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How Children' s Journals Can Address the Post-Print Challenge in the New Ecosystem of Publishing Integration

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Abstract

The application of new technologies in the publishing domain is increasing daily, and an innovative publishing convergence ecosystem has already formed. Children' s periodicals must be grounded in the dual consideration of print periodicals and emerging publishing; intensively cultivate publishing content and endeavor to enhance originality; expand from content production to services; emphasize new media operations and actively pursue new models of integrated development, in order to achieve long-term development.

Full Text

How Children' s Journals Should Respond to the New Ecosystem of Publishing Integration

Abstract: The application of new technologies in publishing is growing daily, giving rise to an innovative new ecosystem of integrated publishing. To secure long-term development, children' s journals must strike a balance between print publications and emerging digital formats, deepen their cultivation of content to enhance originality, extend their focus from content production to service provision, and emphasize new media operations while actively seeking new models for integrated development.

Keywords: new ecosystem; originality; user demand; new media marketing

The continuous advancement of information technology in recent years has not only transformed our daily lives but also altered how we acquire knowledge and the carriers through which we access it, spawning various new communication channels and publishing formats. Traditional publishing must leverage the dissemination forms, vast user bases, and diverse product presentations of

emerging publishing to maximize copyright value, while emerging publishing urgently needs traditional publishing to provide substantial high-quality content and professional expertise. The concept of integrated development has become deeply rooted in the publishing industry, and an innovative new ecosystem of integrated publishing characterized by omnimedia presentation, technological tools, and offline service implementation has already taken shape. To remain invincible in this new ecosystem, children's journals must fully integrate and utilize their own resources to achieve a transformation from traditional periodicals into comprehensive new media industry entities.

1.1 Lack of Content Innovation and Serious Homogenization

Domestic children's journals predominantly use the broad age category of 7-12 years, with nearly 200 such journals competing in the national market. To maximize market share, many children's journal publishers and publishing houses have adopted a journal group development model, featuring numerous titles and comprehensive varieties on a large scale. However, few of these publications are truly innovative or high-quality; some have blindly expanded their varieties purely in pursuit of scale, resulting in content that lacks professionalism and 趣味性. From a market-wide perspective, what is presented to readers are journals with similar positioning, identical topics, and indistinguishable styles. The phenomenon of homogenization is severe, and content lacks innovation and distinctive features.

1.2 Rigid Editing Models and Lack of Internet Thinking

Traditional journals are inherently disadvantaged compared to new media such as the internet in terms of information timeliness and interactivity. In traditional journal publishing, content editing and promotion/distribution are largely independent functions, further widening the distance between content producers and readers. Editors have insufficient understanding of reader needs, often relying on personal experience as their guide while lacking objective market observation and data-driven market planning. This prevents some children's journals from capturing market share through content alone, leading to excessive dependence on postal distribution or their own distribution networks. Furthermore, editors generally lack internet thinking and cannot effectively integrate new internet technologies with publishing. In product design, they fail to focus on uncovering readers' genuine needs for integrated publishing products, and their marketing thinking remains at the elementary stage of simply selling products, lacking a whole-process marketing concept.

1.3 Strong New Media Impact and Severe Market Climate

On one hand, traditional children's journals face direct impact from new media such as the internet and mobile terminals. Online new media offers advantages in timeliness, participation, and interactivity, with more convenient knowledge acquisition, winning reader favor through more clever approaches. On the other

hand, the overall social media environment has changed under new media impact, forcing children's journals to confront comprehensive competition from all media in addition to intra-industry rivalry. Children's sections and education supplements of major newspapers, children's channels and programs on television and radio stations, and children's book publishing from publishing houses all constitute powerful competitors vying for the same readership, creating an even more severe market climate.

2.1 Special Reader Group with Promising Market Prospects

China is a major children's publishing country with nearly 400 million children and adolescents. Due to children's limited cognitive and economic capabilities, children's publications are not purchased directly by readers themselves but rather by their parents, making parental intention an important factor in selection. To protect children's reading environments from unmonitored harmful information online, schools and parents strictly control children's use of electronic products such as computers and mobile phones, placing greater trust in formally published children's journals whose professionalism and authority are unmatched by new media.

2.2 Irreplaceable Unique Reading Experience of Paper Journals

Reading paper books and journals offers greater comfort and allows readers to absorb information with greater focus. In spring 2014, the Joan Ganz Cooney Center, a nonprofit education organization, and the New York Academy of Sciences jointly conducted a social survey titled "A Comparison of Print Books and E-books." The results showed that multimedia e-books divert children's attention from the story itself, and interactive operations unrelated to content distract children from the narrative, hindering their grasp of details and making their comprehension of story content less effective than with print publications.

3. Deep Historical Accumulation and Professional Content Production

Content quality is the foundation upon which journals are built. Traditional journals have long benefited from formal publishing processes and editorial systems, achieving content quality that many new media cannot match. As traditional "official media," they possess innate authority with deep historical accumulation, whose professionalism, authenticity, and authority are unmatched by new media. This represents an advantage for children's journals over other new media platforms as reading materials for children in their learning stage. Additionally, traditional journals have resources for quality content production and knowledge production evaluation systems, making content production more professional. The long-accumulated original content has built valuable wealth for traditional children's journals' march toward omnimedia.

