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Guizhou Daily Newspaper Group's Convergence Innovation Practices: Post-Print Edition

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Abstract

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Full Text

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Guizhou Daily, the official newspaper of the CPC Guizhou Provincial Committee, was founded on November 28, 1949, under the original name New Guizhou Daily. It was renamed Guizhou Daily in 1957 and has since become the most widely circulated and influential comprehensive party newspaper in the province after 68 years of development. Under the dual pressures of internal transformation and external competition from new media, Guizhou Daily Newspaper Group has continuously pursued reform and innovation, advancing the integrated development of traditional and new media. Today, it has evolved into a comprehensive all-media group encompassing 4 newspapers, 6 periodicals, and 6 websites, integrating newspapers, periodicals, websites, and mobile clients.

In early 2017, the Group implemented reforms to its organizational structure, functions, and personnel to further promote media convergence. A major outcome was the establishment of the Guizhou Daily All-Media Editorial Department, comprising four divisions: the All-Media Command and Dispatch Center,

the All-Media Interview Center, the Guizhou Daily Editing and Publishing Center, and the New Media Operations Center. These divisions respectively oversee unified coordination and command of all-media news propaganda, news gathering and manuscript organization, content editing and publishing for Guizhou Daily, and planning, editing, and distribution across new media platforms.

Since March 2016, the Group had been planning the revamp of Guizhou Daily through internal reforms, research, symposiums, and expert consultations, gradually forming a comprehensive plan. The revamp philosophy centered on “pursuing the brilliance of ideas and the fragrance of earth.” Its positioning emphasized the party newspaper’s party affiliation, its nature as a newspaper, Guizhou characteristics, a national perspective, and a global vision. The goal was to enhance the newspaper’s intellectual, journalistic, informational, cultural, knowledge, and aesthetic content, creating a high-quality party newspaper that is “correct, useful, and appealing” as well as “credible, professional, and accessible.”

On January 1, 2017, the Group officially launched the revamped Guizhou Daily, which restructured its theoretical pages and introduced a prominent commentary section to establish a theoretical commentary high ground, further strengthening the newspaper’s depth, interactivity, and appeal.

1.2 Timely Focus on Hot Topics

While news reporting requires real-time attention to social, economic, and political developments with immediate publication, commentary sections must also continuously monitor current hot topics, providing in-depth analysis and commentary to offer readers reference and guidance. This is crucial for ensuring timeliness, improving quality, and attracting readers.

Big data has been a key industry in Guizhou in recent years and represents a genuine economic and social hotspot. In response, Guizhou Daily organized and planned the “Big Data Development Observation” series of theoretical articles. The series featured both condensed content from research led by Chen Gang, then member of the Guizhou Provincial Party Standing Committee and Party Secretary of Guiyang, on “Building an Innovation-Centered City Led by Big Data,” and studies on big data’s specific applications in transportation, tourism, think tank construction, and public opinion guidance. This represented a relatively in-depth theoretical exploration of Guizhou’s big data strategic initiative.

1.3 Flexibility, Brevity, and Readability

Theoretical commentary, especially in party newspapers, often carries a reputation for being dry and boring. A common challenge is how to maintain intellectual depth while presenting content in a vivid, readable manner. To enhance readability and conciseness, Guizhou Daily’s commentary section implemented reforms across column design, article length, and presentation format.

First, most commentaries were limited to under 2,000 words, using short com-

mentary formats that are more accessible and easier for readers to digest. Second, columns such as “From the Web” and “Positive Energy Gas Station” were established to publish commentary on specific news events happening around us. These commentaries come from readers of different industries, ages, and genders, collecting and publishing their opinions to promote interaction and resonance with the audience.

2. Multi-Platform Three-Dimensional Presentation

In the face of new technologies like new media and the internet, traditional media have realized that relying solely on print media is insufficient for effectively delivering content. Even the best content requires diverse, convenient channels for dissemination, especially in an era of fragmented, mobile reading where print readership is declining in favor of digital, mobile, visual, and fragmented consumption. Consequently, many traditional media have launched “two micros and one client” (WeChat, Weibo, and mobile client) and other new media products to enrich their offerings and expand communication channels.

Guizhou Daily Newspaper Group has actively pursued channel and platform construction. Beyond revamping its print media, it has developed strengths in mobile clients, PC platforms, WeChat/social media, and cloud services, gradually forming a diversified, three-dimensional all-media communication platform.

2.1 Mobile Client

On November 5, 2015, the Group officially launched its official mobile news client “Jin Guizhou.” As a key project in Guizhou’s “Five Ones” three-dimensional network initiative, it serves as the province’s mainstream mobile news platform and bears important responsibility for authoritatively releasing information from the provincial party committee and government on mobile devices.

