

On the Development Path of Television Media in the Context of Media Convergence (Postprint)

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Abstract

Technological advancement drives vigorous development across all industries. In the media domain, internet technology has catalyzed the rapid emergence of new media. Emerging media, exemplified by smartphones, smart televisions, and mobile computers, have garnered audience attention and acclaim through distinctive advantages including portability, high speed, and interactivity. New media has transformed audiences' conventional approaches to receiving external information and perceiving developmental trajectories, while simultaneously exposing traditional media such as television and broadcasting to the impact of audience fragmentation. The year 2014 marked the inaugural year of media convergence in China. Under the guidance of national policy, diverse traditional and emerging media have each demonstrated their respective strengths, achieving mutual complementarity of advantages and resource sharing, thereby fostering a new configuration in the media landscape. Within this context, the question of how television media should refine their operations, pursue innovation, genuinely align with contemporary trends, and respond to the challenges posed by media convergence represents a focal issue of collective societal concern.

Full Text

Abstract

Technological advancement drives vigorous development across all industries. In the media sector, internet technology has facilitated the rapid rise of new media. Emerging media, represented by smartphones, smart TVs, and mobile computers, have gained audience attention and recognition through their prominent advantages of portability, high speed, and interactivity. New media has changed audiences' inherent ways of receiving external information and perceiving development trends, while simultaneously causing traditional media such as television and radio to face the impact of audience diversion. The year 2014

marked the inaugural year of media convergence in China. Guided by national policy, various traditional and emerging media have leveraged their respective strengths, complemented each other's advantages, and shared resources, promoting the formation of a new pattern in the media landscape. Against this backdrop, how television media can improve its operations, pursue innovation, and truly adapt to the times to address the challenges posed by media convergence is a hot issue of widespread social concern.

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For most young audiences, smartphones, computers, and other emerging media have become the primary channels for obtaining information and communicating with the outside world. Although traditional television media maintains a broad audience base, it has lost its dominant function. As internet technology continues to advance, emerging media increasingly aligns with audience preferences, while traditional television media faces a survival crisis of gradually losing its public opinion position and experiencing massive audience diversion. In this situation, accelerating the pace of convergence development with new media, leveraging new media's technological advantages while tapping into its own inherent value, is crucial for traditional television media. Television media represents the mainstream media form closest to audiences under the leadership of the Party and government. In the rapidly changing landscape of new media convergence, it is imperative for television media to transform its traditional business philosophy and utilize new media communication channels to realize its own value and advantages.

1.2 New Media's Diversion of Audience

CNNIC has conducted statistics on China's online video user base. By the end of 2015, the number of online video users in China had reached 461 million, and this figure continues to maintain a growth trend. The surge in internet users stems from the mobile era, where network media has attracted and consolidated audience groups across all age brackets through its novel and interactive advantages, gaining broad market presence and presenting numerous well-received works to audiences. Under such fierce onslaught from new media, television media undoubtedly faces significant negative external shocks. An increasing number of young people are no longer satisfied with passively receiving information in front of television sets but are eager to seize sovereignty in selecting media information. Surveys indicate that middle-aged and elderly viewers have become the main audience body for current television media. How to retain

audiences and maintain ratings is a question that television media must contemplate when undertaking its next phase of work.

1.3 Impact on Communication Concepts

“Media convergence” is an emerging operational model characterized by diversified information transmission channels. The Internet, smartphones, smart TVs, and other new media communication channels are effectively integrated with traditional media such as newspapers, television, and radio. All information resources undergo integrated processing and sharing, deriving different forms of information products that are then disseminated to audiences through various platforms. In this process, television media and emerging media are both collaborators in jointly disseminating information and competitors vying for resources and interests. New media clients are diverse, with a flourishing array of service types. Many telecommunications industry operators tend to select network video and mobile video, resulting in reduced market share for television media.

This policy implementation has placed television media in a disadvantageous situation of rising drama production costs, particularly for television media with weak financial resources, undoubtedly intensifying their market competition pressure. Additionally, as national standards for television media advertising placement become increasingly standardized, television media at all levels face restrictions on advertisement duration and content, causing television media to encounter constraints in competition with emerging media.

2. The Convergence Development Path of Television Media

2.1 Building Online-Offline Integrated Operational Channels

In an increasingly fierce media market competition environment, television media should build online-offline integrated operational channels to alleviate competitive pressure and stabilize operational foundations. In its convergence contact with new media, television media should consider how to transform traditional audiences into contemporary audiences through internet clients, providing them with more convenient information services.

