engagement, and evaluation metrics of their reports to find information related to user needs, thereby promoting the steady development of overall media work. Second, in the specific work process, journalists should adjust their writing awareness, transforming traditional event reporting into meaningful reporting that deeply pursues the essence and connotation of news. For instance, when the government introduces new policies, ordinary citizens focus on whether these policies will affect their current living conditions and how. Therefore, when reporting on such news, journalists must dig for information from the user's perspective to effectively provide high-value information.

3. Integration and Innovation of Individual and Team-Based Professional Thinking

During the gradual perfection of the media convergence environment, three key integration concepts have emerged: thinking convergence, service convergence, and humanistic convergence. In the traditional media environment, when new media emerged, they typically developed independently. In other words, during the formation of new media, journalists only needed to master one unique skill to establish their developmental advantage. However, in the media convergence environment, the advantages of both traditional and emerging media can be promoted and developed. Therefore, as a journalist in the media convergence era, one should focus on strengthening work concepts and perfecting thinking to become a comprehensive journalist [4]. For instance, when conducting on-site news reporting, if a journalist goes to the news scene alone, they must communicate with interviewees, record relevant video and audio, and complete post-production text editing—all of which present considerable difficulty and workload. Therefore, in the media convergence environment, journalists must transform their individual professional media thinking into team-based professional media thinking, cooperating with other journalists to complete news reporting work together.

Overall, during news gathering and editing tasks, a team of journalists should possess different specialties and responsibilities to conduct news work harmoniously. In this process, journalists can select team partners following the principle of technical complementarity. Generally, a journalist team should have at least two journalists: one responsible for filming and another for text writing and on-site interviews. Media organizations with adequate resources can form journalist groups of 4-5 people, while larger-scale media can combine different groups into an entire team.

For example, during *The New York Times'* convergence process, a journalist with a comprehensive system typically takes charge of gathering tasks, while post-production news production is assigned to 10-16 journalists. After *Xining Evening News* expanded its development channels and created a mobile client, it integrated a highly capable team of reporting and editing journalists [5]. In this team, youth born in the 1980s and 1990s form the core. These young journalists possess strong cooperation and innovation abilities, timely coordinating with their partners during work, thereby effectively improving overall news quality.

4. Integration and Innovation of Pessimistic and Trend-Setting Professional Thinking

In today's era of constantly changing and innovating media forms, some journalists in the news industry have developed a sense of blindness, with many even leaving the profession for other careers.

According to the 2018 China Newspaper Industry Development Report, China's

newspaper industry has been continuously declining, though the rate of decline has slowed somewhat. However, as the saying goes, history never waits for the weak. Only those who can face history squarely and advance with the times can obtain their own development opportunities. Therefore, for practitioners who truly love journalism and news work, they must develop firm professional beliefs. They should not abandon their journalistic ideals due to short-term confusion and difficulties but should actively and proactively adjust their thinking to become brave pioneers. In the media convergence environment, journalists must transform their pessimistic professional media thinking into trend-setting professional media thinking. During the development stage, they should also face new technologies and equipment squarely, applying and understanding them rationally to strengthen their work effectiveness under the guidance of these emerging tools [6].

Furthermore, when reporting news events, journalists must adhere to professional ethics, describing news events fairly and objectively, grasping their discourse power, guiding correct public opinion, thereby transmitting positive social energy and leveraging the guiding role of news media.

In summary, in today's era of continuous media convergence and development, if journalists want to effectively stabilize the overall development situation and enhance their own development strength, they must rationally adjust their professional thinking. For instance, they should integrate unidirectional thinking into cross-boundary thinking, transform product thinking into user thinking, innovate individual thinking into team thinking, and shift pessimistic thinking into trend-setting thinking. Additionally, in the media convergence environment, journalists should pay attention to the following when conducting related work: First, they must form correct professional attitudes to guide correct public opinion; second, they must enhance professional capabilities to grasp discourse power; third, they must possess high professional literacy to help the public understand the most authentic information through news, thereby promoting their own development and that of the industry.

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