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# A Preliminary Discussion on Post-Print Television News Development Transformation in the Era of Media Convergence

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## Abstract

With the widespread adoption of various emerging information and communication technologies, interactive and customized communication modes have increasingly elevated the autonomous status of audiences, leading to the rapid rise of new media and making media convergence a prevailing trend. At present, how television news can attract audiences and secure development in the intensely competitive converged media era has become a critical issue for the industry. In response to these new challenges, it is imperative to further elucidate the characteristics of new media communication, proactively advance the integration of television, PC, and mobile platforms, and achieve the transformation and revitalization of television news through diversified expressive approaches.

## Full Text

### Preamble

#### A Brief Discussion on the Development and Transformation of TV News in the Era of Media Convergence

**Abstract:** As various emerging information and communication technologies are widely adopted, interactive and customized communication methods have increasingly highlighted the autonomous status of audiences. With the rapid rise of new media, media convergence has become an inevitable trend. Currently, how TV news can attract audiences and achieve development in the fiercely competitive era of media convergence has become a critical proposition for the industry.

Facing new challenges, it is necessary to further understand the characteristics of new media communication, actively promote convergence across television,

PC, and mobile terminals, and realize the transformation and renewal of TV news through diversified forms of expression.

**Keywords:** media convergence; TV news; predicament; transformation

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## 1. The Great Challenges of the Media Convergence Era

Statistics from China Radio & TV Rating (CRTR) on national TV viewership in 2017 reveal that urban TV viewers in China watched an average of 139 minutes of television per day, a decrease of 13 minutes year-over-year, representing a significant decline. The daily audience reach rate, which reflects the scale of TV viewers, dropped to 55.7%, down 4.8 percentage points from the same period in 2016—the largest decrease in recent years [1]. Meanwhile, data from the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology show that by June 2017, the number of internet users in China reached 751 million, with online news and mobile online news user bases growing by 1.7% and 4.4% respectively since the end of 2016, and online video and mobile online video user bases increasing by 3.7% and 5.1% respectively.

This contrasting data fully demonstrates that as media convergence enters a critical phase of reform, convenient mobile internet has accelerated audience fragmentation, placing traditional television media in an overall decline. TV news, long considered one of the “three driving forces” of TV ratings alongside TV dramas and variety shows, is increasingly experiencing “audience loss and diminishing influence” due to the year-by-year decrease in TV set usage and shrinking viewer base.

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## 2. Characteristics of New Media Information Dissemination

### 2.1 Transformation of Audience Identity

In the traditional media era when television, newspapers, and radio dominated, mainstream media played a crucial role in shaping both what the public thought about and how they thought about it. However, as society has become more open and inclusive, audiences’ desire for autonomous choice and self-expression has gradually strengthened, and they are no longer satisfied with passively re-

ceiving information. The promotion and application of new communication methods after the rise of new media have fulfilled these public demands.

Currently, whether on PC or mobile terminals, various media platforms and social software have emerged, giving rise to personalized information customization, streaming media bullet comments, social media sharing, and other interactive methods. These developments have granted audiences greater choice and participation in the information dissemination process, transforming their role from passive “information receivers” to active “information users.”

## 2.2 Fragmented Expression

Fragmentation manifests in two ways. First, fragmentation in information release and reception: With the development of handheld mobile devices, media can gather and release information anytime and anywhere, and the public can also receive information at any time, which has greatly strengthened the timeliness of information transmission. Second, fragmentation in visual presentation: New media presentation forms represented by short videos and micro-videos deliver diverse content through videos lasting from a few seconds to several minutes. This extremely fragmented expression stands in clear contrast to traditional TV news in terms of connotation and depth, largely satisfying modern people’s demands for the speed and scope of information acquisition.

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## 3. Innovation and Persistence in TV News

After the arrival of the media convergence era, various new media platforms have shown prominent advantages, but their disadvantages are also evident: channel confusion, information redundancy, shallow content, and fabrication are common problems. In the vast world of media convergence, the public still has a demand for authoritative and in-depth information, leaving considerable development space for traditional media information platforms represented by TV news.

