

An Analysis of the Innovation and Development of News Feature Programs on Television Terrestrial Channels (Postprint)

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

Abstract

With the emergence of new social media platforms represented by Weibo and WeChat, internet thinking has driven audience segmentation: the rapid advancement of digital technology has plunged traditional mainstream media into difficulties, resulting in diminished economic returns. Traditional mainstream media is actively integrating with new media, giving rise to representative media convergence products such as Intelligent Media Brain and People's Daily Central Kitchen. Television media has also achieved preliminary results on the path of media convergence development. This paper will specifically focus on news feature programs of local television channels as the primary research subject, investigating how to enhance the communication effectiveness of television media through policy support, content concretization, technological updating, and integration with new media, thereby aiming to improve the competitiveness of local channels.

Full Text

An Analysis of the Innovative Development of News Special Programs on TV Ground Channels

Abstract: With the emergence of new social media platforms such as Weibo and WeChat, internet thinking has driven audience segmentation, while the rapid development of digital technology has plunged traditional mainstream media into difficulties, leading to shrinking economic returns. In response, traditional mainstream media is actively integrating with new media, producing representative media convergence products such as AI media brains and the People's Daily "Central Kitchen" integrated newsroom. Television media has also achieved preliminary results on the path of media convergence. This paper focuses specifically on news special programs of TV ground channels as its

primary research object, exploring how to enhance TV media communication effectiveness through policy support, content concretization, technological updates, and integration with new media, thereby improving the competitiveness of ground channels.

Keywords: ground channel; news special; new media; media convergence; program innovation

Classification Code: G222

Document Code: A

Article ID: 1671-0134(2019)05-083-02

DOI: 10.19483/j.cnki.11-4653/n.2019.05.025

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Faced with the rapid development of new media, current academic and industry circles hold two main viewpoints. Some scholars argue that traditional media will inevitably perish. Whether in information dissemination efficiency, news production, or advertising operations, new media has developed a relatively rigorous system through self-evolution, while traditional media's internal operations consume excessive resources and rely on singular revenue models, making them destined for replacement. Other scholars contend that traditional media will not disappear but will actively integrate with new media under political and economic impetus, generating a new generation of mainstream media.

On August 18, 2014, the fourth meeting of the Central Leading Group for Comprehensively Deepening Reform reviewed and adopted the "Guiding Opinions on Promoting Integrated Development of Traditional and Emerging Media," which called for "promoting the integrated development of traditional and new media to create new mainstream media with diverse forms, advanced methods, and strong competitiveness." Since then, President Xi Jinping has continued to emphasize the reform and development of traditional mainstream media, proposing the important principle of "upholding Party spirit, respecting journalistic objective laws, and being people-centered." On January 25, 2019, the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee held its 12th collective study session on the all-media era and media convergence development, where President Xi Jinping further elaborated on all-media development by introducing the concept of "full-process media, holographic media, all-staff media, and all-effective media."

TV channels can be divided into ground channels and satellite channels. Ground channels, also known as ordinary channels, are essentially regional media with limited coverage. For instance, provincial TV ground channels' broadcast range is confined to their province, resulting in problems such as homogeneous content, limited dissemination scope, and equipment funding shortages. Special programs are television programs centered on culture, education, arts, science, figures, or events, taking forms such as pure reporting, commentary, interviews, or comprehensive approaches. Their content and format are more concentrated, demanding higher standards for topic selection and reporting depth. News

special programs are broadcast in news format, characterized by importance, specialization, and newsworthiness.

As important local mainstream media, TV ground channels should actively pursue media convergence, strengthen promotion of core socialist values, recognize the driving role of county-level integrated media construction in TV news special programs, and focus reporting on local culture, consistent with the people-centered principle.

2.1 Pursuing Novelty, Breaking Tradition

Innovation drives productivity, requiring news to adapt to reality through innovation in content, technology, and operations. Innovation means change, not complete overthrow. We must recognize both traditional media's extensive coverage in news special reporting and new media's digitalization, diversity, and visual appeal. For example, Hunan Broadcasting System's Film Channel program "Xiaoxiang Shenbian Shi" focuses on grassroots heroes, everyday good Samaritans, and ordinary people's stories. By discovering the extraordinary in daily life, it promotes the power of role models and core socialist values, recording greatness with sincere emotion and lenses through down-to-earth, distinctive themes such as "Let's Start a Business," "Struggle," "Playing with Crafts," "My Youth on the Farm," and "Workers Have Power."

