

Investigation and Strategic Study on Media Convergence of Guangxi Journals: Postprint

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Abstract

The rapid development of new media, represented by internet mobile terminals, has profoundly impacted the operation and development of traditional media, presenting the journal industry with challenges such as reconstructing development paths and restructuring profit models, while accelerating media convergence offers infinite possibilities and greater opportunities for journals to transform and thrive. However, most journals surviving under the traditional system lack clarity on the questions of media convergence—“how to converge, who converges with whom, and to what extent”—and are deficient in the keen mindset of “thinking about the future” and the capacity for “planning the present.” Through questionnaire surveys and analysis of typical cases, this study investigates the media convergence situation of journals in Guangxi and finds that it has generally failed to achieve expected results, with problems including institutional constraints, lagging editorial mindsets, shortage of talent resources, and profit models in urgent need of development. The paper subsequently proposes breakthrough strategies from the perspectives of convergence environment, convergence thinking, talent cultivation, and profit models.

Full Text

Preamble

Abstract: The rapid development of new media, represented by internet mobile terminals, has profoundly impacted the operation and development of traditional media, presenting the journal industry with challenges such as reconstructing development pathways and rebuilding profit models. Accelerating media convergence offers infinite possibilities and greater opportunities for journals to transform and emerge stronger. However, most journals operating within traditional systems remain unclear about the fundamental questions of media convergence—“how to converge, who converges with whom, and to what extent”—and lack both the keen foresight to “think about the future” and the capacity

to “plan for the present.” Through questionnaire surveys and analysis of typical cases, this study examines the state of media convergence among Guangxi journals and finds that it has generally fallen short of expectations, constrained by institutional mechanisms, outdated operational thinking, scarce human resources, and underdeveloped profit models. The paper subsequently proposes breakthrough strategies from the perspectives of convergence environment, convergence thinking, talent cultivation, and profit models.

Keywords: Guangxi journals; media convergence; new media

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1. Development of Media Convergence Among Journals in Guangxi

Guangxi currently publishes over 180 journals, with consumer journals accounting for 20.32%, business and professional journals for 21.98%, and academic journals for 57.7%. To investigate the development of media convergence among Guangxi journals, the Guangxi Society of Scientific and Technical Journal Editors distributed the “Survey Questionnaire on Media Convergence Publishing of Guangxi Journals” to various publishing units. After collecting and screening the responses, representative journals and publishing organizations were selected for in-depth investigation. The collected materials and survey data were then analyzed to understand the pathways, extent, talent structure, and support systems for media convergence among Guangxi journals, and to explore effective models for integrating traditional journals with new media.

1.1 Basic Information on Media Convergence Among Guangxi Journals

Among the survey respondents, academic journals comprised 65.31%, popular science journals 16.33%, and comprehensive guidance journals 8.16%. Regarding dissemination channels for journal convergence, 42.86% of journals used single-journal websites, 22.45% used journal group platforms of universities, research institutes, or academic societies, 85.71% disseminated content through domestic professional journal platforms such as CNKI, Tongfang, Wanfang, and Chaoxing, 40.82% operated WeChat public accounts, 10.2% utilized social media like Weibo, blogs, and industry communities, and 12.24% employed self-media aggregation platforms such as Toutiao and Qutoutiao.

While media convergence development is in full swing, major convergence events have primarily occurred in mainstream media outlets like newspapers, television, and radio stations or media groups. For most small, dispersed, and weak journals, the prospects for media convergence remain unpromising. Research on Guangxi’s journal industry reveals that, apart from a few organizations such as Guangxi Journal Media Group Co., Ltd., which have consolidated advantageous

resources to implement effective media convergence, the majority of journals in the region remain affiliated with publishing houses, enterprises, public institutions, research organizations, and industry associations, with media convergence efforts generally failing to achieve desired outcomes.

1.1.1 New Media Content Development As shown in Figure 1 [Figure 1: see original paper], regarding content presentation forms across different media platforms, 69.39% of journals offer online versions with content identical to their print editions; 20.41% provide repurposed content adapted for different screen sizes while maintaining the same substance; and only 10.2% utilize online platforms to display additional content related to the journal and its articles. These findings indicate that most journals' new media content merely digitizes print material without developing derivative content based on the original publications.

