

Postprint: Reflections on the Development Pathways of Traditional News Media in the Converged Media Environment

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Abstract

With the rapid development of science, technology, and information technology, contemporary society has fully entered the era of integrated media, and media convergence has become the principal direction of development for the media industry. Integrated media has brought about profound transformations in audience reading patterns and information dissemination methods, while traditional news media is facing enormous challenges under the impact of various emerging media, making transformation and development a key priority for the future. In view of this, this study analyzes the characteristics of news information dissemination in the integrated media era and proposes several transformation pathways for traditional news media based on this analysis, for reference and consideration.

Full Text

Preamble

Theoretical Research: Media Convergence

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Reflections on Development Paths for Traditional News Media in the Converged Media Environment

Abstract: With the rapid development of science, technology, and information technology, society has fully entered the era of converged media, where media integration has become the main direction of development in the media industry. Converged media has fundamentally transformed audience reading patterns and information dissemination methods, subjecting traditional news media to enormous challenges under the impact of various emerging media. Transformation and development have thus become the focal points for the future. In light of

this, this study analyzes the characteristics of news information dissemination in the converged media era and proposes several transformation pathways for traditional news media for reference and consideration.

Keywords: converged media; traditional news media; development paths

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2.3 Media Convergence Leads to Continuous Audience Segmentation

Through years of development, audiences have gained increasing awareness of converged media. Simultaneously, as their thinking and habits continue to evolve, they no longer blindly follow traditional media but instead leverage the various advantages of new media to carefully select news information that aligns with their preferences. This shift has resulted in continuous audience segmentation, which is further intensifying due to diverse and personalized information demands.

Traditional news media can no longer satisfy broader audiences with comprehensive, one-size-fits-all news information during production. They must instead seek specialized news content to meet these diverse and personalized audience needs. If traditional news media continue to employ stereotyped, formulaic approaches to news production, their content will naturally lack originality, leading to continuous audience attrition.

3.1 Promoting Media Convergence to Establish Media Groups

Facing the tremendous challenges brought by converged media, traditional news media must actively transform themselves and comprehensively promote media convergence. To effectively advance media convergence, traditional news media must accurately position themselves to facilitate smooth implementation [3]. Specifically, the primary pathways for traditional news media to achieve media convergence include two strategies: the platformization strategy and the leveraging superior platforms strategy.

When resources permit, traditional news media should actively absorb and learn from the advantages of new media. They should first establish a technology-based user platform, then develop a content provision platform, gradually building a benign open platform that serves all content and service providers, enabling both individuals and institutions to realize their value within the platform, ultimately establishing a media group. Meanwhile, for traditional news media with insufficient capabilities, the strategy of leveraging superior platforms is

necessary. Traditional news media have historically followed the “old barrel effect,” with strategies based on the 短板理论 (short-board theory). However, in the converged media era, the short-board theory has clearly become inadequate for the current media industry development landscape. Traditional news media should commit to reform, no longer focusing on compensating for their own weaknesses but instead fully utilizing their strengths to seek cooperation in areas of weakness—that is, seeking collaboration with mature new media to achieve complementary advantages. For example, many mainstream foreign newspapers have established “Digital News Initiative” partnerships with Google, while in China, *West China Metropolis Daily* and *Southern Metropolis Daily* have formed cooperative strategies with Baidu [4].

3.2 Producing News Through Diversified Approaches

The changes brought by the converged media era are not limited to news dissemination methods and channels but also encompass news production models. This requires traditional news media to actively break away from traditional stereotyped and formulaic news production models and adopt diversified production approaches to align with converged media development trends.

3.2.1 Producing News Through Interactive Integration of Traditional and New Media

Interactive integration of traditional and new media for news production has become a widely adopted approach among news media in the converged media era. This involves traditional news media simultaneously utilizing official websites, mobile sites, Weibo, WeChat, and other platforms for news production while printing newspapers and broadcasting television programs, with targeted adjustments made according to actual circumstances. When disseminating news information, online platforms should prioritize efficiency—that is, capturing online platform attention as quickly as possible. Traditional news production channels, meanwhile, must strive for authoritative information and conduct in-depth exploration of related content to compensate for and expand upon online news information, further attracting audience attention. Through interactive integration of traditional and new media, the advantages of each medium can be fully leveraged to achieve maximum attention, expand audience reach, and lay the foundation for the transformation and development of traditional news media.

3.2.2 Guiding Audience Participation in News Discovery

The various new media emerging in the converged media era have endowed news information dissemination with new characteristics such as low barriers, timely information dissemination, and equal audience participation. Against this backdrop, audiences are no longer passive news recipients but are gradually participating in news, extending beyond mere participation to include news pro-

duction itself. Traditional news media should actively seize this shift in audience behavior, establish positive strategies, build good relationships with audiences, guide their participation, and jointly engage in news discovery, gathering, and dissemination to enrich news production channels and enhance the efficiency and quality of news information dissemination [5].

3.3 Leveraging Content Superiority for Reform and Innovation

Compared to new media, the primary advantage of traditional news media lies in its authority. In this content-is-king converged media era, to effectively maintain this advantage, traditional news media should fully utilize their strengths to further promote reform and innovation and strengthen news content creation.

