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## Research on the Convergence of Traditional and New Media at the Municipal Level: Postprint

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### Abstract

Currently, the integration of traditional prefecture-level city media with new media represents an inevitable choice in Internet development. At this stage, traditional media's communication methods, communication philosophy, and content struggle to adapt to communication development in the new era, necessitating continuous innovation and reform. Based on this, the author, drawing upon years of professional experience, conducts a detailed analytical study on the integrated development of prefecture-level city traditional media and new media for reference by relevant fields.

### Full Text

#### Media Convergence: Theoretical Research

(ChinaXiv Cooperative Journal)

#### Research on the Integrated Development of Prefecture-Level Traditional Media and New Media

**Abstract:** In today's digital landscape, the integration of prefecture-level traditional media and new media represents an inevitable choice driven by internet development. At this stage, traditional media's communication methods, concepts, and content struggle to adapt to the evolving communication landscape of the new era, necessitating continuous innovation and reform. Drawing upon years of professional experience, this paper conducts a detailed analysis and investigation into the integrated development of prefecture-level traditional media and new media, providing valuable insights for relevant fields.

**Keywords:** prefecture-level traditional media; new media; integrated development

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In recent years, China's information and communication technologies and internet technology have achieved remarkable advancement, driving the rapid popularization of media and new media technologies. This has transformed how Chinese audiences receive information and perceive development trends, while also reshaping their modes of thinking. Both new media and traditional media possess irreplaceable advantages: new media offers innovation, portability, richness, and inclusivity, opening up future possibilities for the media industry; traditional media provides authenticity, rigor, depth, and authority, serving as a crucial bridge between the Party, government, and the people, and representing a key channel for mainstream public opinion to guide the construction of social values. Consequently, the integration of these complementary strengths has become a widely shared aspiration.

The year 2014 marked China's "inaugural year of media convergence." Guided by national policies, traditional media at the central, provincial, and prefecture levels embarked on the "Internet Plus" path of media integration, achieving deep convergence with new media in content, channels, and technology. Five years later, China's media convergence has entered an accelerated phase, with traditional and new media advancing toward the comprehensive integration goal of "becoming one entity, merging into a unified whole." Prefecture-level radio and television media represent the critical link in traditional media that is closest to the audience. Therefore, the integrated development of prefecture-level traditional media is essential for mainstream media to keep pace with the times through comprehensive deepening of reforms. By constructing a more sophisticated modern communication system that adapts to the transformation patterns of modern information-based media, prefecture-level traditional media can radiate stronger communication power, guidance, influence, and credibility.

In August 2014, the "Guiding Opinions on Promoting the Integrated Development of Traditional Media and Emerging Media" issued by the Central Comprehensive Deep Reform Leading Group unveiled the prelude to China's media convergence. Following the direction of national policy, the integrated development path for traditional media should involve continuously strengthening internet thinking, supported by advanced technologies, to achieve integrated development in content construction. This requires high-level convergence with new media across content, channels, platforms, and management models. As reforms have progressed from the central to the grassroots level, the integrated development of prefecture-level traditional media has broadened the audience reach of mainstream media. To date, prefecture-level traditional media have actively explored development paths and achieved the following results.

### 1.1 New Media Platform Presence

Establishing a presence on “two micros and one end” (Weibo, WeChat, and client APPs) has essentially become the standard development configuration for prefecture-level mainstream media. Social platforms with broad audience reach, such as Weibo and WeChat, have strengthened the mass foundation of prefecture-level mainstream media. By opening accounts on these platforms to disseminate information through images, audio-video content, and mini-games, media organizations can deepen communication with audiences and enhance user stickiness. Furthermore, smartphones have become an essential media tool for virtually every urban resident, enabling audiences to browse information anytime and anywhere. By entering audiences’ mobile devices in APP form, prefecture-level media have opened a new and important channel for audience engagement.

The Tongchuan Radio and Television Station, where the author works, has created a series of new media access channels through its convergence development. The official website features various program sections where audiences can conveniently scan QR codes to follow Tongchuan Radio and Television’s programs, join its WeChat public account for interactive information exchange, and receive previews of upcoming programs and promotions for latest station activities. Currently, the official Weibo account has over 20,000 followers. In 2015, the “Smart Tongchuan Mobile TV Station” was launched, creating a converged media platform that aggregates the advantages of both traditional and new media. This platform has become a channel for local audiences in Tongchuan to access news information and convenient services while interacting flexibly with mainstream media, effectively expanding audience reach and enhancing user experience.

### 1.2 Accelerating “Central Kitchen” Construction

The “Central Kitchen” represents the “flagship project” in the integrated development of prefecture-level traditional media. Following the demonstration effect of central and provincial media, various prefecture-level media have actively participated in “Central Kitchen” construction. By integrating, consolidating, and aggregating resources from multiple media entities including radio, television, and new media, this system enables efficient communication through content sharing, co-production, and mutual integration. During the media convergence era, developing a “Central Kitchen” can establish a new brain and nerve center for news production in prefecture-level mainstream media, gathering substantial news facts and information from grassroots frontlines. After careful editing and review, this content can be efficiently transformed into media products for downstream audience distribution.

### 1.3 Seizing County-Level Media Convergence Construction

County-level media convergence center construction integrates modern technology communication channel resources with distinctive grassroots cultural re-

sources. In August 2018, the National Conference on Ideological and Publicity Work emphasized the important position of county-level media convergence centers in the integrated development of traditional and emerging media. To better serve and guide the masses, many prefecture-level traditional media have identified county-level media convergence center construction as the “breakthrough point” for integrated development, forming an intensive media transformation.