3.1 Balancing Paper Journals and Emerging Publishing

New technology applications in publishing are increasing daily. By the end of 2018, domestic AR publications showed stable development, with some publishers also focusing heavily on smart robot development and intelligent robot voice knowledge bases. To occupy a place in the new ecosystem, traditional children's journals must grasp both ends. Children and adolescents are natural readers of paper publications; they are in a process of physical and mental development where excessive screen reading affects their growth. Yet they are also natural readers of digital publications, with strong curiosity, learning abilities, and operational skills, quickly mastering various electronic products. The integration of new media technology fills communication limitations and better satisfies young readers' reading psychology. Cultivating reading habits should begin with paper books; as children grow older, their demand for richer varieties and more diverse experiences increases. Diversified reading makes young readers' experiences more abundant, varied, three-dimensional, and even personalized, creating richer experiences, stronger feelings, and better learning and entertainment effects that are also more popular. Therefore, only through deep integration of traditional and emerging publishing in content, channels, platforms, operation, and management, while actively exploring new models, can long-term development be achieved.

According to the *China Digital Publishing Industry Annual Report* released on July 24, 2018, regarding trends in digital publishing industry development in 2018 and beyond, we can more clearly recognize that as the industry gradually matures, its development core is returning to content value itself. Data and technology will further strengthen their supporting role to serve the provision of quality, personalized content. The degree of specialization in content production and creation will deepen, and the capacity for continuous supply of quality content will be enhanced. The era of deep content cultivation has arrived. Users have increasingly more choices and their autonomous consciousness when facing choices will continuously improve. In an environment of information surplus, quality content—especially quality original content—becomes particularly precious. For children's journals to broadly participate in market competition, the principle of “content is king” must be adhered to first and foremost. As reading materials for children in their learning stage, this is also where children's journals hold advantage over other new media platforms. In response to the current serious homogenization of children's journal content and the shallow, scattered, and miscellaneous characteristics of content presented on other new media platforms, children's journals should maintain the rigorous attitude toward content that traditional media have always upheld, emphasizing content planning and investing more effort in the early editing stage to produce lively forms with substantial depth. They should create exclusive columns and timely launch distinctive characters, as unique and vibrant columns and content constitute the lifeblood of journals.

3.3 Extending from Content Production to Services: Transitioning from Traditional Editor to Product Manager Role

The new ecosystem of publishing integration brings modern children' s journals that use technology empowerment as leverage, guided by users' minimal effort to obtain information, establishing channels for user feedback acquisition and dynamic service upgrades to continuously innovate service forms. If traditional paper journals provide limited content, then in the new media era, traditional journals can provide not only more content but also related services through new media technology. These services can enhance user stickiness and brand loyalty among traditional journal users while possessing viable profit models that extend traditional journals' brand value. For the children' s publishing and communication industry, publishing alone is no longer everything; service has become a critical factor determining development. The quality and innovation of services can even affect survival. Therefore, it is essential to emphasize services, actively explore resource advantages, continuously extend service content according to reader needs, and effectively develop scientific derivative products such as toys, stationery, animation, and games. They can fully utilize activities in forms such as columns, training, events, lectures, electronic games, and science experience halls to integrate with new media and attract customers with high-quality products and services. Consequently, traditional editors will transform into "modern editors" with product manager roles, user demand-centered, understanding both content and internet product design, and proficiently mastering basic product manager skills such as content productivity, technical application capability, and market operation ability.

3.4 Emphasizing New Media Operations: Driving Traditional Journal Sales Through Media Integration

5G serves as infrastructure for building the next information society and the technological cornerstone for humanity' s entry into information civilization, featuring high speed, large capacity, and low latency. Post-5G technological development will pay greater attention to information content itself, bringing deep transformation to content services, content platforms, content channels, content consumption, content monetization, and content storage for the publishing industry. Content will be ubiquitous, and the connection between content and users will be greatly enhanced, as the internet enters the stage of "content internet" construction. This brings not only impact but also opportunities for children' s journals. They should fully utilize the advantages of new media networks, integrate various platform resources, and deliver journal content to end readers through different media forms and more opportunities. Currently, the most common forms include e-journals, Weibo, WeChat official accounts, Apps, WeChat mini-programs, and WeChat stores, providing users with quality reading and service experiences. Fully utilizing new media platforms for media integration is an important strategy for driving magazine sales. Some magazines make full use of new media resources, coordinate new media methods, center

on uniquely styled content, and promote new media marketing through interactive forms. Some use Weibo and WeChat to answer user questions, narrowing the distance between the public and the magazine, expanding communication scope through multiple center effects, and accumulating reputation with humorous attitudes and quality content, achieving win-win results in both content dissemination and magazine marketing.

In summary, traditional publishing possesses content, brand, attitude, and position, and more valuably, aggregates top publishing talent; while emerging publishing has technology, users, speed, and interaction. As big data, blockchain, and artificial intelligence deeply integrate with publishing industry scenarios, driving a new wave of digital transformation in publishing, children's journals must utilize both the "depth" of traditional publishing and the "breadth" of emerging publishing to actively seek new models for integrated development that produce "chemical reactions" and achieve long-term growth.

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