

# An Analysis of China' s Media Convergence Development Strategy from the Perspective of Organizational Change: Postprint

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

## Abstract

As an epoch-making instrument, the Internet has propelled humanity into a new communication revolution. In the all-media era, media convergence has emerged as a global consensus for the transformation and development of traditional media. This paper examines, from an organizational change perspective, the implications for media convergence organizational change in China' s mainstream media by analyzing the trajectory of media convergence organizational change at the British BBC, encompassing organizational strategic adjustment, organizational process reengineering, organizational structural reorganization, strategic human resource management, and organizational culture reshaping.

## Full Text

### Abstract

The Internet, as an epoch-making tool, has propelled humanity into a new communications revolution. In the era of all-media, media convergence has become a global consensus for the transformation and development of traditional media. This paper analyzes the organizational change pathway of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) from the perspective of organizational transformation, exploring its implications for mainstream Chinese media in terms of strategic adjustment, process reengineering, structural reorganization, strategic human resource management, and cultural reshaping.

With the rapid development of modern information technology, the 5G era has arrived, and the application of new media innovations such as 4K, VR, AR, and AI in news reporting is fundamentally transforming how users perceive the world and interact with media. Traditional media is experiencing unprecedented disruption and change. Transformation itself constitutes competitiveness, making strategic organizational transition imperative for media

organizations, with media convergence-driven organizational change becoming an inevitable trend. During media convergence, complex internal and external factors interact, prompting global traditional mainstream media to undertake various forms of organizational change encompassing strategy, restructuring, business transformation, process reengineering, structural adjustment, institutional reform, and cultural reshaping.

Founded in 1922, the BBC stands as Britain's most influential media organization with nearly a century of history, representing the quintessential traditional mainstream media. In response to the media convergence trend, the BBC has actively pursued organizational change through three distinct phases: Phase 1 (1997-2006) completed the digital upgrading of traditional media operations; Phase 2 (2007-2012) achieved integration of traditional and new media resources, constructing an all-media news gathering, editing, broadcasting, and control platform; Phase 3 (2013-present) represents the ultimate goal of genuine convergence between old and new media. To this day, the BBC continues its innovative convergence and transformation, maintaining its leading position in the all-media environment through top-down, planned, and revolutionary-yet-incremental organizational change. This paper examines the BBC's media convergence organizational change pathway from an organizational change management perspective, identifying lessons for Chinese mainstream media convergence.

## 1. Overview of Modern Organizational Change Theory

Modern organizational management theory views organizations as living organisms that maintain close connections with their external environments. To seek adaptation and development within the broader social context, organizations must continuously undergo partial or comprehensive adjustments as external conditions evolve. Organizational change refers to the modifications in concepts and operational methods implemented during organizational development to achieve desired objectives. Sauser & Sauser (2002) note: "To adapt to continuously changing business environments, organizations must persistently innovate and adopt novel corporate strategies. The organizational changes undertaken by enterprises all aim to respond more rapidly with greater organizational flexibility. For organizations, adapting to competitive environments to achieve long-term success has become a widely accepted principle in organizational design and strategic management, while effective managers must be able to anticipate change and even initiate it." This demonstrates that an organization's sensitivity and capacity for proactive response to environmental changes determine its success or failure. Organizations typically employ organizational change as one of the most effective means to enhance organizational effectiveness and maintain competitiveness.

## 2. Analyzing BBC's Media Convergence Development Path from an Organizational Change Perspective

### 2.1 National Digital Strategy Drives BBC Organizational Strategy Adjustment

The BBC's and indeed the entire UK traditional media's convergence transformation journey has been driven from the national level downward. In July 2003, the UK Parliament passed the Communications Act, promoting triple-play convergence and ensuring comprehensive, orderly media convergence development. In March 2006, the UK government published a white paper on the BBC's future development direction, offering six recommendations for its growth. In April of the same year, the BBC launched its largest-ever reform initiative—the “Creative Future” program. In June 2009, the UK government's *Digital Britain* white paper promoted digitization in the information sector from a national strategic perspective, emphasizing that the BBC, as a national media organization, should play a crucial role in making Britain a global center for creative industries in the digital age and become a driver of Digital Britain. This illustrates that the BBC's new media convergence strategy has aligned with Britain's national digital strategy from its inception, with the “Digital Britain” national strategy providing the most important foundation for UK media convergence development.

