

## How Local Television Stations Can Leverage Converged Media Thinking to Successfully Produce Program Postprints

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**Date:** 2023-10-08T00:00:00+00:00

### Abstract

The advent of the all-media era has severely impacted television viewership ratings and advertising revenues, plunging television stations into intense media competition. Within this new media landscape, reform of local television stations is particularly crucial: fully recognizing deficiencies in broadcasting philosophies, leveraging converged media thinking, adjusting program formats, integrating program content, innovating content through practice, and elevating production standards. Through deep integration of traditional media and converged media thinking, breaking existing paradigms, centering the audience in program production, creating high-quality and high-caliber content, enhancing the content competitiveness of local television stations, and achieving self-driven innovative development.

### Full Text

#### Abstract

The advent of the all-media era has severely impacted television ratings and advertising revenue, plunging TV stations into fierce media competition. In this new media environment, reform at local TV stations is particularly critical. By fully recognizing flaws in their operational philosophy, leveraging converged media thinking, adjusting program formats, and integrating content, local stations can innovate their programming and elevate production standards through practice. Deeply integrating traditional media with converged media thinking to break existing patterns, placing the audience at the core of program production, and creating high-quality content will enhance the content competitiveness of local TV stations and achieve self-driven innovative development.

**Keywords:** TV stations; converged media

**CLC Number:** G222

**Document Code:** A

**Article ID:** 1671-0134(2018)11-198-02

**DOI:** 10.19483/j.cnki.11-4653/n.2018.11.030

## 1. Converged Media Thinking

Broadly defined, converged media represents the integration of traditional and new media strengths to generate new energy and greater functional impact. It transforms inter-media competition into unified force, achieving mutual service through resource sharing, promotional integration, and shared benefits. Radio, television, and online platforms become three service modes of a single medium, with their human and material resources reorganized to break original structures and reduce program production costs. The character “融” (róng, meaning “fusion” or “integration”) constitutes the core of converged media thinking, aiming to break boundaries between various media and enable entirely new production processes and presentation methods. This not only alleviates resource scarcity but also facilitates program differentiation, pushing content toward greater specialization and audience segmentation—a novel production mindset emerging from the “fusion” context.

Media convergence represents the general trend of development. In 2016, national leadership proposed at the Party’s news and public opinion work symposium: “We must move as soon as possible from the ‘addition’ phase to the ‘fusion’ phase, from ‘you are you, I am me’ to ‘you have me, I have you,’ and further to ‘you are me, I am you,’ striving to build a batch of new mainstream media.” County-level TV stations, as grassroots traditional media with weak influence and competitiveness, must particularly keep pace with media development. Utilizing converged media thinking to break through traditional mindsets, integrate various advantages, overcome development bottlenecks, and promote transformation and upgrading is essential.

### 2.1 Enhancing Professional Quality of TV Station Personnel

In the converged media era, the professional quality of local TV station staff must be simultaneously elevated. Converged media impacts institutional changes at local TV stations and imposes higher demands on practitioners’ professional competence. However, some local TV journalists and content creators remain stuck in traditional media production mindsets, lacking converged media thinking and demonstrating relatively low professional quality. It is essential to enhance practitioners’ understanding of converged media concepts. Without converged media thinking, program production lacks innovative ideas and new communication philosophies, running counter to market demands, making it difficult to gain recognition from TV stations and audience popularity, ultimately degrading overall program production standards.

Personnel's converged media thinking influences television program content and distribution, serving as the creative root of programming. Therefore, for local TV stations to achieve transition and transformation in the converged media era and enhance content competitiveness, they must continuously strengthen media team exchanges and use converged media thinking to promote professional quality improvement.

## 2.2 Transforming Program Production Orientation

For local TV stations, high-quality program planning and content constitute important guarantees for development and high ratings. Converged media thinking serves as the guiding orientation for program production, enabling programs to establish themselves on new thinking, continuously broaden content fields, conduct multi-level and multi-angle content mining, and achieve multi-channel promotion. Some local TV stations, constrained by traditional program production thinking and distribution strategies, produce relatively single-column content and communication forms, which to some extent limits their development.

## 2.3 Improving Local TV Station Efficiency

The emergence of new media has diverted some viewership and revenue from TV stations, making the "profit pie" increasingly smaller. Local TV stations can no longer maintain original profits through existing influence and may even see revenue shrink. Therefore, the emergence of converged media thinking can regather audiences before television screens, stabilize TV stations' status, regain favor from advertising investors, influence advertisers' investment strategies, and increase revenue for local TV stations.