## **2. Constraints on Prefecture-Level Traditional Media Integration**

The requirement and standard for deep integration between traditional and emerging media is to “become one entity, merging into a unified whole.” However, examining the current state of prefecture-level traditional media integration in China, a considerable number of prefecture-level media have yet to achieve the transformation from “addition” to “integration,” still falling significantly short of this objective. The reasons for this gap can be attributed to several constraining factors.

### **2.1 Backward Consciousness**

The integrated development of prefecture-level media requires transformation in consciousness and conceptual innovation among media managers and all practitioners. Only with new consciousness and concepts as the foundation can subsequent capital investment, technology introduction, and talent team construction support media convergence. Nevertheless, despite the severe challenges of audience loss and plummeting ratings faced by many prefecture-level media during the convergence era, both leadership and editorial teams continue to cling to traditional media concepts and methods, failing to develop a sense of urgency for integrated development. Some prefecture-level traditional media even receive stable financial subsidies, resulting in a lack of motivation for proactive integration with new media.

### **2.2 Management System Issues**

Currently, a considerable portion of China’s prefecture-level traditional media still retains outdated administrative management models. Conservative approaches to salary distribution and performance evaluation lack effective and rational allocation of human resources. Moreover, these organizations have not broadly recruited new media technology talents to address the trend of media convergence, leading to inefficiency in new media departments and a lack of core driving force for media integration. Systemic constraints and rigid mechanisms have slowed the pace of prefecture-level mainstream media integration with new media, resulting in insufficient new media literacy at the prefecture level and weak performance in new media platform presence, “Central Kitchen” construction, and new media center development.

### **2.3 Insufficient Funding and Technical Support**

Prefecture-level traditional media, positioned at the grassroots end of mainstream media, face severe limitations in funding sources and technical resources. This represents the primary reason for the stagnation of integration between prefecture-level traditional media and emerging media, leaving them noticeably behind central and provincial media organizations.

## **3. Strategies for Integrated Development**

### **3.1 Establish Internet Thinking, Institutional Planning, and Policies to Actively Promote Omnimedia Development**

Governments at all levels and prefecture-level media should transform traditional concepts, establish internet thinking, and clarify the inevitability and urgency of integrated development to accelerate the formulation and implementation of relevant plans and policies that promote omnimedia development at the prefecture level. From the government perspective, authorities should follow the central spirit of vigorously developing the cultural industry, introduce specific policies supporting independent research and development of various new media technologies, and lead the integration of television, newspapers, broadcasting, and the internet into a unified whole. Simultaneously, they should increase financial investment in the transformation of prefecture-level traditional media to promote digitalization and mobile development. From the media perspective, as guides of grassroots public opinion, practitioners at prefecture-level media should immediately update their concepts, intensify research on new media communication patterns, and develop detailed and practical convergence media development plans to advance prefecture-level media convergence construction.

### **3.2 Enhance Technical Capabilities and Strengthen Professional Team Building to Provide Strong Support for Media Convergence**

Prefecture-level traditional media should actively utilize internet technology, particularly mobile internet technology, to construct three platforms. First, production platform construction: leveraging new media technologies such as big data, robot journalists, scene virtualization, and panoramic shooting can substantially expand information sources for traditional media editing, enrich news and program perspectives, optimize material quality, and accelerate news production efficiency. Second, dissemination platform construction: building upon the foundation of “two micros and one end,” prefecture-level traditional media should also strive to meet users’ personalized needs for media communication, introduce innovative technologies, create more differentiated “product terminals,” and form a full-media communication matrix. Third, user platform construction: prefecture-level traditional media should attach greater importance to user feedback, introduce cutting-edge data analysis technologies to analyze user characteristics and organize user needs, and adjust communication content and methods according to user preferences and features to continuously

enhance user stickiness.

Successful technology application relies on high-end talents with new media experience. Prefecture-level traditional media should actively cultivate and introduce talents who master new media skills and professional knowledge, establish talent training bases through cooperative education programs, and discover more editorial, managerial, and multimedia convergence technical talents in practice. As a member of prefecture-level traditional media, Tongchuan Radio and Television Station has implemented a complete set of effective new media management systems in recent years to build a professional technical team. The team masters basic technologies for maintaining converged media backends and possesses fundamental skills in mobile TV station layout design and architecture. With the principle of “everyone is a journalist,” they utilize new media editing equipment to achieve “single-soldier operation” in news distribution, efficiently disseminating positive information filled with constructive energy to audiences.

### **3.3 Strengthen the Core News Business, Leverage Local News Advantages, and Create Distinctive Features**

News represents the primary battlefield for mainstream media to guide public opinion. In the media convergence era, prefecture-level media must steadfastly prioritize their core news business, report local news and information, and communicate the latest policies and guidelines from the Party and government to enhance the service orientation and appeal of news content for local audiences. Prefecture-level media have long accumulated significant credibility and content competitiveness. In competition with new media, they possess a geographical advantage that external large-scale websites lack: the ability to fully showcase distinctive local cultural characteristics and connect with livelihood departments such as healthcare, education, taxation, social security, and public security to provide more service-oriented news content for local audiences. For example, through its program “Good People of Tongchuan,” Tongchuan Radio and Television Station shares authentic stories of local farmers, grassroots heroes, and philanthropic private entrepreneurs, guiding local residents to emulate these role models and walk alongside kindness. This fully leverages the public opinion guidance function of prefecture-level media and has become a major highlight in the converged development of prefecture-level traditional media.

In conclusion, prefecture-level traditional media must vigorously promote integrated development to achieve effective integration of news communication elements. Through process optimization and “Central Kitchen” construction, various resources can be developed and utilized to realize the convergence and interconnectivity of information content and management methods, producing qualitative transformations that elevate publicity and reporting work to new levels and infuse it with renewed vitality.

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