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Finding a Breakthrough in Media Convergence Post-print

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Abstract

Identifying breakthrough points for media convergence has become a consensus within the collective consciousness of contemporary media professionals. The Taicang Daily, drawing upon its own practical realities, leverages its strengths while circumventing its weaknesses to create synergistic force, establishing a comprehensive all-media center platform, optimizing and reengineering its editorial workflows, grasping the characteristics and patterns of new media, and striving for new advances.

Full Text

Finding Breakthrough Points in Media Convergence

Abstract: Identifying breakthrough points in media convergence has become a shared priority among media professionals. Drawing on its unique strengths and resources, *Taicang Daily* has established an all-media center platform, optimized and reengineered its editorial processes, and mastered the characteristics and patterns of new media to achieve new progress in its convergence efforts.

Keywords: media convergence; exploration; addressing weaknesses; reflective considerations

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Media convergence represents a critical topic widely discussed and actively explored in today's journalism field. How can traditional media achieve integration with new media? How can print media effectively utilize and master electronic platforms? True media convergence requires moving beyond blind spots and misconceptions in communication to realize genuine integration. Consequently,

the key to modern media transformation and upgrading lies in finding breakthrough points for convergence.

Media convergence is not merely a physical reaction between media forms—simple addition or layering—but rather a chemical reaction from form to content, representing a thorough and entirely new integration attempt. It constitutes an inseparable union where each medium contains elements of the other. With no existing models to follow, only bold practice and continuous exploration can secure broader market prospects.

1. Exploring Breakthrough Points in Media Convergence

Taicang Daily is a regional mainstream newspaper with party newspaper characteristics, published as a color broadsheet with postal distribution and a daily circulation of nearly 20,000 copies. Operating in an economically developed and affluent region, the newspaper faces increasing competitive pressure. In recent years, while maintaining correct guidance of public opinion and focusing on economic, social, and livelihood development to maintain a strong reputation among readers, *Taicang Daily* has pursued steady progress and continuous expansion to achieve stable development across its readership, market, and client base.

Identifying breakthrough points in media convergence has become a collective consensus among media professionals. *Taicang Daily* has leveraged its actual conditions, built on its strengths, and formed synergies by constructing an all-media center platform and optimizing its editorial workflow. By grasping the characteristics and patterns of new media—from surface phenomena to deeper implications, and from individual cases to holistic strategies—the newspaper has tackled convergence challenges through years of exploration and practice, attempting to concentrate its efforts across three distinct dimensions to achieve new breakthroughs.

First, the newspaper sought breakthroughs in WeChat and client applications. Although *Taicang Daily* started relatively late in developing new media, it maintained steady progress by leveraging its newspaper industry resources. Since the beginning of the 21st century, the newspaper has dedicated itself to expanding its new media presence, successively developing WeChat, Weibo, websites, and client applications that now rival its traditional print edition. Taking WeChat public accounts as an example, the newspaper began experimenting with operations in 2014, achieving initial success through borrowed momentum. In early 2015, it launched a matrix of ten WeChat public accounts to collectively showcase its new media business. By 2016, through survival-of-the-fittest selection and continuous innovation, the newspaper focused on developing its flagship “Taicang Daily Official WeChat” account while retaining several elite accounts with large followings, such as “Cultural Workshop” and “Local Specialties,” to concentrate advantages and create complementary positioning. Currently, the newspaper’s WeChat followers exceed 150,000.

In July of this year, *Taicang Daily* enthusiastically launched its “Jianghaichao” APP, featuring four initial sections: “Taicang News,” “Social News,” “Lifestyle Information,” and “New Collection of Calligraphy,” establishing it as a comprehensive new media publishing platform. The APP strives to be the first to publish “Taicang’s voice,” promoting three-dimensional dissemination of mainstream public opinion and leading new media in Taicang. Simultaneously, the “Taobao Smart House” APP and WeChat platform were launched, expanding the influence of mainstream media and maximizing promotional impact.

Second, the newspaper pursued breakthroughs in government video livestreaming. To comprehensively demonstrate its integrated transformation capabilities, *Taicang Daily* ventured into government video reporting, focusing on live micro-video coverage of various events. This year alone, the newspaper invested nearly 500,000 RMB in video livestreaming equipment and drones. Beginning with its first live broadcast of the “Dulou Xiaohai Winter Fishing Festival,” the newspaper has seized opportunities for on-site livestreaming of events including “Happy Taicang—CPPCC Members Discuss,” creative DIY kite painting at the Jiangtan Wetland Park, the “Loudong Spring” Cultural Arts Festival opening ceremony, the “Run for Love” riverside mini-marathon, and the “Joyful Jincang Lake” Dragon Boat Festival races. By the end of July, six micro-video livestreaming events had been held, generating significant influence and attracting over 500,000 viewers, effectively enhancing the newspaper’s reputation in video reporting. Additionally, the newspaper has utilized video equipment to complement print media feature stories, organizing teams to produce short videos on topics such as vocational school cheerleading squads, the Zheng He ship’s arrival in Taicang, Italian import exhibitions, racewalking challenges, and the Taohua Island property lottery, publishing them on WeChat public accounts in “text + video” format to animate and revitalize traditional newspaper journalism.

