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Postprint: Analysis of Development Paths for Prefecture-Level City Converged Media

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Abstract

In contemporary society, new media is experiencing increasingly rapid development, exerting a growing influence on traditional media. With the continuous advancement of new media, traditional media is increasingly unable to satisfy market demands. Strengthening the integration of new media and traditional media plays a vital role in the development of the media market; converged media is also receiving mounting attention, the domains involved are becoming increasingly extensive, and the depth of integration is continuously deepening. Municipal-level media serves as a crucial vehicle for reinforcing ideological work, bearing the important responsibility of grassroots propaganda, cultural, and ideological tasks, and holds significant importance for the development of converged media. This paper primarily expounds upon the current development status of municipal-level converged media, discusses certain issues existing in its development, and analyzes the construction pathways for municipal-level converged media.

Full Text

Theoretical Research on Media Convergence: An Analysis of Construction Paths for Prefecture-Level City Media Convergence

Abstract: In contemporary society, new media are developing at an accelerating pace, exerting an increasingly significant impact on traditional media. As new media continue to evolve, traditional media are becoming less capable of meeting market demands. Strengthening the integration of new and traditional media plays a crucial role in the development of the media market, and media convergence has consequently garnered growing attention, expanding into broader fields and deepening across multiple levels. Prefecture-level city media serve as important vehicles for strengthening ideological work and bear critical

responsibilities for grassroots propaganda and cultural ideology, playing a vital role in the development of media convergence. This paper primarily elaborates on the current development status of prefecture-level city media convergence, discusses key challenges in its development, and analyzes potential construction pathways.

Keywords: Prefecture-level city media convergence; County-level media convergence; All-media; Broadcast-television media convergence

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“Media convergence” refers to the integration of traditional and new media, leveraging the strengths of both to enhance media competitiveness and transform the competitive advantage from single-medium to multi-media comprehensive competitiveness. The operational model of media convergence utilizes new media platforms—including television, radio, mobile terminals, and the internet—to integrate their advantages through cloud computing and big data analytics, thereby achieving a holistic enhancement of media value and functionality. Today, media convergence construction has attracted widespread attention, with increasing emphasis being placed on its development. At the National Conference on Propaganda and Ideology in August 2018, General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasized the need to strengthen county-level media convergence construction to better serve the masses, requiring basic full coverage by the end of 2020. On January 25, 2019, during the 12th collective study session of the Political Bureau of the 19th CPC Central Committee, General Secretary Xi Jinping again delivered important remarks on accelerating media convergence development, urging deeper understanding and comprehensive grasp of the trends and laws of media convergence and promoting its advancement in depth. Strengthening prefecture-level city media convergence construction plays an important role in local economic development and social progress, facilitating healthy media development at the prefecture level and providing high-level guidance for grassroots ideological work.

1. Current Status of Prefecture-Level City Media

Media convergence construction is continuously advancing, expanding from provincial-level media convergence centers to prefecture-level city centers, and further extending to county-level centers. Provincial-level media have already established large-scale convergence centers and put them into operation, with provincial media convergence construction largely achieved. As provinces, prefecture-level cities, and counties have increasingly emphasized and strengthened media convergence construction, provincial news media have actively responded to the central government’s advocacy for county-level media convergence, participating enthusiastically and cooperating with

county-level initiatives. County-level media convergence is also progressing, with some county television stations establishing convergence centers through national financial support. However, county-level media convergence coverage remains incomplete, constrained by multiple factors including shortages of technical professionals, weak dissemination capacity, and lack of influential publishing platforms. In contrast, prefecture-level city media convergence construction has proceeded more smoothly with relatively better development. Prefecture-level city media serve as critical nodes for provincial news media, important foundations for county-level media construction, and essential links between provincial and county-level convergence efforts. Prefecture-level news media possess higher-level technology, greater resources, more professional personnel, and certain budgetary allocations, enabling them to better leverage their technological, production, and channel advantages for media convergence construction. Consequently, strengthening understanding of the needs of higher- and lower-level media, coordinating these media entities to the greatest extent possible, satisfying their requirements, achieving comprehensive coverage that links top to bottom, and enhancing prefecture-level city media convergence construction are extremely important.

2. Problems in Prefecture-Level City Media Convergence Development

Although media convergence construction is receiving increasing attention and developing rapidly, prefecture-level city media still face several problems in the integration process. The following are the main challenges in prefecture-level city media convergence development.

2.1 Institutional Constraints of State-Owned Media Organizations

State-owned media institutions face certain systemic problems. Generally, state-owned enterprise systems are relatively rigid with inherent constraints, and various activities are limited by the system, resulting in insufficient and incomplete reform efforts. Prefecture-level city radio and television stations typically function as public institutions operating within the established system. While institutional operation facilitates standardized management and orderly operations under regulations and better organizational control, it also makes media institutions rule-bound, lacking vitality and competitiveness, causing them to rest on their laurels without reform consciousness or innovation. This deeply entrenched rigid ideology within the system makes these units unwilling, afraid, and unable to reform, causing prefecture-level city media platforms to become self-enclosed and making media convergence construction difficult due to lack of reform and innovation.