The establishment of the Jin Guizhou client integrated resources and talent previously scattered across departments like the photography and technology departments, organically merging their separate business functions. In terms of editorial process, it has gradually achieved a new platform-based production pattern of “shared front-end gathering, mid-end editing and command dispatching, and back-end distribution and presentation.” The basic workflow follows the principle of “client first, newspaper second,” effectively realizing one-time information gathering, categorized editing, and multi-platform distribution. To date, the client has exceeded 800,000 downloads.

2.2 PC Platform

On the PC side, the Group has developed two main platforms. First, it integrated existing website resources to launch Jin Guizhou News Network, a comprehensive and professional news information platform covering sections such as Wisdom, Regional, Economy, Culture, Education, Live Broadcasting, Watch-

men, Poverty Alleviation, Big Data, Big Ecology, Big Tourism, Big Health, and Cartoon News. Second, it established Guizhou Scenery Network, an image-focused website that has contracted with over 3,000 photographers and enthusiasts across the province to aggregate high-quality images, forming a professional image resource library integrating collection, aggregation, and distribution. These images have been categorized into sections including Traveling Guizhou, News, Image Memory, Local Chronicles, Guizhou Scenery Photography Chronicles, and Selected Photography.

2.3 WeChat and Social Media

Since the central government vigorously promoted media convergence in 2014, numerous new media products have emerged, with “two micros and one client” becoming standard configurations. According to the People’s Daily Research Institute’s 2014 China Media Mobile Communication Index Report, among 200 newspapers and 137 magazines surveyed, WeChat presence rates reached 93.5% and 87.6% respectively, with metropolitan newspapers achieving 100% presence.

In recent years, Guizhou Daily Newspaper Group has launched multiple WeChat public accounts and Weibo accounts, including “Guizhou Daily,” “Zhengqianfang,” and “Guizhou Scenery Network,” conducting series of promotional activities that have attracted substantial user attention.

2.4 Cloud Platform

The Big Data Guizhou “Media Cloud” project is a key platform for the Group. Through this project, it integrates media resources from across Guizhou Province and even nationwide, building a converged news cloud service center and a media big data analysis and mining cloud service center to provide news information, big data collection, data analysis, and information consulting services for the public, government, and enterprises.

On December 16, 2014, the Group signed a strategic cooperation framework agreement with the Guizhou Provincial Economic and Information Commission to jointly build the Big Data Guizhou “Media Cloud,” a key component of Guizhou’s “7+N” cloud engineering initiative. On March 30, 2015, it formally contracted with Beijing TRS Information Technology Co., Ltd. for the overall design of the Media Cloud project. On July 8, 2017, at the 12th China Media Annual Conference, the Group signed strategic cooperation agreements with municipal party newspapers across Guizhou and the Gui’an New Area newspaper to jointly build a Guizhou party newspaper all-media communication matrix featuring complementary advantages, mutual benefits, co-constructed platforms, shared resources, and coordinated development.

Through recent development, the Media Cloud project has integrated and operationalized 14 media management systems and platforms, including digital newspaper capture, unified file management, information push, and public opinion monitoring. It has actively connected and planned with brother party news-

papers and achieved linkage with municipal and prefectural party newspaper media across the province.

3. Cross-Border Integration and Diversified Development

Cross-border integration and operation represent important choices and characteristics of traditional media convergence transformation. Examples include Guangzhou Daily Group's "Metro +" channel integration project, transforming from a newspaper media to a comprehensive urban metro channel operator, and Guiyang Daily Media Group's "Media +" development strategy, achieving transformation and integration with big data and education industries.

Tourism is a core industry prioritized by Guizhou's provincial party committee and government. In recent years, the province has proposed the development goal of a big tourism industry and "blowout growth" in tourism. After the National Tourism Administration proposed the all-for-one tourism development goal in 2016, it quickly became an important direction for tourism development nationwide, including in Guizhou.

Cross-border integration represents the general trend, while all-for-one tourism reflects practical development needs. The organic combination of these two concepts gave birth to the Guizhou Daily Media Group All-For-One Tourism Brand International Communication Center, driving the Group's cross-border integration and transformation toward the tourism industry. Established on June 15, 2016, the Center positions itself as an aggregator and integrator of traditional, new, and self-media resources both domestically and internationally, aiming for effective communication with precise targeting as its characteristic. It serves Guizhou's tourism industry comprehensively, striving to become a planner for Guizhou's all-for-one tourism brand communication, a creator of tourism content promotion, a developer of distinctive tourism products, and an explorer of tourism resource integration.

Since its establishment, the Center has launched series of products and services by integrating internal resources and establishing external partnerships, achieving certain results.