Third, the newspaper sought breakthroughs in integrated graphics, video, and H5 content. By leveraging traditional newspaper resources and equipping them with new media wings, *Taicang Daily* has extended its reporting methods to achieve interaction between newspapers and micro-media, coordination between newspapers and client apps, and mutual reinforcement across newspaper and online platforms. In its “Taicang All-Media Journalists’ Rural Tour” series, besides featuring text and photo columns in the newspaper, the paper emphasized developing new reporting channels through WeChat public accounts using “text + H5 + video” formats and diversified key coverage on its APP, creating significant promotional momentum and achieving genuine deep media convergence. As is well known, *Taicang Daily* has deepened its grassroots presence, excavated new media potential, built new platforms, and further optimized and integrated its overall newspaper advantages. The newspaper’s steady development over the years has accumulated certain talent guarantees, providing human resources support for developing vibrant new media operations. Furthermore, the social connections, networks, and brand influence accumulated over the years have created more opportunities for expanding new media ventures. As the saying goes, carrying the genes of traditional newspaper professionals into video production

makes the form and content more profound, solid, and vivid.

2. Addressing Weaknesses in Media Convergence Breakthroughs

Traditional newspapers entering modern electronic media must satisfy audiences who have evolved from readers into users. In today's era, which is not only about reading images but also about scrolling screens, only by basing ourselves on traditional core businesses while implanting new media concepts and methods can we continuously expand the new media market. Therefore, on the path of media convergence transformation, future newspaper development space depends not only on establishing and valuing new media but also on placing hopes in new media.

“Human beings are the most active factors in productivity.” Reflecting on the effective advancement of media convergence in traditional newspapers in recent years, although substantial foundational work has been done, problems remain in hardware support and software coordination. The key issue lies in the lack of overall grasp of new media such as video, particularly regarding video architecture, support, and production capabilities. Specifically, there remains considerable room for improvement in traditional media's understanding of various talent requirements.

In recent years, *Taicang Daily* has emphasized strengthening its all-media journalist team by establishing a unified all-media center for command and dispatch, incorporating all journalists into all-media category management. Journalists now hold the title of “Taicang Daily All-Media Journalist” rather than simply “Taicang Daily Reporter.” This additional “all-media” designation means considering the needs of different media platforms throughout the entire process from writing and publishing to style and follow-up. For instance, when examining reporting processes on the all-media platform, considerations must encompass the 首发效应 of the APP, the audience-building dissemination of WeChat public accounts, and the in-depth reporting of the newspaper, requiring comprehensive planning to ensure various graphic and text reports find their proper place and demonstrate their respective strengths.

Vigorously promoting media convergence requires fully leveraging subjective initiative and human intelligence and talent, making every effort to manage personnel effectively. The current bottlenecks in editorial production and development primarily stem from a shortage of capable and effective personnel. Specifically, three areas lack sufficient talent:

First, there is a shortage of copywriting and creative talent. In the past, various planning schemes for newspapers excelled in text and depth, remaining almost exclusively in print media. Transforming text into video is not simple copying. Therefore, entering the entirely new video domain reveals a scarcity of various talents. In this new situation of media convergence, we need more comprehensive, all-around creative talents.

Second, there is a shortage of video production professionals. Although both belong to journalism, text and video each have their unique techniques. A live broadcast event requires not only process copywriting but also coordination among camera operators, hosts, editors, and technical support staff. While current talent development relies primarily on self-cultivation, which is time-consuming and slow to yield results, talent cultivation cannot be accomplished overnight. Video production requires professional talent, and newspaper new media needs cross-disciplinary recruitment to achieve multiplier effects.

Third, there is a shortage of management and operations talent. Over the years, the newspaper industry has developed an effective publishing process encompassing not only interviewing, editing, and publishing but also operations, management, and support—representing valuable institutional resources. However, management in areas such as video also requires a gradual process of familiarization and role adaptation. The current situation demands corresponding management and operations talent.

Media convergence is people-oriented. In this era of media integration, requirements for media professionals' competencies are increasingly demanding: all-media capabilities, composite skills, technical understanding, writing and filming abilities, on-camera hosting skills, and even post-production processing capabilities. Media organizations always hope for more such versatile all-around talents to emerge. However, considering this from another perspective, without a sufficiently strong organizational magnetism, how can media attract such multifaceted professionals who can work independently?

3. Reflective Considerations on Media Convergence Breakthroughs

The integrated development of media cannot be separated from platform foundations. Only by relying on financial resources and enhancing strength can continuous innovation and development be achieved. The key to media convergence lies in people. Only when human initiative and creativity are fully unleashed can the momentum of new media be sustained. Therefore, critical questions confront us: How can we advance deepening reforms with a strong sense of crisis, strengthen market operations, open channels for all-media editorial production, ensure mutual connectivity and integration, and stimulate overall strength? How can we optimize target responsibility management, adopt flat organizational models, form interest-based teams, implement project-based management, use systems to constrain costs and enhance efficiency, further strengthen the principle of greater rewards for greater work, improve compensation evaluation systems, and ensure people are utilized to their full potential?

“The road ahead is long and arduous; I will seek knowledge from top to bottom.” We must further build confidence, break through via reform, and proactively enhance the guiding power of mainstream media while continuously improving employees' sense of professionalism, belonging, and loyalty. In recent years,

Taicang Daily has leveraged its advantages in content, brand, talent, and credibility from traditional print media to vigorously develop converged new media. By enabling newspaper reading, video viewing, and interactive functions on platforms such as official WeChat accounts and client apps, the newspaper has achieved interactive and integrated development across print, web, micro-media, client applications, and screens.

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

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