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How Traditional Print Media Can Develop Post-Prints in the Era of Media Convergence

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Date: 2023-10-08T00:00:00+00:00

Abstract

As media convergence deepens from the “addition” stage to the “integration” stage, and as traditional print media undergoes process reengineering through the “central kitchen” model and communication transformation with a mobile-first approach, how to build new mainstream media with strong communication power, guiding power, influence, and credibility has become an unavoidable issue in the new era of converged media. This article analyzes the convergence development path for traditional print media by examining how they can adapt to the development trends of the new era and leverage the advantages of various media. This paper briefly introduces the characteristics of media convergence, introducing topics of converged media exploration such as newspaper-web integration, integrated gathering and editing, and multi-channel dissemination. It analyzes how media convergence can develop from “addition” to “integration” from five aspects: content is king and heartfelt engagement is paramount, expanding channels to build a three-dimensional communication system, transforming mindsets to establish converged media thinking, daring to innovate with planning taking the lead, and exploring market-oriented reforms through the integration of traditional print media and new media. By maintaining the correct stance, adhering to professional ethics, safeguarding a clean and upright online environment, and integrating high-quality content with uniquely integrated planning, technology, communication, and platforms.

Full Text

Preamble

Journal: ChinaXiv Cooperative Journal • Integration and Development Research

Title: How Traditional Print Media Can Develop in the Era of Media Convergence

Abstract: As media convergence evolves from a phase of simple “addition” to deep “integration,” traditional print media face the critical challenge of transforming themselves into new mainstream media with strong dissemination capacity, guidance power, influence, and credibility amid reforms to central kitchen workflows and mobile-first communication transformations. This article analyzes how traditional print media can adapt to the development trends of the new era and leverage the advantages of various media platforms to explore pathways for integrated development. It briefly introduces the characteristics of media convergence, introducing topics such as newspaper-network integration, integrated collection and editing, and diversified communication. The analysis examines the transition from “addition” to “integration” across five dimensions: maintaining content supremacy with authentic engagement, expanding channels to build a three-dimensional communication system, transforming mindsets to establish convergence thinking, pioneering innovation through proactive planning, and exploring market-oriented reforms through the fusion of traditional and new media. The discussion emphasizes upholding correct positions, adhering to professional ethics, maintaining a clean online environment, and achieving integration between quality content, distinctive planning, technology, dissemination, and platforms.

Keywords: print media; media convergence; content is king; media convergence literacy

Classification Code: G206

Document Code: A

Article ID: 1671-0134(2018)07-037-02

DOI: 10.19483/j.cnki.11-4653/n.2018.07.005

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The internet is transforming the world at a breathtaking pace. Initially, traditional print media established official websites to publish primarily local news, significantly enhancing timeliness and enabling audiences to conveniently access desired information online. Real-time features such as comment sections and forums strengthened interaction between audiences and media. As the era of media convergence arrives, explorations in newspaper-network integration, unified collection and editing, and diversified communication have infused this news medium with the temperature of the times.

1.1 Content is King: Authentic Engagement Matters Most

High-quality, meticulously crafted content constitutes the core competitiveness of media and gradually builds powerful social value, influence, and credibility. In all-media matrix communication, it is essential to leverage the strengths of new media—speed, breadth, and interactivity—while capitalizing on print media’s depth, height, and credibility to compensate for its limitations. The transformation of traditional media is not merely a simple addition of newspapers

and new media platforms, but rather involves comprehensive internal adjustments across management systems, organizational structures, central kitchen construction, and personnel allocation to better produce content that aligns with contemporary development.

Content is king, and there are no shortcuts; authenticity is paramount in all endeavors. By focusing on content creation and striving for excellence, media can leverage content advantages to attract audiences, excavate focal topics and emotional threads, emphasize audience reading experiences and needs, and establish strong connections. Using accessible, grounded expressions to create warm, engaging content represents a practical consideration that all editorial staff must integrate into their work. The public is willing to pay for quality content. By maximizing dissemination efficiency and monetization through content, mindset, and big data, media can cultivate brand value and signature columns for traditional media and their new media platforms, ultimately achieving a “win-win” outcome in both social and economic benefits.

1.2 Expanding Channels: Building a Three-Dimensional Communication System

The transition from traditional newspaper distribution and websites to genuine all-media convergence requires one-time collection, multi-format generation, and multi-channel distribution to create a “central kitchen.” Media must adapt to the trends of platform mobility, socialization, and video orientation in the internet ecosystem to construct an effective three-dimensional communication system. This involves digitally transforming existing editorial workflows, initially establishing a public editorial platform, and moving toward front-end multimedia collection, mid-stage integrated multi-format processing, and back-end adaptation and distribution to various platform terminals.

All-media, which comprehensively utilizes text, audio, video, live streaming, H5, and other dissemination methods, exhibits several key characteristics: networked and digital media communication, diversified and integrated communication subjects, fragmented and niche-targeted audiences, polarized media forms, multimedia products, mobile terminals, and socialized media functions. By flexibly applying popular formats such as images, audio-video, H5, and 3D animation—carefully polishing everything from topic selection and manuscript writing to headline creation and layout design—media can provide diverse reading experiences through multiple channels at the most timely moments. Mobile live streaming, widely adopted by various media for its zero time difference and synchronized dissemination, has become immensely popular among audiences, enhancing simultaneity and the appeal and impact of reporting. This audience-friendly communication format enables mutual integration and connectivity among audiences, public opinion fields, and media discourse.