1.1.2 WeChat Public Account Functionality Development In terms of WeChat public account functionality, 14.29% of journals support online submission and manuscript tracking, 28.57% publish hot topics in relevant disciplinary fields, 22.45% release tables of contents and abstracts for each issue, 16.33% publish full articles in PDF format, and 4.08% publish articles in flowable document formats such as HTML or ePub. Additional functions include online training (courseware, audio, video) at 12.24%, solutions or tools at 6.12%, and marketing or academic promotion activities at 8.16%. However, commercial functionality development remains limited, with e-commerce at 12.24% and online advertising at 8.16% (see Table 1). Furthermore, most journal WeChat accounts have relatively few followers, with only 6.12% exceeding 10,000 subscribers.

1.1.3 Investment in New Media Development As illustrated in Figure 2 [Figure 2: see original paper], a survey on new media investment over the past two years shows that 67.35% of journals made zero investment, 26.53% invested less than 200,000 RMB, and only a handful invested more than 200,000 RMB. This demonstrates that Guangxi journal publishers generally suffer from insufficient capital investment in advancing the integration of traditional and emerging media.

1.1.4 New Media Profit Models As shown in Figure 3 [Figure 3: see original paper], a 2017 survey on website and new media profit models revealed that 73.47% of journals generated no profit from new media. Paid reading accounted for 10.2% of revenue, advertising income for 10.2%, and e-commerce revenue for 6.12%. Consequently, no journal in Guangxi has yet established a comprehensive new media profit model, with the vast majority operating new media platforms without profitability.

1.1.5 Digital Media Professional Talent Pool Figure 4 [Figure 4: see original paper] presents the survey results on digital media professional talent.

26.53% of journals have not undertaken any convergence publishing work, 44.9% operate without dedicated staff (relying on traditional editors working part-time with no plans to change), and 16.33% similarly lack dedicated staff but plan to introduce relevant technical professionals. This disregard for media convergence and scarcity of technical talent constitute significant constraints on the convergence development of Guangxi journals.

1.1.6 Main Factors Affecting Journal Media Convergence As depicted in Figure 5 [Figure 5: see original paper], a survey on problems in Guangxi journal convergence publishing identified institutional constraints (53.06%), lack of awareness about the urgency and necessity of convergence (59.18%), scarce technical professionals (75.51%), insufficient funding (65.31%), and unclear profit models (46.94%) as the primary obstacles. Evidently, institutional barriers, outdated mindsets, funding shortages, talent deficits, and lack of profitability remain the main factors hindering the media convergence development of Guangxi journals.

1.2 Typical Cases of Media Convergence Among Guangxi Journals

Based on information from the “Survey Questionnaire on Media Convergence Publishing of Guangxi Journals,” three representative journal publishers in Guangxi were selected for case study analysis based on journal type and media convergence approach.

1.2.1 Digital Transformation of Provincial Party Journal *Contemporary Guangxi* *Contemporary Guangxi*, the sole provincial-level party journal in Guangxi, has gradually explored and advanced media convergence in the internet era. First, it completed its initial digital publishing transformation by purchasing the Founder Wen Cai Yi Yi editorial management system in 2013, digitizing its print journal, and launching the electronic edition in 2014. Subsequently, the journal implemented networked manuscript collection, editing, and approval processes through this system, standardizing editorial workflows and improving efficiency and management levels. Second, a new media center was established in 2012, with the director-general assuming direct responsibility for new media operations as part of overall journal management, providing unified leadership, planning, and implementation. In 2015, the *Contemporary Guangxi* New Media Center was formally established, staffed with professional editors, graphic designers, programmers, and technicians responsible for daily operations across new media platforms. Third, the journal built and improved its new media platforms. To accelerate the digital platform construction of the party journal, *Contemporary Guangxi* launched its official website in 2015 after drawing on national experience in party journal media convergence and leveraging its own resource advantages. It subsequently developed and released a micro-site version (1.0) for the website, expanding its user base. The *Contemporary Guangxi* WeChat public account and official Weibo account, launched

in 2014, gradually found their distinctive positioning through continuous operational adjustments and timely revisions [1].

