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Postprint: Practice and Reflection on the Transformation and Upgrading of Print Media Journalists in the Context of Media Convergence

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Abstract

In the new context of media convergence, print media labeled as traditional media still has considerable potential to fulfill its role, and the transformation and upgrading of print media journalists also holds great promise. This article begins with a successful case of three-dimensional reporting, proposing that print media can leverage advantages in deep news excavation, strong information authority, high communication value, and excellent layout visual design by updating their concepts to advance all-media construction. For journalist transformation and upgrading, mastering the new “eighteen martial arts skills” requires not only proactively mastering various new technologies and skills under all-media conditions, but also keeping pace with the times to learn new theories and new knowledge, thereby building up a quality foundation that adapts to the new era and new requirements. Meanwhile, they must not lose their core competency of diligent interviewing and writing; in news gathering and writing activities, they must accurately grasp the dialectical relationships between action and thought, listening and questioning, and superficiality and depth, continuously strengthening their “footwork, vision, mental acuity, and writing ability.”

Full Text

Media Convergence · Theoretical Research

Practice and Reflection on the Transformation and Enhancement of Print Media Journalists Under the Background of Media Convergence

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In today' s media landscape, information is ubiquitous, all-encompassing, and universally accessible, leading to profound changes in the public opinion ecosystem, media structure, and communication methods. The comprehensive development of full-process media, holographic media, all-staff media, and all-effect media presents new challenges for journalism. Those facing the greatest pressure are journalists on the front lines, particularly traditional print media reporters. When ordinary citizens can instantly record and upload what they see and hear, journalists who still follow conventional newspaper, radio, and television editorial processes can hardly play the leading role of mainstream media. Media convergence is imperative, and journalist transformation must take the lead.

1.1 Taking the Lead in Era Progress In early January, a sudden rescue incident turned Dongtai' s ancient Anfeng Town into an overnight sensation. At around 4 PM on January 7, a mother picking up her child from Anfeng Elementary School accidentally reversed her car into a river. In that critical moment, Xie Xiaojin, a truck driver from Tongyu Village in Anfeng Town, bravely jumped into the icy water. With the help of enthusiastic bystanders on the shore, he rescued five people—one adult and four children—in less than two minutes. The life-saving act was captured on video by witnesses and quickly spread across WeChat groups and social media.

Dongtai Daily reporters rushed to the scene immediately. The editor-in-chief' s directive was clear: prioritize speed while ensuring depth. This occurred during the city' s annual “Two Sessions,” when the newspaper' s first four pages were traditionally dedicated to conference coverage. The solution lay in leveraging a three-dimensional new media communication platform. Reporters not only filed timely written reports but also provided video and images. The article “He Saved Five Lives Single-Handedly” was published with rich visuals through Xinhua' s live cloud platform and *Dongtai Daily' s* WeChat public account, which was then pushed across Xinhua' s entire network. That evening, the *Dongtai Daily* WeChat account republished the story, which immediately attracted national media attention. Major outlets including Xinhua News Agency, *Xinhua Daily*, and Jiangsu Satellite TV contacted *Dongtai Daily* to coordinate coverage using the newspaper' s firsthand materials.

On January 9, Xinhua' s client featured the story on its homepage under the headline “He Saved Five Lives,” surpassing 200,000 views within an hour. On January 10, Xinhua' s WeChat public account “Morning News” republished it. Jiangsu Satellite TV communicated with *Dongtai Daily*, and on the morning of January 9, Jiangsu Net and Litchi Net first released the rescue story, followed by continuous coverage on *News Space Station*. On January 10, *Xinhua Daily* published a co-authored piece titled “Rescue: Two Minutes of Life-and-Death Speed.” CCTV News Weibo reported Xie Xiaojin' s heroic act under the headline “Two Minutes of Life and Death! He Saved Five Drowning People Alone,” with 766,000 video views in two days. On January 12, CCTV' s *News 30 Minutes*, *News Live Room*, *China News*, and *First Time* all covered the story.

Building on this momentum, *Dongtai Daily* leveraged its print advantage to expand depth and breadth. The day after the incident, the newspaper squeezed space to publish an on-the-scene report titled “Two Minutes of Life and Death.” Subsequently, after communicating with Anfeng Town’s Party Committee leadership and conducting extensive interviews in Anfeng Town, Tongyu Village, and Xinghua City (where Xie Xiaojin frequently delivered goods), reporters produced an in-depth feature titled “The Story Behind ‘Two Minutes of Life and Death’ Is Even More Compelling,” accompanied by a commentary piece titled “Midwinter Warmth Nourishes Hearts.” Later, a full-page story documented how Xie Xiaojin’s “textbook rescue” triggered intensive coverage by over a hundred media outlets, supplemented with safety tips for vehicle water emergencies to raise public awareness.