In the era of new media convergence, all media serve as tools. During the exploration of building a three-dimensional communication system, interaction with

audiences is crucial. Through the integration and interaction of social media and traditional channels, audiences should feel that their concerns are being addressed while media can gauge how many people are seriously engaging with their content. Maintaining audiences with authentic, high-quality content stimulates sustained and stable activity, and communicating in language they understand and appreciate can effectively enhance audience stickiness. After all, only quality traffic can generate breakthroughs in click-through rates. Media seeking substantial traffic must maintain audience stickiness by providing timely feedback on audience comments, questions, and concerns—especially those related to people’s livelihoods—and conducting follow-up reports. A media organization that urgently addresses public needs and thinks from the people’s perspective, demonstrating service consciousness, will undoubtedly gain public recognition and esteem, thereby increasing media attention.

1.3 Transforming Mindset: Building Media Convergence Thinking

For traditional media editors and reporters, media convergence represents an inevitable development trend in which no one should remain an outsider. It is essential to actively transform mindsets, adopt a “humble posture” to achieve “great presence,” and find one’s position and make contributions in the media convergence process. First, editorial staff in traditional media must enhance their media convergence literacy. By promoting media skills training, single-function editors and reporters can gradually become all-media professionals proficient in utilizing images, video, text, VR applications, and production—skilled at capturing highlights, daring to innovate, and enlivening media convergence transformation. Talent constitutes the primary resource. Traditional media must also attract outstanding high-skilled professionals, as with the rapid development of big data and cloud technology, talent competition has quietly become a core competitive factor.

Second, editorial staff must transform their mindset and build media convergence thinking. When reporters cover a story or plan a topic, they must fully consider its potential multi-format generation. For traditional print publication, the expression should be formal and appropriate to print media’s character. Simultaneously, as all-media journalists and editors, they must consider how to adapt standard text into content audiences prefer to read—whether through short videos, H5, or live streaming—and how to use multimedia means to enhance dissemination power and traffic meticulously. This gradual formation of new thinking also represents media adaptation to audience needs. Integration enables better interaction and more effective dissemination, representing not only a transformation in tools and methods but also a fundamental shift in thinking for every traditional media journalist.

Finally, it is crucial to determine content from the audience’s perspective. By providing timely warnings or reminders about weather, water, and power outages that concern the public, media can stimulate audience interest when they obtain desired information. Combining localized, in-depth, and service-oriented

content with daily life, and enhancing interaction with readers through news hotlines, Weibo, and WeChat, media can address public difficulties with professional spirit, provide authoritative assistance, and strengthen audience stickiness.

1.4 Bold Innovation: Planning Comes First

News planning involves decision-making and strategizing during the dissemination process of certain news materials, formulating detailed reporting plans to satisfy audience information needs and achieve expected communication effects. In the media era, news collection and editing is no longer a simple linear process but a multi-layered, creative endeavor. During interviews, journalists must be adept at discovering “news behind the news.” At each time node, media often have specific content to focus on, such as annual Spring Festival travel seasons, college entrance examinations, and golden weeks. The challenge lies in creating fresh perspectives beyond routine reporting, transforming angles to enable audiences to understand news more intuitively, three-dimensionally, and rapidly, which requires advance planning.

News planning must achieve three-dimensionality and completeness. Thorough interviews and deep excavation form the foundation of news planning, while personalized media combinations presented in audience-interesting ways can be utilized. Simultaneously, media must be bold in innovating reporting formats, such as H5, which provides audiences with alternative reading experiences by integrating text, images, and video—a delightful approach particularly suitable for media content innovation in the mobile internet era. Innovation requires editorial staff to continuously learn advanced concepts and technologies, break fixed mindsets, and broaden their horizons to innovate within tradition and seek distinctive development through integration.

1.5 Shifting Approach: Exploring Market-Oriented Reform

With traditional print media’s revenue declining, media organizations must break past business mindsets within the all-media ecosystem. Using newspapers and new media platforms to attract advertising from local businesses represents an initial step toward gradual market-oriented reform. First, media can organize various activities for government and enterprise promotion, building platforms for face-to-face communication between government, enterprises, and the public, adhering to the principle of “media builds the stage, enterprises perform, and the public benefits” to seek mutual development. Second, media must skillfully utilize multimedia means—such as WeChat, secondary WeChat pages, short videos, live streaming, websites, and Weibo—to conduct comprehensive enterprise promotion, thereby winning recognition from cooperative enterprises and broad audiences and ultimately establishing long-term, stable strategic partnerships. Finally, diversified industry development represents a pathway for transforming traditional media advertising operations.

It is important to note that during media transformation, some operators overly emphasize publishing various enterprise information, expanding promotional scope, and indiscriminately pushing content without selection—an approach that is not advisable. The best advertising consists of high-quality works that generate physical and mental resonance. Precise and well-timed utilization of multi-channel promotion often yields twice the result with half the effort. Advertising must also be authentic; profit should not be the primary consideration.

From “lead and fire” to “light and electricity” to “numbers and networks,” all-media has broken through the limitations of print media, shortened dissemination timeframes, and enhanced media-reader interaction. Regardless of the form of convergence, media must maintain correct positions, adhere to professional ethics, preserve a clean online environment, and achieve integration between quality content, distinctive planning, technology, dissemination, and platforms.

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