

A Preliminary Analysis of the Post-Print in the Integrated Innovation Development of Early Childhood Journals

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Abstract

With the rise of new media, people's reading patterns have become fragmented and flexible. Traditional children's journals have progressively undergone integrated innovative development, transitioning from initially supplementing with CDs, learning machines, and reading pens, to incorporating QR codes, AR, and VR technologies, and further to developing APPs. This evolution has further enriched journal content, extended knowledge points, stimulated children's reading interest, and can also enhance circulation and increase revenue. However, opportunities and challenges coexist. During the integrated innovative development process of early childhood journals, the following issues must still be emphasized: incomplete journal integration, where in-depth integration is imperative; integration must be appropriate, as excess is as detrimental as deficiency; protecting copyright and preventing piracy; improving content quality to construct an all-media development platform; and continuously enhancing journal brand and influence.

Full Text

Theoretical Research · Media Convergence: A Brief Analysis of the Integrated Innovation and Development of Children's Journals

Abstract: With the rise of new media, people's reading habits have become increasingly fragmented and flexible. Traditional children's journals have progressively pursued integrated innovation and development, evolving from initially bundling CDs, learning machines, and point-reading pens, to incorporating QR codes, AR, and VR technologies, and further to developing dedicated apps. This development has enriched journal content, extended knowledge points, stimulated children's reading interest, and boosted circulation and revenue. However,

opportunities coexist with challenges. During the integrated innovation and development of early childhood journals, several issues must be addressed: integration remains superficial and requires deeper convergence; integration must be appropriate, as excess is as bad as deficiency; copyright protection and anti-piracy measures are essential; content quality must be improved to build an all-media development platform; and journal brand and influence must be continuously enhanced.

Keywords: children' s journals; integrated innovation; new media; all-media development; AR; VR

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With social development, people increasingly emphasize user-centered and human-oriented concepts. User experience has become a crucial part of daily life and can even guide consumer behavior. In the era of print publishing, traditional journals could provide readers with satisfactory user experiences that met their reading needs. However, the emergence of new media and the diverse information presentation methods and conveniences offered by the internet have left readers and audiences no longer satisfied with single, fixed reading modes. As user demands have increased, new media has created a new and powerfully attractive reading method and related services. Consequently, the user experience provided by traditional journals has declined sharply. In the new media environment, integration between traditional journals and new media has become an inevitable requirement for survival and development.

As media convergence continues to upgrade, traditional journals have gradually extended into peripheral industries such as audio, video, and cultural creativity, building multi-dimensional spaces. This has given rise to pop-up books, 3D publications, and even a trend toward today' s popular live-streaming platforms. For example, *Yilin* magazine launched "Yilin Open Courses," *Readers* magazine created "Readers · Study," and *China Education Daily* established "China Education Voice," all offering mobile classrooms through live online sessions.

At the Sixth Second Council Meeting of the China Periodicals Association held on January 15, 2019, President Wu Shangzhi proposed six key work points for the new year. He emphasized strengthening integrated innovation to promote high-quality development in the periodical industry, further exploring development models and profit models for industrial integration, innovation, and transformation, and reinforcing content production, overall integration, knowledge services, internet thinking, and user thinking.

Therefore, as appropriate reading materials for preschool children, how children' s journals can leverage new media technology to avoid the disadvantages of bor-

ing reading, enhance children' s reading experiences, provide better knowledge services, and implement highly operable new reading models that align with the interests of this age group is a significant topic requiring collective exploration.

1. Models and Manifestations of Integrated Innovation and Development in Children' s Journals

Initially, many children' s journals maintained a wait-and-see attitude toward integrated innovation, believing it contradicted the concept of parent-child shared reading and would make children overly dependent on electronic devices. However, with strong national support and advocacy for integrated innovation in journals, coupled with deeper understanding of new media technology, an increasing number of children' s journals have begun beneficial experiments, giving rise to diverse models of integrated innovation and development.

1.1 Initial Integration Forms: CDs, Learning Machines, and Point-Reading Pens

The earlier model of integrated innovation involved using external devices such as CDs, learning machines, and point-reading pens to enable audio story playback and early learning assistance functions. This allowed children to listen repeatedly and focus on key learning points, fostering good habits of independent reading. A representative example of mature application of this model is *Youthhood Pictorial*, whose bundled point-reading pen has been widely welcomed by children and parents.

