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On the Convergent Development of Broadcast Media and WeChat Public Platforms (Postprint)

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Abstract

Over the past few decades, broadcast media has occupied a leading and monopolistic position within the media landscape. However, the continuous development of new media has posed a strong impact on traditional broadcast media, causing this medium—lacking in visual impact—to gradually fade from public attention. Against the backdrop of declining semiconductor radios and the rise of smartphones, traditional broadcasters have realized through continuous innovation and practice that only through in-depth integration with new media can they adapt to the trends of the times; among these integrations, the most representative is the integrated development of broadcast media and WeChat Official Accounts. Based on this, this paper, grounded in the new media era, takes the advantages of integrated development between traditional broadcast media and WeChat Official Accounts as the entry point, while simultaneously proposing pathways for their integrated development, with the aim of helping traditional broadcast media break through development bottlenecks and achieve long-term development.

Full Text

Preamble

Research on Integration and Development: A Preliminary Study on the Integrated Development of Broadcast Media and WeChat Public Platforms

Abstract: For decades, broadcast media held a dominant position in the media landscape, enjoying unchallenged supremacy. However, the continuous evolution of new media has profoundly impacted traditional broadcast media, gradually pushing this visually static medium out of the public spotlight. As semiconductor radios decline and smartphones rise, broadcast professionals have realized through ongoing innovation and practice that only deep integration with new

media can align with contemporary trends. The most representative example of this is the integrated development of broadcast media with WeChat public platforms. Grounded in the new media era, this paper examines the advantages of integrating traditional broadcast media with WeChat public platforms and proposes pathways for their converged development, aiming to help traditional broadcast media break through developmental bottlenecks and achieve long-term growth.

Keywords: broadcast media; WeChat public platform; integrated development

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In the new media era, traditional broadcast media have begun experimenting with opening WeChat public accounts to adapt to developmental trends, increase ratings, attract greater attention, and secure market share amid fierce social competition. By extending their influence from the broadcast domain to the WeChat platform, these media outlets leverage WeChat's inherent advantages to create broad prospects for development.

1.1 Compensating for the Ephemerality of Traditional Broadcast Media

Traditional broadcast media have historically offered rapid dissemination through radio signals, satellite transmission, and cable networks reaching millions of households, with audiences accessing content via radios and televisions. However, this content was inherently ephemeral—radio waves vanished instantly, preventing listeners from replaying programs, and before digital television, local stations simulcasting news broadcasts offered no option for viewers to watch missed programs retroactively. WeChat public platforms effectively resolve these issues by enabling broadcast programs to be accessed on-demand. Currently, over half of all broadcast media have established WeChat public accounts that provide program replay and listening services with simple operation: users merely open the account and click the on-demand button at the bottom to watch television programs or listen to radio broadcasts anytime and anywhere. Moreover, these on-demand services support background operation, allowing users to perform other tasks on their phones while the broadcast continues running as “background audio.” This approach not only compensates for the ephemerality of broadcast media but also highlights its companion-like qualities.

1.2 Enhancing Communication Impact Through Push Notifications

For county-level radio stations, the push function of WeChat public accounts offers a powerful tool to integrate current domestic and international events with local hot topics. While pushing broadcast programs and news updates, stations can also insert advertisements to stimulate audience attention and consumption. Once audience members follow the public account, they can directly consult via mobile terminals about urban traffic conditions, trending restaurants, tourism information, and more. Furthermore, audiences can participate in topic discussions. This approach captures audience attention, increases click-through rates, and ultimately enhances the influence and credibility of county-level radio stations.

In the internet era, everyone is simultaneously a disseminator, producer, and receiver of news. The news communication model emerging from the integrated development of county-level radio stations and WeChat public platforms has undergone revolutionary transformation. Unlike traditional news media that required institutional structures, fixed locations, and teams to release information, any location with internet access can now become a news distribution point—a mechanism that dramatically accelerates news reporting speed.

Additionally, after publishing news and information on WeChat public platforms, radio stations can receive audience feedback anytime and anywhere, enabling more timely understanding of audience needs. Compared with previous communication methods, information dissemination through WeChat public platforms substantially improves the timeliness of feedback. Simultaneously, broadcast media can engage in interactive discussions with audiences through these platforms, with communication forms diversifying beyond traditional text and images to incorporate multiple intuitive modalities including audio and video.

1.3 Enhancing Interactivity with Audience Groups

Broadcast media can utilize WeChat public accounts as platforms for connecting and interacting with audiences. After following an account, users can directly participate in talk shows through posting comments, sending virtual gifts, and other forms of engagement [1]. Traditional broadcasting primarily employed one-way communication, neglecting audiences' expressive needs. As Chinese people's demands for spiritual civilization increase, broadcast programs must develop targeted interactive topics based on audience psychology to attract more listeners and satisfy their personalized needs.

