

## Postprint: Analysis of Professional Roles of New Media Practitioners in the Media Convergence Era

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### Abstract

With the development of Internet technology, a growing number of audience members access information through “Weibo, WeChat, and news client applications” . Within the context of rapid new media development, the tide of media convergence has swept across the traditional media industry. Therefore, in the era of media convergence, traditional media must actively acquire knowledge related to new media in order to optimize their modes of communication. This paper primarily analyzes the professional role positioning of new media practitioners in the era of media convergence, to facilitate a transformation in the work mindset of media practitioners.

### Full Text

#### Abstract

With the development of internet technology, an increasing number of audiences now obtain information through the “two micros and one end” (Weibo, WeChat, and news clients). Amid the rapid growth of new media, a wave of media convergence has swept through the traditional media industry. Consequently, in this era of integrated media development, traditional media must actively acquire knowledge related to new media to improve their communication methods.

This paper primarily analyzes the professional role positioning of new media practitioners in the era of media convergence, enabling media workers to transform their work mindset.

**Keywords:** media convergence era; new media practitioners; professional roles; analysis

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The development of new media has gradually gained public recognition and is changing our lives. People can not only gather information from the internet but also disseminate information through online platforms. Furthermore, some individuals have proactively transitioned into media professionals in the new media environment, greatly enriching the professional backgrounds of media practitioners and bringing vitality to new media. Therefore, media practitioners need to examine their own work to achieve proper professional role positioning.

## **1. The Media Industry Enters a New Era of Integrated Development**

In August 2014, the fourth meeting of the Central Leading Group for Comprehensively Deepening Reform reviewed and approved the “Guiding Opinions on Promoting the Integrated Development of Traditional and Emerging Media,” formally establishing top-level design for media convergence. The media industry has thus entered a new era of integrated development between traditional and emerging media. Convergence is not merely a technological innovation or a refreshment of communication methods, but rather an update of concepts and ideas, and an innovation of systems and mechanisms. Both traditional and emerging media practitioners must keep pace with the new era to better realize media integration.

On August 8, 2017, at 21:19, a 7.0-magnitude earthquake struck Jiuzhaigou County, Aba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province. A news robot delivered the global first report through the official WeChat platform of the China Earthquake Networks Center in just 25 seconds. Over the decade since the Wenchuan earthquake, news communication methods have undergone tremendous transformation—Weibo releases, WeChat interactions, instant client updates, and live video streaming from the scene...Multi-port presentation has become standard practice in every “news campaign.”

## **2. Self-Positioning and Professional Mentality of New Media Practitioners**

### **2.1 The “Xiao Bian” Self-Positioning**

**2.1.1 Reasons for Self-Identifying as “Xiao Bian”** Due to the rapid development of internet technology, media types have become increasingly diverse. Among these, new media editors are primarily responsible for writing articles to disseminate information to society. In this information-technology-rich environment, the editor position has been colloquially termed “Xiao Bian” (a diminutive, informal term for editor). This professional appellation caters to contemporary audience psychology, bridging the distance with audiences and

reflecting an open media 格局. Therefore, the “Xiao Bian” designation aligns with the characteristics of the new era.

**2.1.2 The Role as Information Conveyer** The renowned American social psychologist Kurt Lewin proposed the “gatekeeper theory,” suggesting that media practitioners are primarily responsible for information screening, thereby controlling what audiences receive. However, contemporary media practitioners are transitioning from the professional positioning of “gatekeeper” to “information conveyer.” The main reason is that with the popularization of internet technology, audiences have access to increasingly diverse information channels, intensifying competition within the media industry. Media practitioners must transform their professional positioning to cater to popular tastes in selecting, discerning, writing, and conveying information.

## 2.2 Professional Mentality Presentation of New Media Practitioners

**2.2.1 Professional Mentality of Practitioners with Print Media Experience** **Moderate Reformers:** Due to the impact of new media, some traditional media practitioners believe they need to gradually change traditional news communication methods by following new media trends. Simultaneously, they maintain that traditional media practitioners should perform their duties well and continuously improve their professional literacy to adapt to the professional requirements of the new media era.

