

Reflections on the Development of County-Level Television Stations in the Context of Media Convergence: Postprint

Authors: Zhang Daming

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Abstract

Under the backdrop of integrated media, the development of county-level television stations has encountered both opportunities and challenges. In response to transformations within the integrated media environment, the question of how to facilitate the enhanced development of county-level television stations has become a matter requiring serious consideration among broadcasting professionals. Accordingly, various county-level television stations have actively pursued innovation during the integrated media era, promoting the convergence of traditional and new media, improving program quality, and expanding communication modalities, thereby achieving notable accomplishments. However, it must be recognized that due to inadequate comprehension of integrated media, the integrated media trajectory of county-level television stations remains at the stage of merely “touching the network” rather than genuinely “integrating with the network,” thus necessitating the construction of intelligent media through scientific and technological means.

Full Text

Reflections on the Development of County-Level Television Stations in the Context of Media Convergence

Abstract: In the era of media convergence, county-level television stations face both opportunities and challenges. Confronted with these transformative changes, broadcasting professionals must seriously consider how to better promote the development of county-level TV stations. To this end, county-level television stations have actively pursued innovation in the media convergence era, promoting the integration of traditional and new media, improving program quality, and expanding dissemination channels, achieving notable results. However, it must also be recognized that due to inadequate understanding of media

convergence, the convergence efforts of many county-level TV stations remain superficial—merely “touching the internet” rather than truly “integrating with the internet.” There is a pressing need to leverage science and technology to build smart media.

Keywords: media convergence; science and technology; smart media; county-level television stations

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Author: Zhang Daming

Advanced science and technology have profoundly transformed contemporary work and lifestyles. In recent years, cutting-edge technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) and virtual reality (VR) have gained prominence, with VR wearable devices and AI-powered scene recognition technologies increasingly entering daily life. Applying AI and VR technologies to county-level television station operations can facilitate deeper media convergence and help these stations build smart media platforms, providing users with more targeted and diversified television programming that meets the viewing needs of different demographic groups and enhances user stickiness. Throughout this process, county-level TV stations must actively achieve integration across different media platforms, making full use of quality new media platforms such as WeChat, QQ, Weibo, and self-media. By leveraging their local advantages, these stations can promote mutual integration with new media and enhance their program quality.

1.1 The Necessity of Localizing County-Level Television Station Programming

Unlike provincial and national television stations, county-level TV stations must clearly define their responsibilities: correctly guiding local public opinion, promoting socialist core values, providing high-quality information services for the people, and fostering local economic development. Therefore, these stations must first identify their proper role, root themselves in the local community, fully absorb local nutrients, and commit to building television programs with distinctive local characteristics. In the current broadcasting system, county-level television stations serve as crucial local grassroots outlets and have long constituted an important supplement to municipal, provincial, and national networks. However, due to constraints in funding, technology, and talent, county-level stations have remained at the bottom of the broadcasting hierarchy, with their programs achieving only moderate success. With the arrival of the new media era, county-level television stations have been the most immediately and severely affected. New media offers diverse formats, innovative programming, strong

targeting, flexible broadcasting, and content diversity—characteristics that pose multiple challenges to county-level stations with their conventional programming, heavy advertising loads, and limited entertainment content. First, ratings for county-level TV stations have plummeted. Their primary programming consists of local news with limited influence, typically confined to a single county or surrounding areas. Influenced heavily by new media, people now access news and information through increasingly diverse channels—including local WeChat official accounts, Weibo, forums, and WeChat—resulting in fewer viewers and declining ratings. Second, the dissemination scope of county-level TV stations has shrunk. Combined with the impact of new media and falling ratings, their reach has further diminished, reducing audience size and severely devaluing their information worth. Finally, survival has become increasingly difficult. The media landscape is now intensely competitive, and competition from new media and online platforms has further narrowed the market scope for county-level TV stations, making their survival more precarious. Consequently, to maintain vitality and win certain ratings in this increasingly competitive television market, county-level TV stations must actively integrate with new media, launching official Weibo accounts, WeChat official accounts, and self-media platforms. Most importantly, they must be rooted in the local area, serve local people, build television programs with local characteristics, and promote localization to win the affection of local audiences through distinctive programming.

