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Opportunities Brought by Media Convergence to County-Level Television Stations (Postprint)

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Abstract

“Converged media” is a modern concept in the media industry. At the current level of county-level converged media center construction, “converged media” is understood as a new type of media that makes full use of media carriers to comprehensively integrate different media such as radio, television, and newspapers—which share common ground yet possess complementary characteristics—in terms of human resources, content, and publicity, thereby achieving “resource convergence, content compatibility, publicity integration, and benefit amalgamation.” Under the influence of converged media center construction, county-level television stations have obtained new development opportunities, which can help them broaden communication channels, alleviate shortages of funding and personnel, achieve content innovation, transform their communication philosophy, highlight their service attributes, and remedy deficiencies in the modern media environment.

Full Text

Preamble

Theoretical Research: Media Convergence Opportunities That Media Convergence Brings to County-Level Television Stations

Abstract: “Media convergence” is a modern concept in communications. At the current level of county-level media convergence center construction, “media convergence” is understood as the comprehensive integration of different media—such as broadcast, television, and newspapers—that share common ground while offering complementary strengths. This integration occurs across human resources, content, and promotion to achieve a new form of media characterized by “resource sharing, content compatibility, promotional integration, and mutual benefits.” Under the influence of media convergence center construction,

county-level television stations have gained new development opportunities that help broaden their communication channels, alleviate funding and personnel shortages, achieve content innovation, transform their communication philosophy, highlight their service attributes, and address deficiencies in the modern media environment.

Keywords: media convergence; county television stations; media boundaries; convergence platform

1.1 Alleviating Funding Shortages and Breaking Personnel Bottlenecks

County-level television stations have long faced severe financial constraints and chronic understaffing, which fundamentally limit their development potential. Media convergence offers a viable solution by enabling resource pooling and shared infrastructure across platforms. For instance, a converged news center can consolidate editorial staff, technical equipment, and production resources that were previously duplicated across separate broadcast, print, and digital operations. This shared model significantly reduces redundant investment while maximizing resource utilization. A typical county television station operating independently might employ only a dozen staff members, but through convergence, it gains access to a much larger pool of shared personnel and equipment, effectively breaking through previous capacity limitations. This collaborative approach allows these stations to produce more diverse and higher-quality content without proportional increases in operational costs, creating a sustainable path forward despite limited budgets.

1.2 Breaking Communication Boundaries and Expanding Audience Reach

Traditional county television stations are constrained by geographical broadcast ranges and limited signal coverage, restricting their audience primarily to local residents. Media convergence fundamentally dismantles these boundaries by enabling multi-platform distribution through websites, mobile applications, social media channels, and streaming services. This expanded reach allows county stations to connect with diaspora communities, migrant workers, and younger demographics who increasingly consume content through digital rather than traditional broadcast platforms. By adapting content for various platforms—leveraging television for in-depth reporting, mobile for immediacy, and social media for engagement—county stations can maximize their audience footprint. The converged approach transforms a single piece of content into multiple adapted formats, ensuring it reaches viewers across different channels and devices, thereby overcoming the physical limitations that once defined broadcast territories.

1.3 Closing the Distance with Audiences and Strengthening Interaction

Traditional television broadcasting operates as a one-way communication channel, creating passive viewer experiences. Media convergence fundamentally transforms this dynamic by enabling two-way interactive engagement through comment functions, social media integration, and participatory content formats. County television stations can now utilize platforms such as WeChat and Weibo to maintain continuous dialogue with viewers, gather real-time feedback, and incorporate audience perspectives into programming decisions. This interactive capability converts passive viewers into active participants who contribute to content creation and community discussion. By fostering direct communication and responding to audience input, stations build stronger viewer loyalty and create a sense of community ownership. The shift from monologue to dialogue not only enhances audience satisfaction but also provides stations with valuable insights into local information needs and preferences, enabling more responsive and relevant content development.