### 2.2 Clear, Sustainable Organizational Strategy Leads to Planned Organizational Change

Facing continuous development and application of new technologies and media, the BBC's new media convergence strategy has consistently adhered to three core concepts: “share, discover, use,” proposing an overall strategic layout of “one BBC brand, ten core products, four media terminals,” and a development strategy of “mobile-first, content is king.” Throughout this long and complex media convergence organizational change, the BBC has adopted a top-down, planned organizational change model. In 2015, then BBC New Media Chief Operating Officer Andy Conroy emphasized in sharing transformation experiences that the primary principle of transformation must be “ensuring senior leadership accepts the transformation concept.” From July 2009 to January 2011, the BBC's new media transformation working group spent an entire year persuading decision-makers and middle management to accept transformation concepts and initial strategies before proceeding with planning and implementation. From the BBC's perspective, new media transformation represents a strategic “turn” to adapt to future all-media environments. Only through top-down, holistic transformation can this reform be driven forward, and whether top-level design (decision-making management) can genuinely accept transformation concepts becomes the key to strategic success or failure.

### **2.3 Reshaping Organizational Business Processes, Adjusting Operational Mechanisms and Structure**

To eliminate the drawbacks of traditional business processes characterized by “big television, big radio, small internet, with each platform handling its own gathering, editing, and broadcasting,” the BBC vigorously developed new media platform construction and technology research, reconstructing multimedia-integrated business processes. It established a cross-platform multimedia news center, built cross-media departments closely related to content production, improved the all-media information gathering, editing, broadcasting, and control system, and attached great importance to audience participation, user experience, and content interaction, forming a relatively complete management model for audience participation in news reporting and production. The BBC actively promoted institutional integration and streamlining, broke down departmental barriers, adopted flattened management, implemented an innovative “content + technology” dual-leadership management system, highlighted the “service” label, reduced resource transmission and sharing costs, and improved work efficiency, thereby completing organizational process reshaping and achieving deep integration of media resources and efficient operation of media platforms. As BBC Strategy Director John Tate stated: “Systematization/organization is the core of media transformation, encompassing products, management, budgets and incentives, workflow innovation, and innovation aggregation across all aspects.”

### **2.4 Human Resource Management Systems Drive Organizational Change and Cultural Reshaping**

In the transformation of the BBC’ s human resource management system, it established a “content + technology” dual-leadership management system and conducted comprehensive training oriented toward all-media needs, providing necessary guarantees for cultivating all-media talent. Simultaneously, the BBC emphasized talent team building through comprehensive training to enhance comprehensive qualities and cultivate all-media talent. Andy Conroy noted: “This is not about equipment, not about technology; this is about people’ s reform,” emphasizing the importance of human factors in the BBC’ s transformation. Meanwhile, organizational culture reshaping proceeded subtly during the BBC’ s transformation process. Through open and inclusive sharing, extensive and direct communication, the BBC gradually reformed the drawbacks of traditional hierarchical systems, changed bureaucratic styles, stimulated innovation motivation, activated individual capabilities, promoted communication and cooperation between content teams and technical teams with diverse and multicultural backgrounds, and aligned organizational goals, continuously integrating new ways of thinking and behaving with Internet-thinking concepts into organizational culture to form a new shared value system among organizational members.

### 3. Implications for Chinese Mainstream Media Convergence Development Organizational Change

Organizations emerge in response to their times, evolve with development, act according to trends, and prosper by embracing currents. General Secretary Xi Jinping has pointed out: “We must plan according to the trend, act in response to the trend, and follow the trend to accelerate media convergence development, enabling mainstream media to possess strong communication power, guidance power, influence, and credibility, forming concentric circles online and offline, enabling all people to unite closely in ideals, values, and moral concepts, making positive energy stronger and the main melody more vigorous.” Currently, Chinese mainstream media’s media convergence organizational change has entered the deep-water zone of reform. Change is flexible, convergence is the driver, transformation is the key, and cultural reshaping is fundamental. Based on the analysis of the BBC’s media convergence organizational change pathway, this paper explores coping strategies from the perspectives of organizational strategic adjustment, process reengineering, structural reorganization, strategic human resource management, and cultural reshaping, aiming to provide references for Chinese mainstream media convergence organizational change.

#### 3.1 Mainstream Media Convergence Should Highlight National Strategy to Strengthen Mainstream Public Opinion

National strategy drives organizational strategic adjustment. In 2013, the Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee proposed that “promoting the integrated development of traditional and emerging media is an urgent strategic task.” In 2014, the fourth meeting of the Central Comprehensively Deepening Reform Leading Group reviewed and approved the *Guiding Opinions on Promoting the Integrated Development of Traditional and Emerging Media*, elevating media convergence to a national strategic level. Subsequently, a series of new policies on media convergence were introduced. In 2016, General Secretary Xi Jinping specifically demanded promoting convergence development and leveraging new media communication advantages at the Party’s news and public opinion work symposium, emphasizing the need to move from “addition” to “integration” and strive to build new mainstream media. In 2018, the establishment of China Media Group marked a new stage in the integrated development of China’s mainstream media. In 2019, General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasized at the 12th collective study session of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee the need to promptly complete top-level design, build new communication platforms, establish new mainstream media, and expand the influence of mainstream values. Mainstream media must timely provide more truthful, objective, and clearly-opinionated information content to seize the initiative and dominance in the public opinion arena.

