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Defending the Public Opinion Front and Enhancing the Dissemination Capacity of Mainstream Media: Deputy Editor-in-Chief Lu Xiangao of Guangming Daily on Building Resource Cohesion Capacity in Traditional Media (Postprint)

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Abstract

In the first half of the internet era, traditional media strengthened user engagement and expanded connectivity by restructuring editorial processes, reforming institutional mechanisms, and establishing “two microblogs and one app” platforms. However, as the demographic dividend fades, the question arises: what development paths remain for media convergence in the internet’s second half? How can mainstream media 坚守舆论阵地 (hold their ground in public opinion) while comprehensively enhancing their ca...

Full Text

Resource Cohesion Capacity Building in Media Convergence: A Case Study of Guangming Daily

The Challenge of Media Convergence in the Internet’s “Second Half”

In the first half of the internet era, traditional media strengthened user engagement and expanded connectivity by restructuring editorial processes, reforming institutional mechanisms, and establishing “two microblogs and one app” platforms. However, as the demographic dividend fades, the question arises: what development paths remain for media convergence in the internet’s second half? How can mainstream media 坚守舆论阵地 (hold their ground in public opinion) while comprehensively enhancing their capacity for news dissemination, guidance, influence, and credibility? At the inaugural China New Media Development Conference in October 2018, Lu Xiangao, Deputy Editor-in-Chief of Guangming Daily and Director of its Media Convergence Center, proposed that building resource cohesion capacity could expand development space and

establish an internally-driven, growth-oriented mechanism for the second half of media convergence.

Strategies for Building Resource Cohesion Capacity

Lu Xiangao articulated a multi-pronged strategy: “By delivering high-quality content, exploring application scenarios, strengthening project operations, creating branded events, and providing technical services, we can consolidate resources in dissemination, technology, finance, publicity, and market development, thereby enhancing our capacity for leadership, innovation, service, influence, and growth.” This approach focuses on leveraging the newspaper’s core strengths to build “Guangming IP” and establish long-term mechanisms. To strengthen quality content production, Guangming Daily established a dedicated committee and a commentary studio to produce editorial articles.

The WeChat Revolution and Content Entrepreneurship

The 2012 launch of WeChat Official Accounts catalyzed an explosion of content creators. Xu Denei, founder of NewRank, argues that WeChat’s revolutionary significance lies in unifying content and distribution channels, making content entrepreneurship viable. However, this surge in content creation presents a dual challenge: while high-quality content must survive in an oversaturated market, traditional media must also find ways for their mainstream voice to serve as an “anchor in turbulent waters.”

Guangming Daily’s Commentary Studio: Operational Model and Evolution

Guangming Daily’s commentary studio exemplifies institutional quality content production. The studio begins daily operations at 5:00 AM by monitoring public opinion to identify current affairs hotspots, establishes topics by 7:00 AM, and then engages studio members in collaborative discussion to formulate main arguments, set editorial tone, and designate lead writers. After rigorous three-tier review, finalized commentator articles are distributed across all content platforms. In its early days, the studio produced only 2-3 commentaries; through core team building and intensified efforts in guidance, production, and distribution at the media convergence level, it now reliably delivers 10-15 high-quality commentaries daily. As Lu Xiangao emphasizes, “Institutional media must output high-quality content and rely on that quality to consolidate dissemination resources and enhance our leadership capacity. As institutional media, quality content production must have a guiding role.”

Historical Trajectory of Guangming Daily’s Digital Transformation

Tracing Guangming Daily’s media convergence development reveals a consistent strategic evolution. In 2004, Guangming.com was launched with the philosophy of “highlighting cultural taste and serving intellectuals,” implementing

a series of reforms. In 2009, Guangming Daily's mobile newspaper emerged with the positioning of "intellectuals' palm-sized home, wireless era's personal consultant." By 2010, further reforms established the website as "intellectuals' online spiritual home and authoritative ideological, theoretical, and cultural website," creating signature columns such as "Guangming Commentary." Through building advantageous resources and creating quality content, Guangming Daily has rapidly established discourse power in its specialized domains. From early newspaper-website integration to mobile development, Guangming Daily has consistently positioned itself around "serving intellectuals," strengthening its content advantages and enhancing brand influence.

Exploring Diversified Mobile Scenarios

As information technology advances, content presentation forms—including images, short videos, H5, VR/AR, and live streaming—have become increasingly rich across mobile scenarios. Live streaming, as a form of news visualization, has become mainstream for traditional media exploring mobile platforms. He Li, Director of Business Development and Partnerships for Northeast Asia at the Associated Press, notes that in AP's live short video practice, users prefer immersive content beyond just breaking news. Recognizing its own limitations in breaking and on-site news while acknowledging its accumulated strength in ideological theory, ideology, education, science, and culture, Guangming Daily has strategically concentrated on building core competitiveness. Since last year, Guangming Daily pioneered the "University Admissions Directors' Guangming Live Broadcast" initiative, leveraging its client app and website while coordinating with multiple mobile platforms.

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

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