This case study offers several insights. Journalists must be generalists—knowing and understanding everything—with the foremost priority being continuous improvement in political theory cultivation. As disseminators of Party policies, recorders of contemporary events, promoters of social progress, and guardians of fairness and justice, journalists must keep pace with the times by studying Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, General Secretary Xi’s new requirements for media convergence and journalists, new economic theories, and new technological knowledge. Only with abundant and updated knowledge can journalists handle fast-paced news gathering with ease and skill.

News is a product of its era. Whether writing a lengthy in-depth report of thousands of words or a brief news item of a few hundred characters, journalists reflect the new people, events, explorations, pursuits, achievements, and spirit of our times. During spring festivities, a reporter visiting a peach orchard observed how small farms optimized planting structures, connecting agricultural products with high-end markets, efficient agriculture, and modern tourism to create picturesque landscapes. Amid surging new economic trends, journalists must study diligently to guide officials and citizens in applying new economic thinking and passionately document the development of the new economy, contributing uniquely to high-quality local economic development.

2.1 Diligently Practicing Enhanced Journalistic Skills As a county-level newspaper with a century-long heritage, *Dongtai Daily* possesses a glorious journalistic tradition. With the rapid development of the internet and the arrival of the all-media era, *Dongtai Daily* has overcome resource constraints to explore a distinctive path of integrated media development. From developing digital newspaper platforms and video news to launching the “Modern Dongtai” mobile app; from establishing a new media department and launching the *Dongtai Daily* WeChat public account to joining Xinhua Daily’s live cloud platform; to fully integrating with platforms like Douyin, Baijiahao, Tencent Penguin, and Toutiao—*Dongtai Daily* has continuously integrated resources, enhanced technical capabilities, and diversified communication methods.

Throughout this process, journalists evolved from initial discomfort and passive response to adapting proactively, continuously mastering new knowledge, familiarizing themselves with new fields, expanding their horizons, embracing new things, progressing with the times, and growing alongside their newspaper. Reporters must master various new media applications beyond traditional gathering, writing, and editing skills. Audio, video, live streaming, VR, and robotics are standard equipment for all-media era journalists—those who cannot adapt will be eliminated. Faced with overwhelming online fragmented information, journalists must enhance their data processing capabilities to discover useful information in complex cyberspace.

Dongtai Daily has developed a mutual learning model pairing veteran and young journalists through its “East Newspaper Lecture Hall,” where experienced reporters share interviewing and writing expertise while younger colleagues teach technical skills. From cameras, video equipment, mobile phones, and drone photography to graphic illustration, H5 mobile communication technology, image editing, WeChat editing, and layout design—each session elevates both groups. During the “Beautiful Dongtai · Vibrant Spring Folk Parade” on the second day of the Lunar New Year, reporters conducted multi-camera mobile live streaming while covering the event, attracting interactive participation from citizens and overseas compatriots. Live broadcasts of investment promotion meetings, college entrance examinations, municipal committee plenary sessions, and Shanghai integration activities have accumulated over one million views, supporting key municipal work, addressing public concerns, and expanding *Dongtai Daily*'s influence. During spring festivities, the Dongtai Party Secretary visited the newspaper's new media studio, interacting with reporters covering watermelon seedling cultivation and exclaiming it was an eye-opening experience.

3.1 Grasping Three Dialectical Relationships in News Gathering Adhering to the principle that “content is king in journalism, and journalists must master their craft,” *Dongtai Daily* has continuously developed robust work styles, innovative thinking, and traditional virtues through year-round programs like “Spring Festival Grassroots Walk,” “Reporter Township Tours,” and “New Dongtai Construction News Competition.” These initiatives guide journalists to go deep into communities, immerse themselves in real life, connect with higher-level policies and grassroots realities, strengthen capabilities, and enhance investigation and research skills. Journalists must constantly improve their footwork, vision, mental acuity, and writing ability while accurately grasping three dialectical relationships in news gathering: action versus reflection, listening versus questioning, and superficiality versus depth.