3.3.1 Attracting Audiences Through Public Agenda

The fierce competition between traditional and new media has led to a trend of homogenization in current news reporting, where uniform reporting methods clearly struggle to attract audiences. Therefore, traditional news media should recognize this development trend, actively attempt reform and innovation, and skillfully arrange news to provide audiences with fresh reporting perspectives and novel agendas. For instance, in topic selection for news information, traditional news media should consider audience perspectives during production, skillfully selecting representative news topics and choosing unique angles to 切入 (approach) these topics, making news reporting more aligned with audience needs while triggering emotional resonance [6]. Only in this way can traditional media effectively avoid the homogenization phenomenon inherent in news reporting, thereby improving overall news content quality, effectively expanding news information content, and truly establishing good interactive relationships with audiences.

3.3.2 Maintaining Content Authenticity to Consolidate Credibility and Authority

Truth is the foundation and soul of news. In the converged media environment, some emerging media, in fierce competition, often resort to fake news and exaggerated reporting to capture audience attention. Although this may generate short-term click-through rates, it continuously erodes their credibility. To win over audiences, traditional news media must further strengthen their credibility and authority. This requires traditional news media to consistently adhere to the fundamental principle of authenticity, implement multiple layers of scrutiny for news information, and follow systematic procedures in a standardized manner, thereby effectively enhancing the authority of traditional news media and capturing a larger audience market.

3.4 Enhancing Core Competitiveness Through Talent Cultivation

The continuous development of media convergence has brought earth-shaking changes to traditional news media. To effectively respond to these changes, in addition to changes in new media itself, a talent team with excellent comprehensive qualities and outstanding professional capabilities is essential. Based on a comprehensive review of current development trends, news production and dissemination groups can be primarily divided into several categories, including “versatile journalists,” “super teams,” “expert journalists,” and “citizen journalists.”

3.4.1 Versatile Journalists and Super Teams

The concept of “versatile journalist” originates from *The Complete Reporter: Fundamentals of News Gathering, Writing, and Editing*. As versatile journalists, they must fully grasp future industry development trends and 自如应对 (nimble respond to) industry and professional changes. Versatile journalists need to effectively retain the advantages of traditional journalists while enhancing capabilities including traditional business skills, professional concepts, and professional ethics. They also need to strengthen competitive elements, comprehensively mastering news content production methods for various media types, while proficiently using diversified interview tools and multiple interview channels to achieve first-time reporting and follow-up tracking. Simultaneously, in this process, versatile journalists must correctly handle high-intensity pressure, avoid duplication during news information processing, and possess good value judgment capabilities, journalistic dedication, professional qualities, and physical fitness [7]. From the perspective of current news reporting by large media institutions and media groups, for complex and large-scale news information, they typically form “super teams” to conduct in-depth news mining and tracking. For traditional news media to achieve these objectives, they must comprehensively cultivate versatile journalists, establish super teams through versatile journalists, and achieve optimal and maximum combination of news information resources based on strengthened human resource management.

3.4.2 Expert Journalists and Citizen Journalists

As the pace of social consumption continues to accelerate, audience demand for news timeliness is increasing, while demand for news depth is continuously decreasing. Meanwhile, with the deepening pace of globalization, elite groups’ information acquisition is no longer limited to domestic sources, continuously compressing the living space of “expert journalists” [8]. Traditional news media should take the lead in breaking through, 顺应大势 (following the general trend), comprehensively deepening the “expert journalist” training system, and actively adapting to this shift in audience demand. At the same time, with the continuous development of “citizen journalism,” professional journalists from mass media are not necessarily experts in their reporting fields, and it is highly likely

that the wisdom of audiences or audience groups themselves deserves more societal attention. The development of “citizen journalism” has demonstrated its advantages in breaking news reporting, not only effectively fulfilling social supervision functions but also playing important roles in enhancing civic awareness and establishing civil society.

However, with the continuous development of science and information technology, encoding and decoding have become increasingly simple, and the high penetration of the internet and mobile internet has created tens of thousands of communication platforms. Every audience member shares their viewpoints on their preferred platforms while attempting to find like-minded individuals with similar perspectives. Various different voices have gradually formed “opinion tribes” and “opinion communities,” transforming individual weak voices into powerful collective forces. The value judgments of opinion communities toward external matters are like pressure cookers—if collective negative emotions cannot be effectively guided, they can cause serious harm to public opinion. As traditional media, they should recognize their responsibilities, vigorously cultivate “expert journalists” while actively connecting with “citizen journalists,” truly respecting the labor achievements of “citizen journalists.” Through diversified integration and interactive approaches, they should scientifically and reasonably guide various “citizen journalists” to make correct judgments about news value while fully utilizing “citizen journalists” for news information dissemination.

Conclusion

In summary, converged media represents not only challenges but also opportunities for traditional news media. Whether they can effectively respond to challenges and seize opportunities has become the key to future development for traditional news media. This requires traditional news media to actively learn from and draw upon new media development trends under new circumstances, proactively innovate and transform their thinking, positioning, and skills, comprehensively utilize strategies such as promoting media convergence to establish media groups, producing news through diversified approaches, and leveraging content superiority for vigorous reform and innovation, thereby effectively enhancing the competitiveness of traditional news media and laying a solid foundation for the development of China’s media industry.

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

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