**Radical Reformers:** Media revolutionaries believe that media development must discard the old and establish the new to adapt to social development. They argue that traditional media no longer suits the trends of the times and therefore see no necessity for its existence, particularly holding strong views against print media. In summary, radicals are more willing to apply new media in their work.

**Free Thinkers:** Free thinkers often remain within traditional media. They not only recognize the transformative trends of new media but also understand certain drawbacks of the new media industry. Consequently, free thinkers often content themselves with the status quo and do not conform to new media development trends. Thus, free thinkers uphold the doctrine of the mean, believing that the essence of media has not changed.

**2.2.2 Professional Mentality of Post-90s New Media Practitioners** The post-90s generation grew up alongside the internet. With active minds, they can promptly keep up with internet development. Therefore, when entering the media industry, they often quickly adapt to the work environment. However, they are more susceptible to social influences and prone to 浮躁 mentality. Consequently, post-90s practitioners often choose media positions that seem attractive, sometimes causing them to violate the professional 初心 of media workers.

### 3. Daily Work and Professional Role Performance of New Media Practitioners

#### 3.1 Focus on Follower Growth as Fast Pace Becomes the New Normal

**3.1.1 Increasing Follower Count as a Key Work Component** Due to intense competition in new media, editors must keep pace with new media development and improve their professional literacy to produce content that the public enjoys reading. Meanwhile, their follower count serves as an important metric for organizational performance evaluation. Consequently, editors' writing content actively caters to public demand.

**3.1.2 Measuring Work Effectiveness in Seconds** As news information dissemination requires timeliness, media practitioners must promptly discover, write, and disseminate information to enhance their media organization' s competitiveness. Moreover, they must quickly respond to breaking information and instantly release it to the public. Therefore, media practitioners frequently work late into the night. In today' s information-technology-rich environment, they also take pride in rapidly disseminating news information, competing to complete their work every second.

#### 3.2 Professional Role Performance

**3.2.1 Makers of Fragmented Information** When disseminating information, media practitioners categorize their work content according to communication formats. For instance, some media primarily produce and release information containing images, short videos, and other content. Such fragmented content tends to be superficial, requiring no in-depth analysis of the published information. Due to its brevity and vividness, fragmented information is favored by the public to a certain extent. For example, people nowadays prefer downloading short videos from platforms like Douyin, Kuaishou, and Huoshan. However, the value of fragmented information is often limited.

**3.2.2 Filters of Massive Information** As of December 2017, China' s internet user population reached 772 million, including 753 million mobile internet users. The application of "two micros and one end" has accelerated information dissemination, with nearly every audience member simultaneously serving as an information receiver, disseminator, and publisher. Since the public exists across all industries, they sometimes discover news events faster than journalists and instantly release information via mobile phones. Some news events rapidly spread through people' s social media posts. However, in a complex and changing social environment, the authenticity of such information is uncertain, and false information often causes social disorder. Therefore, as professional media personnel, we must enhance our sense of responsibility and gatekeeping ability to carefully select useful, positive information for audiences.

New media not only provides audiences with a platform to obtain information

but also enables interaction among audience members. Therefore, new media editors can be considered organizers of audience interaction. Today, various APPs have emerged, allowing audiences to express their views in comment sections and interact with other audiences or new media editors. Additionally, Cooley's "looking-glass self" theory suggests that others' evaluations of oneself help individuals re-examine and understand themselves. Therefore, through audience feedback, new media practitioners can publish more comprehensive information. For example, during college entrance examination application periods: first, candidates can download relevant software to scientifically select schools; second, the software pushes application information according to candidates' needs, making their applications more targeted; third, candidates can post their questions on online platforms to find relevant professionals to solve problems; and finally, editors integrate these fragmented pieces of information for secondary publication to improve candidates' admission rates.

## Conclusion

In summary, media convergence development presents both opportunities and challenges for traditional media. Media are not only information providers but also information service providers and organizers of audience interaction. New media practitioners increasingly emphasize audience experience when producing and publishing information, such as creating popularized headlines for public understanding. Moreover, communication between the public and media practitioners has become more frequent, obtaining more useful information through interaction and feedback.

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

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