

The Transformation of Traditional Publishing in the New Media Convergence Era: Post-Print

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Abstract

With the advancement of science and technology, new media is developing at an increasingly rapid pace. At present, single-medium platforms can no longer accommodate the evolution of the era and the demands of audiences; media is trending toward multidirectional convergence, necessitating that the traditional publishing industry adapt to this trend and proactively undertake adjustments. Under the impetus of new media convergence, the traditional publishing industry confronts substantial difficulties and challenges, while also encountering new opportunities. The industry should innovate its transformation methods, shift its transformation philosophy, and cultivate transformation professionals to align with the developmental requirements of publishing in the new era.

Full Text

Transformation of Traditional Publishing in the New Media Convergence Era

Abstract: With the development of science and technology, new media is evolving at an accelerating pace. Single-medium platforms can no longer meet the demands of the times or audience needs, as media increasingly converges across multiple channels. Traditional publishing must adapt to this trend and actively adjust its strategies. Under the new media convergence trend, traditional publishing faces enormous difficulties and challenges, but also new opportunities. The industry should innovate its transformation methods, shift its transformation philosophy, and cultivate professional transformation talent to meet the development needs of publishing in the new era.

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Although traditional publishing faces difficulties due to the development of new media, it simultaneously encounters unprecedented opportunities. The industry can leverage new media to meet new rounds of challenges. Against the backdrop of new media convergence, traditional publishing should actively seek solutions, adapt to the new media era, and pursue transformation and development.

The concept of “new media” is defined in relation to traditional media. While traditional media encompasses newspapers, radio, and television, new media primarily comprises devices such as smartphones and computers. Currently, new media is developing rapidly in China and has become an integral part of people’s lives.

1. Current Situation of Traditional Publishing Under New Media Convergence

“Media convergence,” first proposed by Nicholas Negroponte and later elaborated by MIT professor Pool, refers to the trend of multi-functional integration across various media. This concept includes both narrow and broad definitions. The narrow definition refers to the “convergence” of different media forms, producing a “qualitative change” and creating a new media form. The broad definition encompasses the combination and convergence of all media and their related elements, including not only media form integration but also the fusion of media functions, communication methods, ownership, and organizational structures.

Media convergence represents the general trend, and traditional publishing must actively adapt to this direction for its survival. In this context, audiences no longer rely solely on paper books but have more choices, such as e-books. This shift has reduced demand for traditional paper books, placing traditional publishing in a difficult position. Currently, China has over 700 million mobile phone users, making smartphones an essential part of daily life. Users rely on mobile devices for information retrieval and social interaction, and naturally, for reading as well. Mobile reading maximizes users’ time, enabling them to read anytime and anywhere without temporal or spatial constraints, which greatly facilitates their lives. As more users turn to mobile reading, the number of paper book readers and purchasers has declined, posing severe challenges to the survival of traditional publishing. In response, traditional publishing must actively seek solutions, correctly recognize that it faces both enormous difficulties and new opportunities under new media convergence, and strive to utilize its strengths to achieve better development through new media platforms.

2. Problems in Traditional Publishing Transformation Under New Media Convergence

Traditional publishing may encounter various problems during its transformation process.

2.1 Overly Simplistic Transformation Methods

The emergence and development of new media have brought more challenges and opportunities to all industries. As a former industry giant, traditional publishing has also been significantly impacted in the new media era. Although most traditional publishing enterprises are actively seeking transformation, their efforts often remain superficial—merely formalistic changes without addressing fundamental issues. For traditional publishing enterprises, transformation requires far more than simple digitization and media integration; it demands comprehensive reform and innovation across the entire industry chain, including operational models, editorial processes, and profit structures. Facing the wave of media convergence, publishing enterprises must increase their engagement with users, break down information barriers, and explore new development paths. The consequence of simplistic transformation is that changes are not thorough, remaining merely formal rather than substantive, which ultimately cannot be sustained in the long term.

2.2 Copyright Infringement in the Transformation Process

One transformation method for traditional publishing is digital publishing. The emergence and rapid development of smartphones have turned modern people into veritable “mobile phone users,” spending most of their free time on mobile devices, which provides an opportunity for digital publishing. Digital publishing offers users abundant books and convenient reading time and space. However, behind these conveniences lie certain problems, particularly copyright infringement issues, especially regarding the ownership of work copyrights. Infringement in publishing mainly stems from the fact that existing laws and regulations for traditional publishing no longer suit the digital publishing era, necessitating the establishment of a copyright protection mechanism aligned with current developments. In digital publishing, such as e-book downloads, many works have unclear authorship, making reproduction and use on the internet extremely common. Some works are even difficult to trace to their sources, creating opportunities for copyright infringement.

2.3 Lack of Professional Talent in the Transformation Process

Talent is the core and foundation of any undertaking, and excellent talent is the decisive factor for success. However, serious talent shortages exist in the transformation of traditional publishing. Traditional publishing previously had low requirements for talent, needing only basic knowledge of editing, layout, and proofreading. In the new media convergence era, publishing demands for

talent have increased significantly, requiring not only mastery of fundamental publishing theory and practice but also proficiency in digital editing technology and professional competence. At present, some publishers still focus only on editorial and proofreading processes, knowing little about digital publishing editing technology. Consequently, they have insufficient consideration and limited attention to transformation issues, resulting in unsatisfactory outcomes. Today, talent who understands both publishing theory and digital publishing technology is extremely rare. According to predictions by the China Institute of Publishing Science, by 2020, China's journalism and book publishing workforce will reach 10 million, with approximately 4 million in digital publishing, but only 5% of these will meet the required qualifications. This demonstrates the extreme shortage of qualified digital publishing talent in China.

3. Strategies for Traditional Publishing Transformation Under New Media Convergence

Although traditional publishing faces enormous development difficulties under new media convergence, it also has many opportunities. The industry must actively adjust its transformation to adapt to the times. Due to lack of experience and practical methods, traditional publishing has encountered many problems and taken many detours. The question remains: how should traditional publishing transform correctly in this context?

3.1 Innovating Transformation Methods

Under new media convergence, most traditional publishing enterprises have begun gradual transformation, but few have implemented fundamental changes, with most remaining superficial and formalistic. Traditional publishing needs innovation and fundamental reform. Compared with emerging media, traditional publishing has advantages in advanced technology and equipment for information dissemination. In terms of user base, traditional publishing has established a stable user community through years of development. Therefore, during transformation, enterprises should gradually expand their user base through these stable users.

3.2 Transforming Transformation Philosophy

Philosophical transformation is crucial in the process of traditional publishing transformation. Shifting philosophy requires enhancing user experience and always prioritizing users—this is the key to successful transformation. In modern publishing, user experience is paramount. The industry should disseminate excellent, healthy works that users enjoy, enabling them to obtain spiritual pleasure and emotional cultivation through reading.

3.3 Cultivating Professional Transformation Talent

Having excellent publishing professionals is the foundation for successful publishing transformation. Under new media convergence, the industry must focus on cultivating professional talent equipped with skills aligned with publishing transformation. Professional competence is essential, requiring practitioners to master not only basic publishing theory and practice but also meet high standards in digital publishing. During transformation, talent cultivation should emphasize improving editorial structure, capabilities, and professional quality.

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