1.2 Promoting the Localization of County-Level Television Station Programming

County-level television stations should make full use of quality new media platforms such as WeChat, QQ, Weibo, and self-media, relying on their local advantages to promote integration with new media. First, stations must deeply explore local history and culture, identifying historical figures and scenic spots that resonate with local audiences and producing them as television programs to enhance localization. Second, when promoting these localized programs, they should leverage the advantages of media convergence through WeChat official accounts, television news, newspapers, short videos, and other formats to achieve comprehensive local coverage and expand the influence of localized programming. After winning public acclaim, stations should continue to produce programs that align with local audience preferences. Finally, county-level TV stations must use converged media platforms to achieve effective communication with the public. Through traditional methods such as questionnaires and incentivized surveys, combined with live online interactions and interactive features on WeChat official accounts and Weibo, stations can engage with the public to understand their specific needs and subsequently introduce more public service programs—such as services for lost and found, recruitment, real estate, shopping, and assistance. They can also promote quality local products, cooperate with businesses, and launch beneficial activities to provide people with high-quality, affordable goods, further increasing user stickiness. Additionally, county-level TV stations should actively connect with local government departments, both to promote

government policies by pushing important news and announcements to local people through WeChat official accounts, Weibo, and short video accounts, and to build a communication bridge between the public and government departments to help solve practical problems, thereby enhancing the public influence of county-level TV stations.

2. Mobile Social Technology Facilitating the Transformation and Development of County-Level Television Stations

New media's demonstrated power and vitality has dealt a massive blow to traditional media while simultaneously creating new development opportunities. For county-level TV stations undergoing transformation today, building media convergence is of great significance. The purpose of actively integrating with new media is to accelerate the transformation and development of traditional media. Through media convergence and leveraging mobile social technology and platforms, county-level TV stations can expand dissemination channels for television programs and news information, broaden their influence, and transform themselves from traditional broadcasters into new converged media platforms centered on the internet. On these platforms, users can access various types of effective information according to their needs, while county-level TV stations can adopt flexible and diverse dissemination formats, achieve program innovation, and further expand their reach and influence on the internet. Therefore, on the path of transformation and development, county-level TV stations must fully utilize mobile social technology.

First, transformation must begin with mindset. County-level TV stations must recognize that in the mobile internet era, audiences are no longer passive recipients and have increasingly high demands for television programming. Therefore, during transformation, stations must improve service quality in response to these changes, integrate mobile social technology, and provide more diversified services to the public through mobile apps and websites to build a positive relationship with their audience.

Second, when integrating mobile social technology, stations must fully leverage its advantages. County-level TV stations need a clear understanding that mobile social technology is not merely a technology but a new platform for information dissemination built upon various apps, websites, and live streaming platforms. Influenced by mobile internet, the way people obtain information has changed dramatically, shifting from reliance on traditional media to dependence on the internet—primarily through news apps, live streaming platforms, and websites such as Toutiao, Douyin short videos, WeChat official accounts, and Weibo. Users only need a smartphone and a few apps to browse content of interest according to their preferences. Therefore, county-level TV stations must pay close attention to this shift. On one hand, they should integrate mobile internet technology to launch their own mobile apps and promote them effectively to increase visibility. On the other hand, they should leverage new media platforms by launching WeChat official accounts, Weibo accounts, self-

media accounts, and short video or live streaming accounts to transform from a single dissemination method to a diversified approach combining traditional and online channels. After launching these new media accounts, they should connect them with their television programs to make them important platforms for promoting the station and expanding its reach. Furthermore, on mobile internet platforms, county-level TV stations must emphasize user experience, strengthen communication with users, respond promptly to their inquiries, accept complaints and suggestions, and enable users to feel high-quality service.

Artificial intelligence technology is an emerging and popular technology whose application in the development of county-level TV stations can help them thrive in media convergence. First, county-level TV stations should leverage their media advantages while actively integrating with new media platforms to further expand their media platform data. Stations can continuously enrich their media resource libraries or use scraping software to capture popular resources from the internet, especially hot keywords after breaking news events, to provide users with massive information resources. Second, they should analyze user browsing habits. Using big data analytics focused on user needs, stations can analyze potential user requirements and formulate development plans accordingly. Given the financial and technological constraints of county-level TV stations, they can actively integrate popular AI algorithm technologies that allow low-cost analysis of user-centric data. Based on user browsing habits, intelligent push of relevant information can greatly enhance the automation and intelligence of converged media platforms, enabling users to obtain text, images, videos, and other information that matches their browsing habits and promoting the converged development of county-level TV stations. Finally, county-level TV stations must keep pace with broadcasting development trends and build smart media platforms. As AI technology continues to develop, smart media is gradually transitioning from concept to reality. County-level TV stations must closely follow this direction, applying AI to news gathering, editing, writing, and distribution to further enhance their intelligence level.

As science and technology continue to advance, the media convergence path for county-level TV stations will become increasingly intelligent and automated. Under these circumstances, county-level TV stations must actively adopt new technologies. Given their constraints, county-level TV stations must inevitably increase capital investment, introduce high-quality talent, transform management mechanisms, and improve management efficiency to achieve transformation and development through media convergence.

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(Author's Affiliation: Xiaoyi City Radio and Television Station, Shanxi Province)

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

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