## 2.4 Breaking Development Bottlenecks: An Inevitable Choice

Local TV stations face the impact of new media and must use converged media thinking to break through development constraints. Local TV stations have inherent disadvantages, including weak foundations, insufficient innovation capacity, and funding shortages. Their communication influence is deeply constrained by geography, with very closed dissemination scope. Moreover, as the media environment flourishes, TV stations at all levels seek development strategies, making strength gaps increasingly apparent and audiences more complex. Converged media thinking can help local TV stations break free from geographical restrictions, overcome closed communication scope, expand influence, assist in cross-media and cross-regional operations, and enhance competitive strength. Therefore, converged media thinking represents a necessary choice for local stations' exploration and development. Taking media convergence as the consciousness of TV program production, breaking through their own development bottlenecks, and promoting innovative development of local TV stations

are essential. As traditional media practitioners, it is necessary to strengthen professional learning of converged media and quickly transform into converged media professionals.

### 3.1 Establishing Converged Media Centers to Create High-Quality Content

Facing challenges from new media, mobile internet, and various self-media platforms, local TV stations should assess the situation, seek countermeasures, take proactive action, uphold the philosophy of self-development, and actively promote media convergence. Establishing converged media centers constitutes a key platform for promoting local TV station development. Through building converged media centers, local TV stations can achieve a “central kitchen” style production process. This model enables unified content collection, distribution, and production, reducing program production costs through scaled collection and intensive production while maintaining quality and quantity.

Local TV stations building converged media centers to implement “central kitchen” style program production and broadcasting integrates traditional media with multiple media forms, achieving one-time collection, diverse generation, and multi-channel release. Across the nation, TV stations have established converged media centers suited to their development in the new environment. The Beijing Yanqing District Converged Media Center is China’s first “broadcasting + newspaper” model “central kitchen,” creating an all-media development platform integrating newspapers, television, broadcasting, and new media. Gansu Province’s Yumen City Radio and Television Station, in 2017, actively responded to the central media convergence strategy by implementing the “Data Fusion Service Center and Converged Media Sharing Platform Project,” officially launching its media convergence process. TV stations at all levels promote convergence development, build new mainstream media, and strive to construct new mechanisms for all-media news and program production, providing audiences with high-quality content at the fastest speed and most effective combination, giving full play to traditional media’s unique advantages, and creating new mainstream media.

### 3.2 Cultivating Converged Media Talent Teams

On the path of promoting all-media convergence, converged media talent is the driving force. The greatest challenge for local TV stations in converged media development lies in cultivating existing traditional media talent and developing converged media professionals. Local TV stations must comprehensively enhance overall professional quality and build professional teams supporting converged media platform operation and development. This requires sufficient financial guarantees to manage professional talent, timely introduction of technically proficient converged media professionals, ensuring regular training to enhance professional quality, and providing appropriate compensation and wel-

fare benefits. Developing converged media talent should prioritize local talent as the broad standard, introduce high-end talent as the basic means, cultivate existing talent as the regular approach, and properly utilize socially influential talent to gradually improve program production standards and content quality. Local TV station leaders must adopt converged media thinking as their leadership philosophy, master converged media business, be adept at managing converged media technical talent, and lead teams to gradually create branded programs with distinctive local TV station characteristics. Local TV stations should grant converged media departments greater personnel authority, including the right to introduce high-end technical talent, and make corresponding adjustments to personnel authority to achieve precise talent appointment.

Regarding rewards and punishments in all-media talent assessment, the gap between rewards and punishments can be widened to achieve truly effective incentives for practitioners. Existing traditional media personnel are the main force for TV station program innovation, making training for these professionals in converged media a key focus. Innovation capacity under converged media thinking has become an important standard for evaluating future media workers. Therefore, existing traditional media practitioners must not only adapt to the constantly changing media environment but also diligently study new professional knowledge and skills, continuously update media fusion thinking concepts, and rapidly integrate existing materials.

### 3.3 Emphasizing Content Innovation

In the converged media era, local radio and television stations must abandon outdated topics, update communication concepts, emphasize content timeliness and novelty, and achieve content innovation. To attract audiences through content innovation, local TV stations must achieve program content precision and targeting. By combining local audience life experiences, understanding local people's living content and ideas, investigating audience demographics, thoughts, and preferences, screening accurate program materials, and effectively integrating collected information, they can develop innovative programs with clear objectives. The vastness and complexity of user groups impose urgent demands on program content personalization and precision. Only by strengthening program content innovation can user stickiness be enhanced. Local TV stations can extensively collect audience content consumption data to establish target audience databases for converged media centers, analyze content preferences of different audience segments, customize personalized content for them, and conduct precise push notifications to enhance user activity and increase user stickiness. Alternatively, they can collect data through field interviews and questionnaire surveys to make local TV station columns and content closer to audience psychology and enhance market competitiveness in the converged media era.

Local TV stations must explore derivative innovation capabilities of television content products and achieve content innovation through diversified content

products. By fully utilizing converged media thinking, television programs can generate brand premium and brand appeal, continuously motivating local TV stations to make content innovations and promoting their transformation and development.

The converged media era brings both challenges and opportunities to local TV stations, which should be firmly grasped to accelerate transformation goals through continuous thinking updates and structural changes. During the transformation and development process, local TV stations will shift from traditional media models toward modern media, gradually break existing patterns, overcome geographical restrictions, expand communication influence, produce higher-quality program content, and serve broader audiences.

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