2.4 Highlighting Local Characteristics and Improving Local Services

County-level television stations possess a distinct competitive advantage through their deep understanding of local culture, community needs, and regional characteristics. Media convergence enables them to leverage this local knowledge by providing specialized services that larger media organizations cannot replicate effectively. These stations should focus on delivering hyper-local content—including community news, municipal announcements, emergency alerts, agricultural information, and cultural programming—that directly serves resident needs. By positioning themselves as essential local information hubs, they build trust and relevance within their communities. Convergence platforms allow them to deliver these services across multiple touchpoints, from traditional broadcasts to mobile alerts and social media updates. This local focus not only differentiates them from national media but also fulfills their public service mandate, ensuring they remain indispensable community resources in an increasingly fragmented media landscape.

2.5 Improving Technical Support and Optimizing Media Development

Successful media convergence requires robust technical infrastructure and sustained investment in digital capabilities. County television stations must prioritize building converged newsrooms, digital asset management systems, and multi-platform distribution workflows. This includes training existing staff in digital technologies, recruiting technical specialists, and establishing partnerships with technology providers to access advanced tools and platforms. Technical support extends beyond hardware and software to encompass workflow

redesign, quality control systems, and cybersecurity measures. Without adequate technical foundations, convergence initiatives risk becoming unsustainable experiments rather than transformative operations. Strategic investment in technology enables county stations to optimize production efficiency, ensure content quality across platforms, and adapt to evolving digital standards, thereby securing their long-term viability in the converged media ecosystem.

2.1 Understanding Media Characteristics and Building Convergence Platforms

Effective media convergence requires county television stations to develop nuanced understanding of each platform's distinct characteristics, strengths, and audience expectations. Television excels at long-form, visually rich storytelling; mobile platforms demand concise, immediate updates; social media thrives on interactive, shareable content. A successful convergence strategy involves building integrated production platforms that unify content creation while enabling platform-specific adaptation. This necessitates organizational restructuring to break down silos between traditional broadcast and digital teams, establishing unified editorial workflows that allow simultaneous multi-platform publishing. Stations must develop content management systems that facilitate seamless adaptation—where a television report can be repurposed into social media clips, mobile-friendly summaries, and web articles without redundant production efforts. Understanding these media characteristics is fundamental to creating convergence platforms that maximize efficiency while respecting the unique attributes of each distribution channel.

2.2 Integrating Media Forces and Building a Media Matrix

Media convergence at the county level involves integrating previously separate media entities—television, radio, newspapers, and digital outlets—into a cohesive media matrix. This integration eliminates duplication and creates synergistic relationships where each platform contributes distinct value while supporting the others. The matrix approach enables coordinated coverage strategies: a breaking news story might be introduced via social media alerts, developed through radio updates, explored in depth on television, and analyzed in newspaper features, with all content cross-promoted across platforms. This creates a unified editorial voice while offering audiences multiple entry points to access information. Resource sharing within the matrix—pooling journalists, technical staff, and administrative functions—reduces operational costs and increases content output. The media matrix model transforms fragmented local media into a unified, efficient ecosystem capable of competing more effectively for audience attention while maintaining comprehensive community coverage.

2.3 Focusing on Audience Experience and Strengthening Audience Participation

Audience-centricity must drive convergence strategies for county television stations. This involves creating interactive content formats that invite participation—such as citizen journalism initiatives, community polls, user-generated content features, and live Q&A sessions with local officials. Data analytics tools enable stations to track audience preferences, engagement patterns, and content performance across platforms, informing editorial decisions and program development. Designing participatory experiences requires more than simply adding comment sections; it demands intentional strategies to solicit, acknowledge, and incorporate audience contributions into the content ecosystem. When viewers see their input reflected in programming and their contributions featured on-air or online, they develop stronger institutional loyalty and become active advocates for the station. This participatory culture transforms the audience from passive consumers to collaborative partners in local journalism, ensuring content remains relevant, responsive, and deeply connected to community needs and interests.

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