Television media, as the mainstream media with the deepest mass foundation, possesses abundant information resources. By expanding publicity through cooperation with new media forms, television media can further increase the coverage of television channels in the media market and achieve good interaction with audiences. Local television stations should establish official websites, placing previously fixed-time broadcast television programs on these sites to satisfy audience needs for on-demand viewing and optimize audience experience. Simultaneously, television editorial staff can adjust program content based on audience feedback, enhance audience participation, and foster close emotional resonance between audiences and television media. Beyond establishing official websites,

television media should fully utilize currently most popular social platforms with the largest user bases, such as WeChat and Weibo, to enhance program influence. By using official Weibo accounts to explore and understand current affairs hotspots, or utilizing WeChat public accounts to launch program-related activities, the connection between programs and audiences can be strengthened.

To fully achieve diversified media convergence, the cultivation of all-media journalists is essential. All-media journalists refer to individual journalists whose interview activities can simultaneously complete news reporting releases for multiple platforms including mobile, television, and network ends, playing the role of “single combat” to most directly exert the promotional function of converged media. Emerging media forms represented by WeChat and Weibo have rapid dissemination speeds. After news events occur, media such as Weibo push notifications, WeChat releases, and network reports quickly disseminate basic elements of time, place, and event through “fragmented” short videos and short news, while television has almost become the final release terminal. Under these circumstances, television media should change its thinking to compensate for the constraints on media development caused by lack of timeliness, attempting development through the cultivation and construction of all-media journalists.

2.2 Enhancing Content Quality and Cooperating with Smart TVs

Smart TVs integrate the original external set-top box into the television itself, making television more closely connected with internet new media. On one hand, smart TVs greatly expand television information resources; on the other hand, smart TVs have the experiential advantage of large-screen viewing compared to PC and mobile terminals. Particularly for some television stations with limited capabilities that find it difficult to seek breakthroughs in technological development, utilizing smart TVs can achieve media convergence of broadcast content at low cost, obtaining promotional effectiveness equivalent to other information on the internet.

Smart TVs provide a broader platform for television media publicity and reporting, but the right of choice remains in the hands of audiences. Whether smart TVs can be utilized to enhance promotional effectiveness depends on program content quality. Adhering to the principle of “content is king,” combining regional characteristic resources for program production, and creating quality products within original brands can enable television media to grasp regional characteristics with one hand while promoting broader influence with the other, thereby gaining larger market share. Being close to local areas and close to audiences represents the most distinctive features and advantages of television media programs. In the increasingly competitive environment of the media convergence era, television media programs pursuing innovative paths of localization, livelihood-oriented content, and folk culture can not only make local audiences willing to turn on their televisions to watch people and stories around them but also shape unique advantages for local programs, providing conditions for programs to spread to broader and wider ranges and enhancing

program competitiveness.

2.3 Segmenting Audiences and Implementing Targeted Converged Media Delivery

Audience segmentation is a method to optimize media resource allocation and improve publicity efficiency using “big data” thinking and technology. Specific work includes utilizing big data to identify audience types and needs, then conducting targeted delivery through converged media publicity channels. During the scriptwriting process for the American drama *House of Cards*, investors collected information from 33 million audience members regarding age, residence, service terminals, viewing frequency and time, and even which segments were paused, fast-forwarded, or repeated, thereby deducing which actors and plot types were most popular to provide reference data for subsequent scriptwriting.

Television media might consider imitating the basic model of big data analysis, using public accounts for data collection and analysis. Television media can launch voting, event registration, group purchase registration, and other activities on their public accounts. Fans participating in activities need to fill in valuable information such as name, gender, age, occupation, and interests. When fan numbers reach a certain scale, television media can establish data models and delineate different fan groups to produce targeted video, text, and image promotional information for directional delivery. Television media can also open special columns on television channels and video websites to plan activities that fans enjoy. Of course, county-level television media, constrained by systems, mechanisms, talent, and financial resources, should proceed gradually and according to their capabilities in the construction and application of targeted delivery.

In summary, the arrival of the converged media era brings challenges to television media while also ushering in development opportunities. In practical work, television media should first correctly understand the connotation of the converged media era, comprehensively grasp the direction of current television program and emerging media convergence innovation, allow the powerful content production capabilities of traditional media to exert greater advantages, radiate tremendous vitality in the new environment of media convergence, and promote television media to fully fulfill its mission of guiding correct social public opinion orientation in this new era.

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

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