The characteristic of timely broadcast program dissemination appeals particularly to certain audience segments, primarily because it enables their active participation—a phenomenon especially prominent in livelihood-related or interview programs. With WeChat's widespread adoption, audiences can quickly

evaluate program content on the platform. When their viewpoints and opinions receive attention and are restated during programs, audiences often experience tremendous satisfaction.

1.4 Mining Program Content from WeChat

WeChat enables users to publish messages, images, and audio-visual content, showcase their daily lives and moods, expand social circles as a networking tool, and follow various public accounts to receive diverse information. Consequently, broadcast media can select currently hot topics and focal news of greatest concern to users to produce programs broadcast through public accounts. This allows users to interact with hosts and provide timely feedback on programs while listening. Simultaneously, users can function as news publishers, sharing interesting anecdotes from their surroundings. Program teams can screen this user-generated content, selecting newsworthy events to enrich program material. When listeners actively participate and hosts engage with audiences in real-time, programs become more dynamic and appealing.

2.1 Leveraging the “Shake” Function

WeChat Shake is a stranger-social feature developed by Tencent that automatically matches users who shake their phones simultaneously, providing a broader interactive platform and communication opportunities. Broadcast media can invite listeners to participate in programs using this function, enabling simultaneous engagement from in-studio participants, external audiences, and hosts, which strengthens listener loyalty. Additionally, broadcasters can use backend statistics to determine how many people participated during a given timeframe and randomly select winners [2]. This format breaks geographical limitations, allowing anyone listening to the program to participate. The backend can also designate specific groups for Shake participation—for instance, requiring users to follow the program’s public account—thereby better attracting followers and enabling effective control of winning probabilities.

2.2 Strategic Use of Push Notifications

Radio programs from different stations have distinct positioning, and any broadcaster’s audience encompasses diverse professions and fields. However, county-level broadcast media face a notable disadvantage: difficulty generating widespread attention when holding important events or releasing significant news. To address this, county-level broadcasters can utilize the push notification function of WeChat public accounts to send relevant announcements, news, or information to all followers, thereby expanding promotional scale and channels.

During integrated development with WeChat public platforms, broadcast media should observe several key considerations: First, when vigorously developing and promoting public accounts, avoid naming them after specific programs, as

program changes may cause the loss of previously cultivated followers. Second, strengthen management—the establishment of WeChat public platforms aims to enhance communication with users, promote programs, and increase ratings, not to serve as personal promotion platforms for managers, which would undermine brand image establishment and maintenance. Third, construct a comprehensive assessment mechanism that rewards well-promoted, highly executed public accounts with positive audience feedback while penalizing underperforming ones. Fourth, prioritize user experience by controlling the timing and frequency of promotional information—excessive pushes trigger user resentment and resistance, while insufficient pushes fail to attract attention and increase ratings.

2.3 Brand Building

With the arrival of the internet era, traditional broadcast media have begun exploring new development paths by leveraging new media platforms like WeChat and Weibo to promote their brands—for instance, opening Weibo accounts and applying for WeChat public accounts to attract new users through published content. However, with the rapid development of WeChat public accounts, information and news promoted and released by traditional broadcast media on these platforms have become increasingly homogeneous, with substantially declining information quality. In essence, public accounts build influence through user subscriptions and follows, and the relationship between accounts and users is fundamentally one of subscription. To maintain this fragile relationship and enhance mutual stickiness, content quality must be improved [3]. When program information obtained by users through public accounts meets their needs and preferences, this subscription relationship can be sustained long-term. If content quality cannot be guaranteed, subscribers will inevitably unfollow over time.

From the perspective of county-level broadcast media development, leveraging the WeChat public platform can effectively promote brand influence, filling the previous interactivity gap to some extent. Traditional broadcast media employed relatively monolithic program dissemination models, with audiences in passive receiving positions. One-way information transmission meant broadcasters could only judge program popularity through ratings, unable to obtain timely and effective user opinions and feedback. The emergence of WeChat public platforms presents an opportunity—if broadcast media can achieve integrated development, they will inevitably attract new users. Leveraging the strong interactivity of WeChat public platforms enables audiences to participate in program production, achieving zero-distance engagement between programs and viewers, enhancing interactivity, and increasing user stickiness and attention.

In conclusion, amid the daily development of new media, county-level broadcast media must keep pace with the times, adjust development models, and actively integrate with new media to break through developmental bottlenecks. Effective integration with WeChat public platforms can increase audience stickiness, enhance audience interaction, improve ratings, and promote the healthy and

sustainable development of traditional broadcast media.

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

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