First, it published the first domestic tourism magazine named "All-For-One Tourism." In January 2017, the Group's application to establish Guizhou All-For-One Tourism bilingual periodical was approved by the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television, creating an important platform for promoting Guizhou tourism to external audiences.

Second, it founded the tourism industry internal publication Guizhou Tourism Reference, co-established with the Guizhou Provincial Tourism Development Commission to fill the gap of lacking a tourism industry periodical in the province and build a platform for information exchange, industry dynamics, professional communication, and theoretical research.

Third, the Center has planned and organized series of tourism promotion activities, such as the 2016 “Mountain Park Province · Ecological Hiking Season” events in Liupanshui and Anshun, the 2017 “Jin Guizhou New Year Big Walk” ecological hiking activity, and the overall promotion of the Taijiang Sisters’ Festival in 2017, including press conferences, themed reporting, and media invitations.

Fourth, the Center is exploring the development of tourism cultural and creative products. As tourism cultural products represent important support for the tourism industry, and with the advent of mass tourism and all-for-one tourism development, consumer demands for such products are increasing. Currently, market homogenization is severe, with most products lacking creativity. The Center has been exploring the 梳理 (sorting) of provincial cultural resources and development of tourism cultural products, planning to establish a tourism cultural creative studio to fully exploit Guizhou’s ethnic and mountain cultural characteristics combined with modern tourism market demands. Additionally, it plans to implement a “Six Ones” project: a set of Guizhou tourism picture albums, a series of Colorful Guizhou tourism books, a set of Guizhou tourism maps, a set of Guizhou tourism internal information materials, a set of Guizhou tourism digital promotional products, and a set of Guizhou tourism promotional cultural creative products.

4. Characteristics and Reflections on Media Convergence Innovation

Based on traditional media development patterns and the Group’s specific practices, several new characteristics have emerged in the editorial process and revenue sources beyond simply launching new media products.

4.1 Characteristics of Media Convergence Innovation

First, the process has become clearly closed-loop. Traditional media’s gather-edit-distribute process was linear: what to gather, how to edit, what to publish, and in what form were entirely decided by the media organization—a typical “we write, you read” model with limited consumer participation. After media convergence, with diversified product forms including both traditional print and new media, the traditional process has been systematically reformed into a closed loop: content gathering → multi-stage editing → multi-channel distribution → user experience and interaction → back to content gathering.

Second, revenue sources have diversified. Traditional print media organizations, especially government mainstream media, were mostly public institutions with unified fiscal appropriations, resulting in limited business investment. Revenue primarily came from distribution and advertising, with distribution being the main source. With technological advances and new media development, print circulation and advertising revenues have declined sharply. As public institution reforms progress, traditional media organizations have transitioned to market-

oriented companies responsible for their own profits and losses. Under internal reform and external competition pressures, many face operational difficulties, with some even going bankrupt.

Since 2014, the inaugural year of China's media convergence development, post-convergence revenue sources now include: (1) Distribution income from retained print products; (2) Advertising income from both print and new media platforms; (3) Content operation income, providing valuable information consulting services by mining rich content resources accumulated over years, such as the Group's Media Cloud project; (4) Channel operation income, including proprietary channel operations (co-published pages, event operations, promotional services) and agency channel operations (building, developing, and maintaining promotional channels); (5) Cross-border operation income, with "Media +" strategies promoting integration with other industries, such as the Group's tourism industry integration through its All-For-One Tourism Brand International Communication Center.

4.2 Reflections on Media Convergence Innovation

Media convergence innovation is not an overnight process but a long-term cultivation and transformation. It is not a zero-sum relationship between traditional and new media, but rather one of mutual integration. To promote integrated development, several issues must be addressed.

First, the relationship between social and economic benefits. Media convergence is both self-salvation in the digital age and a fundamental requirement for expanding propaganda channels and strengthening public opinion guidance. As cultural system reforms advance and media organizations transition to market-oriented enterprises, they must leverage their advantages to enhance competitiveness and profitability while building all-media platforms to fulfill political propaganda tasks with high quality.

Second, the relationship between traditional media thinking and internet thinking. Traditional newspapers follow a "content production-oriented" model emphasizing "what we want to publish," with market channels primarily through newsstands and subscriptions. Internet-based new media follows a "user demand-oriented" model emphasizing decentralization, individual experience, participation, and interaction. If traditional media is "we write, you read" or "we broadcast, you watch," new media is "everyone writes, everyone reads" and "everyone broadcasts, everyone watches." Therefore, media convergence should not merely repurpose traditional content for new media platforms. New media is fundamentally a platform requiring broad public participation and interaction. Treating it merely as a new channel for news distribution may doom media convergence from the start.

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

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