1.2.2 “Professional” Convergence Exploration of Academic Journal *Planner* *Planner*, an academic journal under Guangxi Journal Media Group Co., Ltd., is recognized as a “Chinese Core Journal,” “Chinese Scientific and Technical Core Journal,” and “Chinese Core Academic Journal,” ranking among the nation’s top three planning professional journals. As a representative of Guangxi’s academic journals, *Planner* leads in media convergence. The journal launched its website in 1998 and revamped it in 2014 to meet digital transformation needs, initially achieving networked manuscript editing and review as well as integrated planning information services. In 2015, the *Planner* website adopted an open access model, allowing readers to download and read articles for free. In recent years, the journal has kept pace with trends by launching an official Sina Weibo account in 2013 and a WeChat subscription account in 2014, focusing on specialized, refined, in-depth, and distinctive services for the urban planning industry. *Planner* leverages WeChat, Weibo, and its website to achieve integrated development between academic journals and new media, employing micro-communication, micro-marketing, and all-media publishing to facilitate interaction between professional journals and new media platforms.

1.2.3 All-Media Path of Popular Science Journal *New Rural Technology* *New Rural Technology*, a comprehensive agricultural popular science journal sponsored by the Guangxi Institute of Scientific and Technical Information, is the only popular science journal in Guangxi to receive nomination for the “4th China Government Publishing Award - Journal Category” and be recommended as one of the “China’s Top 100 Newspapers and Journals” by the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television. In recent years, the journal has actively sought innovative paths for integrated development, spending six years building a new media platform of considerable scale. First, it established a comprehensive independent journal website featuring information dissemination, interaction, brand image display, entertainment, and navigation search functions, allowing users to freely download past issues, access “three rural issues” information, and watch agricultural technology promotion videos. Second, the journal launched a WeChat public platform that delivers electronic micro-issues daily to meet readers’ instant reading needs. The “Farmers’ Cloud Mall” facilitates purchases of books, magazines, technical materials, agricultural supplies, and farm products. Third, the journal opened communication channels including WeChat, QQ groups, and SMS platforms to strengthen editor-reader interaction.

In terms of content reporting, *New Rural Technology* has also implemented media convergence practices. First, it employs multimedia linkage to expand article coverage. Second, it innovates reporting formats by launching the “Rural Sound and Image” column across print, website, and WeChat platforms, combining text and video. Readers can watch related videos by scanning QR

codes at article endings while reading the text. In exploring profit models for media convergence, the journal adopts all-media joint sales of journal content, network-linked advertising operations, and multi-channel promotional activities to achieve integrated marketing between traditional and new media projects, thereby improving operational efficiency. Additionally, *New Rural Technology* offers knowledge services such as agricultural technology project retrieval and agricultural entrepreneurship consulting, generating revenue from enhanced user services.

2. Problems in Media Convergence Development of Guangxi Journals

2.1 Institutional and Mechanistic Constraints

In June 2011, China launched the first batch of enterprise restructuring for non-current affairs newspaper and periodical publishing units under central government departments, prompting similar reforms nationwide. However, because journal system reform preceded broader public institution reform, many journal staff in Guangxi were reluctant to transition from public institution employees to enterprise personnel, causing the reform to stall temporarily [2]. Apart from a few organizations like Guangxi Journal Media Group Co., Ltd., which have consolidated resources for group operation, most journals remain affiliated with publishing houses, enterprises, public institutions, research organizations, and associations, whose management systems and mechanisms constrain journal development, including media convergence. According to the survey, 53.06% of journals identified institutional constraints as a barrier. First, supervisory and sponsoring units provide insufficient attention, with inadequate funding and staffing that prevent sufficient investment in new media convergence development and hinder the attraction of talented professionals for new media management. Second, ineffective incentive mechanisms exist. Because supervisory units strictly control distribution quotas (funds or indicators) for public institutions, journal staff salaries may not correspond to market rates or achieve normal growth, dampening enthusiasm and reducing motivation for media convergence reform.