Driven by national strategy and to adapt to their own and era development requirements, central and local mainstream media have intensified efforts to promote media convergence development. The integrated development of tradi-

tional and emerging media directly relates to the growth and strengthening of China's mainstream public opinion positions and the security of the ideological sphere. Chinese mainstream media should, with a high sense of political responsibility and mission, seize the opportunity of media convergence development to drive top-down organizational change that combines revolutionary and incremental approaches. On one hand, they should actively apply new technologies, mechanisms, and models, fully leveraging the respective advantages and potential of traditional and emerging media, following the laws of news communication and new media development, firmly establishing Internet thinking, and strengthening user, technology, and interaction awareness to achieve in-depth media convergence development. On the other hand, they must adhere to the principle of Party control over media, serve the national strategy, strengthen mainstream public opinion, enhance communication power, improve guidance power, expand influence, and increase credibility, firmly occupying the commanding heights of public opinion guidance, thought leadership, cultural inheritance, and service to the people.

### **3.3 Strategic Human Resource Management Serves Organizational Change Goals to Support Media Convergence Development**

Media convergence organizational change involves not only innovation in organizational structure and business processes but also, more fundamentally, change in people. John P. Kotter notes: "In most organizational changes, the most fundamental problem existing in all stages is how to change people's behavior." Strategic human resource management is the model through which organizations systematically plan and manage various human resource deployments and activities to achieve strategic objectives, representing an indispensable organic component of organizational strategy. It implies establishing a "people-oriented" core philosophy oriented toward organizational strategic goals, conducting planned human resource allocation and activities. Strategic human resource management serves as the guarantee for organizational change and sustainable development, with top-level design requiring support from human resource management. This is primarily manifested in two aspects: first, through planned and systematic training, vigorously cultivating interdisciplinary talents who meet all-media needs; second, introducing competition mechanisms through internal development and external recruitment, bringing in, utilizing, and developing talent, continuously innovating talent incentive and promotion mechanisms to stimulate employee creativity and vitality, forming human resource management systems conducive to talent growth, and providing human resource guarantees for media convergence development.

### **3.4 Promoting Organizational Culture Reshaping "Guided by Core Socialist Values and Integrated with Internet Thinking"**

Organizational culture, as a soft organizational management tool, plays a crucial role in organizational management and development. Organizational culture is

gradually formed through long-term cultivation and accumulation, making its transformation a more complex and lengthy process. The knowledge economy era demands that organizations establish dynamic, learning-oriented organizational cultures to possess sufficient organizational flexibility and adaptability to change. Therefore, new media convergence organizational culture transformation must, on one hand, inherit and develop the advantages of existing organizational culture, and on the other hand, integrate Internet thinking awareness into organizational culture to enhance organizational openness, sharing, and innovative spirit, improving organizational environmental adaptability and responsiveness. This involves gradually building a media convergence organizational culture that is “people-oriented, continuously learning, innovatively pioneering, and diversely inclusive,” thereby further strengthening the core competitiveness of Chinese mainstream media.

Organizational strategy determines organizational structure. Media convergence is not simply “plus Internet” but rather “Internet plus,” requiring media organizations to center on their core objectives and capabilities, guided by the application of new media technology, to reengineer business processes and reconstruct organizational structures and operational mechanisms aligned with media convergence development laws. By strengthening the application of new media and new technologies and promoting all-media convergence development through top-level design, media organizations should drive multimedia news production process reengineering, accelerate the construction of new all-media platforms, comprehensively integrate and converge media resources, break down barriers in traditional operational mechanisms, cultivate new organizational management structures, and promote comprehensive integration of content, technology, channels, management, and operations, thereby enhancing media’ s comprehensive competitiveness.

There is no fixed formula for media convergence organizational structure change; change agents should select the most suitable organizational structure based on their own development status. For example, *People’ s Daily* has advanced integrated “one-stop” news production process reengineering and promoted deep multimedia integration by establishing a “Central Kitchen” all-media platform. China Media Group, aiming to build a world-class new mainstream media with strong leadership, communication power, and influence, has proposed the development strategy of “equal emphasis on broadcast and internet, with internet taking precedence,” adhering to innovation while maintaining integrity, strengthening technology leadership, deepening convergence development, and making the 5G+4K+AI strategic layout the new engine for the group’ s development. The group has promoted overall reconstruction in development concepts, production processes, and technical equipment. These beneficial attempts, which actively embrace technological progress and reform innovation while consolidating their own advantages, provide excellent demonstrations for media convergence transformation in Chinese mainstream media.

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

*Source: ChinaXiv – Machine translation. Verify with original.*