1.2 Further Integration Forms: QR Codes, AR, and VR Technologies

Currently, the most widespread integration model utilizes portable electronic devices and other platforms to enable functions such as scanning codes to listen to stories, watch videos, play games, and experience augmented reality. Taking *Kindergarten* magazine as a comprehensive example: in 2017, the publication underwent a major upgrade, introducing H5 technology and AR technology into its story and smart issues respectively, developing audio book functions and augmented reality experiences that have received continuous praise from readers and supervisory authorities. Building on this foundation, *Kindergarten* magazine added QR code video viewing functions in 2019, allowing children to watch interesting videos related to column content.

Scanning codes to listen to stories not only satisfies children' s need to hear stories repeatedly but also alleviates limitations faced by parents due to time and distance constraints, positively impacting language learning, memory enhancement, and imagination development. The augmented reality feature allows young readers to zoom, rotate, and observe scenes on screen from all angles, facilitating comprehensive understanding of scientific objects and stimulating reading initiative and learning autonomy. The updated audio-visual integrated reading method fully mobilizes children' s reading interest, expands the aesthetic

boundaries of children' s reading, and positively promotes reading advocacy. Scanning codes to watch videos and play games enables edutainment, helping children learn column-related knowledge or develop hands-on skills in a relaxed atmosphere.

1.3 Deep Integration Form: Dedicated Apps

A more profound and professional model of integrated innovation involves developing proprietary apps to enhance reader experience and participation, and more importantly, to enable readers to access extended content and professional services anytime, anywhere. While commercial and fashion journals such as *Bloomberg Businessweek* and *ELLE* have developed their own dedicated apps, this has not yet been seen in early childhood journals, perhaps representing a future direction for our efforts in integrated innovation.

2. Positive Significance of Integrated Innovation and Development in Children' s Journals

Currently, children' s journals are keeping pace with development trends, emphasizing business growth and product innovation, and actively integrating creative thinking from new reading and new media fields, demonstrating good momentum in integrated innovation. Simultaneously, these integrated innovation models have brought numerous beneficial impacts to the development of early childhood journals.

2.1 Enriching Journal Content and Extending Knowledge Points

Based on children' s reading characteristics and acceptance levels, early childhood journals feature more pictures and fewer words, which for explanatory columns such as science popularization can create a dilemma where "we can' t finish explaining, and children can' t understand." Integrated innovation can resolve such predicaments by using electronic devices for knowledge expansion beyond print journals, making early reading more engaging and enjoyable.

2.2 Stimulating Children' s Reading Interest and Cultivating Good Reading Habits

For young children with limited literacy, journals that can be listened to, played with, and interacted with can positively promote upgraded reading experiences and habit formation. Given issues such as fixed length, one-way output, and lack of interaction in traditional print journals, new technologies offer tempting opportunities for comprehensive upgrades. In the modern "content + platform + terminal" communication system, journals can transform into magical storybooks. This "new-type journal" represents not only a major transformation for the journals themselves but also a significant shift in reading methods for readers. The introduction of emerging technologies will break traditional reading patterns, creating a stereo reading space that integrates visual and auditory

elements. This has undeniable significance for upgrading children' s reading experiences, enhancing their interest, and cultivating reading habits, particularly for young children with short attention spans. Fresh and interesting reading experiences can help them transcend single print reading, fully opening their spiritual growth.

2.3 Increasing Circulation and Revenue

Some journals adopt a paid model for integrated innovation projects, but most remain free. Currently, most Chinese readers have not yet developed the habit of paying for content, and given the vast amount of free information in life and online, free access is necessary to attract readers. However, as awareness of copyright payment increases and integrated innovation models and content richness grow, charging will become the general trend, creating revenue streams beyond traditional distribution. Moreover, the large user base and extensive database accumulated under the early free model will inevitably expand the journal' s social influence, opening markets for traditional distribution and boosting sales revenue.

3. Issues and Countermeasures in the Integrated Innovation Development of Children' s Journals

Although traditional journals, including children' s journals, face the wave of digitalization, the rise of new media, and changing reading habits, the trend toward integrated innovation is irreversible and holds significant positive meaning. However, many unavoidable problems remain in this process.