2.2 Outdated Operational Thinking

Although many journals have explored effective integration between traditional and new media to adapt to the contemporary media environment, few successful cases exist. This stems partly from insufficient in-depth practice in new media operations and partly from misconceptions about media convergence among journal operators. Some Guangxi journal managers still simplistically understand media convergence as “traditional journals + new media,” a superficial interpretation that constrains development. Media convergence involves not only diversified communication methods but also fundamental changes in communication philosophy and mindset. Therefore, journals must adopt internet

thinking, prioritize user experience, and achieve effective integration with new media in content creation, dissemination models, and service patterns [3].

2.3 Scarcity of Convergence Talent

Guangxi's journal workforce suffers from severe aging and a homogeneous composition dominated by traditional text and graphic editors, lacking diversity. Two main reasons account for this: first, most journals currently engage in single publishing businesses with weak market competition awareness and insufficient vitality, making it difficult to provide work platforms that meet contemporary youth demands; second, lacking support from supervisory departments and facing limited operational funds, most Guangxi journals cannot offer competitive salary structures to attract talent with new media development or management capabilities. This talent shortage also perpetuates organizational structures based on traditional publishing operations, with few journals establishing dedicated departments for new media construction and digital publishing.

2.4 Insufficient Funding for Media Convergence

New media construction and the integration of traditional and emerging media require substantial investment in technology, equipment, and capital. However, the survey on new media investment over the past two years reveals that 67.35% of journals made zero investment, 26.53% invested less than 200,000 RMB, and only a handful invested more than 200,000 RMB. This indicates that Guangxi journal publishers generally face severe funding shortages in advancing media convergence. Most traditional journals rely on outdated profit models based on advertising and circulation revenue or depend entirely on financial subsidies from government and sponsoring organizations. Compounded by various factors, traditional journals suffer from single operational models, insufficient profitability, limited self-accumulation, and undeveloped new media profit models, with no industry capital inflow, exacerbating the funding deficit.

2.5 Underdeveloped Profit Models for Media Convergence

Currently, journal subscriptions, advertising, digital copyright transfer fees, and page charges remain the primary revenue sources for Guangxi journal publishers. However, under new media impact, subscriptions and advertising have declined year by year, making it increasingly difficult to generate operational income from these sources. Academic journals also lack bargaining power when negotiating digital copyright transfer fees with domestic database enterprises, resulting in minimal revenue [4]. Among journals implementing media convergence, 73.47% were unprofitable in 2017, with only a few generating modest income from paid reading, advertising, fee-based information services, or e-commerce. Virtually no journal has established a comprehensive new media profit model.

3. Breakthrough Strategies for Media Convergence Development of Guangxi Journals

Media convergence for journals is a systematic project requiring joint efforts from government, journal management departments, technology R&D enterprises, and journal operators to promote development through institutional reform, environmental improvement, and innovative initiatives.

3.1 Enhanced Government Support and Institutional Innovation

Integrated development of traditional and emerging media represents a major strategic deployment by the central government, making government support crucial. To address institutional constraints on media convergence for Guangxi journals, supervisory departments should continue implementing national journal system reform policies while formulating localized systems to accelerate convergence. First, following the spirit of the “Guiding Opinions on Further Promoting Press and Publishing System Reform,” the reform of Guangxi’s journal system should be reinvigorated leveraging the opportunity of public institution system reform. Second, key journals should be supported in developing media convergence by incorporating government public service platforms into convergence construction to provide one-stop journal services for the public. Journal societies (associations) and enterprises should be encouraged to form “Journal New Media Alliances,” creating a “central kitchen” for journal publishing to explore innovative convergence pathways. Third, to address insufficient attention from supervisory and sponsoring units, government departments should include journal management performance in annual performance evaluations of these units.