Action versus Reflection: Good news is not written but walked out. Grassroots interviews require more than sitting in offices—they demand physically entering farmhouses, fields, workshops, and construction sites, walking, observing, conversing, and thinking simultaneously. In recent years, Dongtai has intensified industrial restructuring, initially forming a modern industrial structure

characterized by green and smart features. Despite macroeconomic pressures, the city has attracted numerous high-tech projects with broad market prospects. *Dongtai Daily* organized a “Tour of Major Industrial Projects Over 500 Million Yuan” activity, pairing veteran and young reporters to cover production workshops and construction sites. At Lingsheng City Technology, which covers over 500,000 square meters, reporters visited every workshop to understand die-cutting, stamping, CNC, fasteners, intelligent automation, and R&D centers, truly experiencing how “smart manufacturing leads the world, and effort achieves dreams” is not just a slogan but a reality. At Kosen Optoelectronics, aiming to become “the largest post-process supplier in the LCD field,” reporters donned full dust-proof gear to experience the entire LCD manufacturing process firsthand. Young reporters realized that concepts unclear from engineers’ explanations became immediately comprehensible on-site. Veteran reporters guided younger colleagues to draw on their knowledge reserves, observe every detail, ask questions actively, and develop mature story frameworks without leaving the scene, producing fresh, vibrant news reports.

Listening versus Questioning: Journalists must be generalists but cannot know more about a specific topic than their interviewees. Veteran reporters advise thorough preparation before interviews—understanding the subject, issues, and relevant knowledge; maintaining humility during interviews by not interrupting with uninformed comments and adopting a student-like attitude; and skillfully questioning in the latter stages by quickly processing details, achieving mastery through comprehensive understanding, and forming interactive dialogue. In Dongtai’s Shiyuan Town’s Hougang Community, the refractory materials industry has been a dominant local industry for nearly half a century. When national safety regulators conducted special governance on dust hazards in ceramic and refractory manufacturing, many enterprises in Shanxi and Henan were eliminated, yet Hougang’s refractory enterprises thrived safely. Several young reporters covered this phenomenon but failed to extract valuable stories. When a veteran reporter took over, the interview dramatically broke through. Focusing on Jiangsu Zhonglei Energy-Saving Technology Development Company, the most successful enterprise, the reporter initially faced resistance and unfriendly attitudes. However, after accurately detailing how Zhonglei and other Hougang refractory companies had proactively implemented intelligent transformation years earlier to gain development advantages, the enterprise representative became engaged and spoke at length about development challenges and successes. The reporter listened attentively without interruption, taking careful notes. During the interview, tea was served, and the physical distance between reporter and source gradually closed. In the interview’s later stages, the reporter focused on a successful case where Zhonglei Energy Saving provided technical solutions for a large state-owned enterprise’s waste heat power generation system, transforming from “selling products” to “providing solutions.” The resulting article, “ ‘Heavy Work’ Uses ‘Light Touch’ : ‘Product Sales’ Transforms to ‘Solution Provision’ —Zhonglei Energy Saving’s Deep Innovation Bravely Forges New Development Path,” prompted the company’s chairman

to visit the newspaper office personally to express gratitude and praise *Dongtai Daily*'s reporter for being thoughtful and insightful.

Superficiality versus Depth: Journalism is both intellectual and physically demanding work. Writing in-depth, compelling news requires broad vision. Journalists must understand our great era, view issues with perspective, grasp local Party committees' and governments' central work, analyze matters clearly, and integrate into ordinary people's lives—thinking what they think and wanting what they want. Before the Year of the Rooster Spring Festival, Hujiabao Neighborhood Committee in Wulie Town produced two similar stories: neighbors who had previously received help during illness were now repaying kindness door-to-door after their financial situations improved. A reporter on maternity leave tracked the story from the 27th to the 30th day of the lunar year, conducting consecutive days of emotional interviews. This led to deeper reflections on synchronizing economic development with cultural progress and integrating era advancement with simple folk customs. On the first day of the Lunar New Year, “Lian Die and Lao Zhou's Unique Busy New Year” reached thousands of households with the morning newspaper, becoming a hot topic among small-town residents. During the interview, the reporter discovered another lead: 200-plus households (920 people) in Hujiabao had become e-commerce entrepreneurs, shipping nearly 6,000 orders daily and achieving prosperity. This revealed how new technologies and economies have penetrated to the nerve endings of China's economic development, becoming a tremendous force driving era advancement and social progress. This report won second prize in the 2018 Jiangsu Good News Awards.

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

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