3.1 Incomplete Integration: The Imperative for Deeper Convergence

Most innovation transfer efforts in children' s journals merely follow trends, with many journal development teams generally confused about transfer methods and future development. During digitalization, many children' s journals essentially sell their print content at low prices to technology service providers, who then process the content to complete digitalization and produce electronic publications. These technology providers then sell the electronic journals back to content service providers while continuing to operate the electronic publications. This essentially only achieves the transfer and sale of print content without forming a systematic and feasible integration method from the ground up. Consequently, during the initial exploration period of journal integration innovation, convergence with new media remains quite superficial, far from substantive deep integration.

3.2 Balancing the Degree of Integration with New Media

While children' s journals cannot remain at the superficial level of merely adding point-reading pens or QR codes during integrated innovation, and certainly cannot simply convert print journals into electronic products—otherwise readers

would merely become viewers of TVs, mobile phones, or tablets—the transformation of children’s journals must proceed yet not go too far, lest it become something else entirely. It is essential to maintain the characteristics of parent-child reading and deep reading inherent in children’s journals while enhancing their reading appeal. This is what journal development teams must balance.

3.3 Copyright Protection and Anti-Piracy Measures

Piracy is a serious issue for print journals. After digitization, the cost of copying and reproduction further decreases, leading to rampant piracy. Therefore, copyright protection remains a critical issue during digital transformation and integrated innovation.

3.4 Improving Content Quality and Building an All-Media Development Platform

Regardless of how times change, controlling information sources and ensuring content quality is the eternal truth that “content is king.” To enhance reading appeal during integrated innovation, children’s journals must improve their own content quality in addition to leveraging new media methods. This requires strict improvement in content selection, processing, layout design, and other aspects to provide more satisfactory and high-quality reading services, becoming a quality information service provider.

First, during integrated innovation, journals should establish the concept of becoming their own content information service providers while maintaining content control, establish their market position, classify journal information differently and deeply, and deliver information precisely to users while controlling the core components. Only then can integration with new media be achieved.

Second, journals should proactively develop their own information provision platforms and methods, form industrial value chains, transform from passive content suppliers to active information service providers, build their own marketing, publicity, and management departments, and gradually form their own all-media communication platforms. Future journal development teams must awaken from the self-intoxicated state of elite culture from the planned economy era and actively transform into precise service providers for readers who can even become customers. They must accurately grasp market dynamics, understand reader needs, anticipate reader concerns, and address reader anxieties, allowing readers to truly enjoy the packaged services provided by journals conveniently and comfortably.

For example, *Kindergarten* magazine could build upon its print carrier to develop WeChat public accounts, mobile apps, or even network products, inviting senior and excellent early education or early reading experts to share parenting experiences, provide series of classic bedtime stories, or develop its own children’s English learning platform based on the Little Zebra brand IP image. With sufficient funding and human resources, it could even provide physical parent-child

English or early reading experimental bases, allowing more young mothers and children across China to enjoy the quality early education resources and services provided by the *Kindergarten* team, following an industrial chain development path.

3.5 Enhancing Journal Brand and Influence

While improving content quality, continuously enhancing journal brand is another issue requiring attention in the integrated development of children's journals. A corporate or product brand image represents its industry position and serves as a source of profit and important guarantee for future journal operations. Therefore, establishing a strong brand image and enhancing brand influence is crucial for journals and key to market positioning. Many traditional journals, busy integrating with new media in hopes of boosting development, forget their most market-competitive asset—the journal brand. If a journal has weak brand awareness, unclear market positioning, and neglects brand image establishment and maintenance, it will also neglect the value that brands bring to journal development. No matter how deeply it integrates with new media, it will ultimately face extinction.

For children's journals, improving content quality, participating in more public welfare activities, and conducting public welfare publicity can all enhance brand influence.

In conclusion, facing the wave of digitalization and the strong emergence of new media, children's journal teams must both grasp new opportunities for transformation, innovation, and upgrading, and meet new challenges in journal integration innovation. They must continuously deepen content, improve quality, expand industrial chain operational structures, and provide readers with more optimized reading experiences and information services through flexible and diverse methods. It is believed that children's journals that integrate and innovate with new media technology will continue to expand their social influence, better disseminate excellent early reading and intellectual enlightenment culture, and make positive and profound contributions to the humanistic development and personality cultivation of countless families with young children.

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