2.2 Single Funding Sources for Prefecture-Level City Media Convergence Construction

Prefecture-level city media convergence requires substantial financial support, and funding shortages constitute a major problem that negatively impacts management and operations. Since prefecture-level media institutions are public institutions, their funding primarily comes from prefecture-level government appropriations, resulting in single-source funding that relies on local government allocations. While government funding can provide basic guarantees for staff income and equipment maintenance, it falls far short of what is needed for replacing high-end equipment and achieving multi-dimensional media integration. Moreover, prefecture-level media's dissemination capacity and influence remain relatively limited, generating low revenue from market-based advertising operations, which results in insufficient additional income. This lack of adequate funding for media convergence construction adversely affects institutional management and operations.

2.3 Shortage of Professional Talent and Aging Technical Equipment

Prefecture-level city media convergence construction urgently requires technology and talent, which are extremely important and play a key role in determining the quality and efficiency of media convergence. However, talent rarely flows to prefecture-level units, and the current conditions, benefits, and compensation of prefecture-level media institutions make it difficult to retain talent. Furthermore, as public institution reforms are underway, new recruitment is temporarily suspended while existing staff cannot be transferred out, making talent retention even more challenging. This situation affects the core strength of prefecture-level city media convergence construction and hinders its progress. Simultaneously, the technical equipment for media convergence is continuously aging, with replacement speed failing to keep pace with equipment obsolescence, which is extremely detrimental to the development of prefecture-level city media convergence.

3. Construction Paths for Prefecture-Level City Media

By analyzing the problems in prefecture-level city media convergence construction, achieving healthy development requires in-depth analysis and resolution of these issues, strengthening the development and construction of prefecture-level city media convergence centers, building proprietary media convergence operation and management platforms, and achieving integration both upward and downward to promote prefecture-level city media convergence development.

3.1 Strengthening System and Mechanism Reconstruction to Inject Reform Vitality

System and mechanism reconstruction primarily involves restructuring the management system and the institutional framework. Restructuring the manage-

ment system mainly entails establishing a unified legal entity for the media convergence platform, making this unified legal institution the sole official media outlet while ensuring the absolute leadership position of the media convergence center' s leadership, enabling multiple media channels to speak with one voice and enhancing the credibility and influence of the media convergence organization. Strengthening institutional restructuring primarily involves applying enterprise-style management to public institutions, where media collection, editing, and propaganda constitute the institutional mainstay while operations represent the enterprise mainstay. Separating these two mainstays promotes their common development, enhances institutional reform momentum, and thereby drives prefecture-level city media convergence development.

3.2 Strengthening Media Talent Cultivation and Recruitment While Updating Equipment

During institutional reform, talent shortages have become increasingly prominent, making it more important to strengthen professional talent cultivation and recruitment. This involves both internal and external talent acquisition—only by proceeding simultaneously on both fronts can the construction of a professional media convergence technical team be guaranteed. This includes strengthening internal staff training while actively recruiting external talent and providing them with better development platforms to promote prefecture-level city media convergence construction. Simultaneously, equipment must be continuously updated to keep pace with technological innovation. Currently, skills employed in provincial media convergence such as “central kitchen” systems, live streaming, and instant polling are all capabilities that prefecture-level city media convergence platforms must master. Therefore, strengthening equipment updates will make prefecture-level city media convergence platforms more comprehensive in functionality.

3.3 Fully Utilizing Provincial Media Convergence Resources and Strengthening Cooperation with County-Level Media Convergence

As technologies such as 5G, big data, cloud computing, the Internet of Things, and artificial intelligence continue to develop, all-media has entered a new stage of accelerated development. Prefecture-level city media convergence must strengthen the full utilization of provincial media resources, establish seamless connections with provincial media convergence platforms, achieve data interoperability and shared dissemination channels with provincial media convergence construction, and leverage the internet to make full use of provincial media convergence resources' dissemination channels and central platform resources. Meanwhile, prefecture-level city media convergence construction must actively cooperate with county-level media convergence, using available resources to help county-level media convergence platforms innovate and reform, and promoting coordinated development between prefecture-level and county-level media convergence construction. Currently, the flourishing construction of media con-

vergence and all-media represents a transitional stage and inevitable path for traditional and emerging media moving toward the future. Media convergence is a process, not an outcome, which will ultimately lead to intelligent media convergence and usher in a true “mass communication” era.

Strengthening the integration of traditional and new media requires grasping and following the laws of new media development and news dissemination, strengthening internet application, fully leveraging the advantages of both traditional and new media, and utilizing advanced media technologies as much as possible to promote integration in management, funding, channels, and platforms. Building highly competitive, influential, credible, and technologically advanced media convergence institutions ensures that prefecture-level city media convergence construction proceeds in the correct direction, improves its efficiency and quality, and thereby promotes the overall development of prefecture-level city news media. In summary, promoting media convergence development requires expanding and strengthening mainstream public opinion, consolidating the common ideological foundation for the Party and people of all ethnic groups to unite and strive together, and ensuring the provision of powerful spiritual strength and public opinion support for achieving the “Two Centenary Goals” and realizing the Chinese Dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

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

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