2.2 Enriching Content Structure

Although regional ground channel programs primarily target local residents, they must not neglect diverse content reporting. Journalists should study special programs of various styles to broaden topic selection, stimulate creative inspiration, and cultivate artistic appreciation. Ground channel news specials can expand their horizons to culture, economy, politics, and other fields to increase social attention. In recent years, "Xiaoxiang Shenbian Shi" has successively launched distinctive themed programs such as "Young Craftsmen," "Good People Around Us," "My Unique Skills," "Amazing My Kid," and "On the Field of Hope."

3. Software Updates for TV Ground Channel News Special Programs

TV ground channel news special program software encompasses four main aspects: planning, content, picture quality, and news teams. The following discusses software updates from these perspectives.

First, planning innovation. Good planning is key to successful news specials. News special planning includes topic selection, staffing, interview questions, subjects, and anticipated issues. Except for breaking events, most news specials require planning that enables journalists to discover and follow up on problems. Since news specials lag behind instant social media or news apps in timeliness,

reporting should emphasize in-depth content development, manifested in deep problem excavation and in follow-up, investigative, and continuous reporting.

Second, content innovation. Focus cameras on ordinary people, telling their stories in accessible language and appealing visuals. Reflecting the pulse of the entire era through small personal stories brings freshness to audiences, comprehensively and multi-dimensionally displaying ecological beauty, cultural charm, development speed, and people's diligence.

Third, improving picture quality. Regardless of content, the final product presented to audiences is video, and picture quality directly determines viewing experience. Improvements require adjustments in clarity, contrast, color, and aspect ratio, adapting not only to TV equipment but also to smart mobile devices. Therefore, production should employ mature photography equipment to comprehensively enhance captured picture quality, delivering optimal viewing experiences.

Finally, improving team comprehensive quality. Media team development should focus on cultivating new media usage, production skills, and internet thinking to create teams capable of both close collaboration and independent operation. Media groups can partner with universities to cultivate specialized talent or establish internal training departments with advanced equipment for regular professional development. Most importantly, practitioners must develop integrated media thinking. To improve operational efficiency, temporary news teams can be formed for different specials. This approach reduces organizational bloat and personnel dispersion while allowing one department to conduct multiple specials simultaneously, increasing topic selection flexibility for both immediate event coverage and long-term in-depth reporting without affecting regular programming. Cultivating media convergence awareness requires practitioners to follow industry technological advances and conceptual innovations while learning from other local stations' strengths, such as the Central Kitchen model. Although local channels lack funds for complete integrated media centers, they can start by building material databases and gradually develop cooperation platforms through inter-departmental or inter-station collaboration.

4. Media Convergence Development for TV Ground Channel News Special Programs

New media and traditional media integration can proceed through three levels: material, operational, and conceptual. For ground channel news specials, media convergence manifests through AI and 3D animation editing, internal personnel restructuring, and cultivating convergence awareness.

The use of AI and 3D animation editing. Digital technology offers new video editing methods. Traditional news special editing relying primarily on text, images, and video presents a single approach that challenges audience attention.

AI anchors and 3D animated charts add variety, while 3D animation can display scenes cameras cannot capture.

Changes in internal personnel structure. Traditional news special staffing typically operates by department, with the entire editorial department handling material collection, video editing, and text editing after topic confirmation. This approach has structural limitations. Temporary news groups organized by special can reduce organizational bloat and personnel dispersion, enable one department to conduct multiple specials simultaneously, and increase topic selection flexibility for both immediate and long-term in-depth reporting without affecting regular programming.

Cultivating and improving media convergence awareness. This requires practitioners to follow new technologies and concepts in the industry and learn from other local stations' advantages, such as the Central Kitchen model. Although local channels lack resources for complete integrated media centers, they can begin by building material databases and gradually establish cooperation platforms through inter-departmental or inter-station collaboration.

In conclusion, new media is prompting traditional mainstream media to actively reform. While TV stations enhance satellite channel competitiveness nationally, they must also recognize ground channels' role among regional audiences and prioritize innovative development of news special programs. Media groups should explore deeper integration with new media, while journalists must establish internet thinking and new media thinking, uphold Party spirit principles, improve media literacy, and accelerate news innovation pace and quality to achieve leapfrog development of news programs.

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

Source: ChinaXiv –Machine translation. Verify with original.