3.2 Creating a Conducive Environment for Convergence

Media convergence development represents both a life-or-death test and a critical opportunity for journals in the internet era, directly affecting the industry’s future prospects. As a transformation path for traditional media, convergence requires government to foster a supportive environment through projects, policies, and market cultivation. First, research special projects should be established to increase project support for media convergence development. National projects in publishing network construction, digital composite publishing, and digital copyright protection technology R&D should be leveraged to enhance technical capabilities. Journal management units should relax project application conditions based on Guangxi’s actual circumstances, not limiting applications to corporate group legal entities, while financial management departments should increase special funding support, improving subsidies, loan interest discounts, and performance rewards to align fiscal and industrial policies with enterprise needs. Second, existing policies should be supplemented to facilitate convergence. The autonomous region’s party committee and government should introduce targeted tax policies offering reductions for new media technology R&D enterprises and journal media convergence units to alleviate

funding pressures. Third, the market for journal media convergence should be cultivated. Market development requires cultural industry growth, which can be promoted through nationwide reading initiatives and “Silk Road Book Fragrance” campaigns to cultivate cultural consumers. Additionally, traditional journals should collaborate with cultural industry companies to integrate journals with film, television, animation, and gaming industries, exploring joint promotion business models. By creating a favorable environment, government can attract more social capital investment in journal media convergence and promote industry development.

3.3 Innovative Convergence Thinking

Innovation is the primary driver of journal media convergence development. Journals must approach convergence with creative concepts. First, innovation should focus on user experience and media function expansion, utilizing various media forms to extend journal content and functionality, deeply 挖掘 article information to satisfy user content needs and increase stickiness. Second, factors including technology, talent, departmental structure, and philosophy should be coordinated to achieve comprehensive integration between print journals and new media. Finally, open and shared thinking should promote convergence. Openness involves encouraging editors to develop into versatile professionals and employing diverse media methods to express content centered on user needs. Sharing involves strengthening user interaction and winning loyal users through information and knowledge exchange.

3.4 Talent Cultivation and “All-Media Team” Building

Talent guarantees successful media convergence. Journal publishers must prioritize talent acquisition and cultivation. First, they should actively recruit digital publishing and new media professionals to form dedicated convergence teams. Second, existing staff training should be intensified, focusing on developing editors’ ability to apply new technologies and convergence thinking, improving digital literacy, and cultivating versatile “all-media reporters,” “all-media editors,” and “all-media managers.” Third, reserve talent cultivation should be strengthened by exploring “journal-university collaboration” models to train all-media professionals, improving teaching systems, integrating faculty resources, creating quality new media courses, and providing practical opportunities for university students to develop a reserve workforce.

3.5 Profit Model Exploration for Industrial Transformation

Profitability represents the direction of journal media convergence. Without profitable convergence, journal operations cannot achieve virtuous cycles. In exploring profit models, journals should establish new media operation departments to develop various new media-related projects based on traditional platforms, design service-oriented and functional digital products, add new business units, achieve diversified operations, and manage relationships with operators,

databases, and technology developers to identify viable profit models. Government management departments should accelerate journal group construction to concentrate advantageous resources, form collective strength, and create competitive market entities with advanced management systems, operational mechanisms, and profit models that adapt to market demands, providing effective guarantees for industrial transformation.

3.6 Enhanced Content Creation and Quality Journal Cultivation

Regardless of changes in content production methods and dissemination mechanisms, both traditional journals and new media must adhere to content as king, with content innovation remaining fundamental to media convergence. Journals should treat content innovation as the primary means of establishing industry authority, combining “persistence and innovation” to create in-depth coverage of major themes through professional interpretation and rational analysis that meets diverse and personalized user needs, attracting new media users with quality content. Relevant departments can formulate incentive policies for content production, stimulating innovation consciousness and motivation among journal practitioners through excellence awards, encouraging them to explore new discourse expressions and communication methods, enhancing the appeal and influence of journal information, and fully leveraging journals’ functions in academic exchange, achievement promotion, information dissemination, knowledge accumulation, social education, publicity guidance, news media, and reference consultation.

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

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