### 3.1 Breaking Platform Limitations: “Convergence” as the Priority

In the era of media convergence, TV news professionals urgently need to abandon the “bystander” mentality and break free from the positioning constraints that the term “television” imposes on business scope and media platforms. TV news production should no longer serve only “television,” but should deeply integrate new media technologies and communication methods to quickly establish a presence across different platforms, including the TV “big screen” and mobile “small screen.”

Major TV media such as CCTV, Hunan TV, and Phoenix TV have made early moves by developing and promoting their own PC and mobile clients, gaining a firm foothold in the media convergence era. CCTV’s “Cbox” client is a prime

example. Meanwhile, other relatively weaker provincial and municipal TV stations have adopted alliance strategies to survive the fierce competition. For instance, Sichuan Radio and Television established the “Live Sichuan Alliance” with various municipal and prefecture-level broadcasters in the province through its “Sichuan Observation” client platform.

At present, radio and television stations at all levels are using media convergence technology to expand news gathering methods and distribution platforms to varying degrees. The role of media convergence as a vehicle for the renewal of TV news has become increasingly evident.

### 3.2 Transforming News Models: “Effectiveness” as the Principle

After media convergence, the scope and characteristics of the audience have undergone tremendous changes, necessitating transformation in TV news production and broadcasting methods. The key to this transformation lies in achieving communication effectiveness. To this end, TV news production and broadcasting should be based on the following three principles for innovative practice.

**3.2.1 For the TV “Big Screen”: The Principle of “Expression Innovation”** “If the earth doesn’t explode, we won’t take a holiday; if the universe doesn’t restart, we won’t rest. We’re here waiting for you through wind and rain, on holidays. There are no four seasons, only two: when you’re watching is the peak season, when you switch channels is the off-season.” On the evening of January 26, 2017, CCTV news anchor Zhu Guangquan, when reporting on the “Journey Home · 2017 Spring Festival Travel Rush” series, abandoned the traditional solemn posture and instead used internet-style language in an extremely humorous and approachable manner to communicate with viewers. This instantly made him a viral sensation online and won audience affection. The case of “punchline master” Zhu Guangquan demonstrates that in the media convergence era, where information is abundant, unique and highly personalized forms of expression help TV news stand out in a sea of homogeneous information.

Moreover, aligning with contemporary context is a key point of expression innovation. In recent years, CCTV’s “Xinwen Lianbo” program has added subtitles to explain important speeches by central leaders, used 3D charts to compare key data when summarizing major livelihood issues, and incorporated animated characters and internet catchphrases to vividly interpret policies. These expression methods with obvious contemporary characteristics make the disseminated information clearer and more interesting. From a social psychology perspective, people are accustomed to seeking identity in similar contexts. Actively applying emerging editing techniques and expression methods familiar to the audience can help TV news programs align with audience preferences and cultivate viewer loyalty.

**3.2.2 For the Mobile “Small Screen”: The Principle of “Light Editing, Deep Reading”** Mobile audiences have viewing demands for “short,” “fast,”

and “refined” content. We need to edit the most exciting footage of major news events into 1-2 minute short videos while supplementing them with extensive images and text to enrich connotation and extend information. This allows audiences to see first-hand news information in the shortest possible time during brief leisure moments. CCTV’s “V” series short videos have succeeded through this approach.

Since 2014, CCTV has launched micro-video programs such as “V-Guan” and “Zui Xinwen” to deliver the voices of national leaders at the first moment and hit the front lines of breaking domestic and international events. The popularity of CCTV’s “V” series micro-videos is evident from the data: during the 2016 Two Sessions, 1,142 “V-Guan Two Sessions” micro-videos were released with a total of 1.35 billion views; during the 2016 G20 Hangzhou Summit, 91 “V-Guan G20” micro-videos were released with 220 million views [2]. These staggering readership numbers fully demonstrate that mainstream TV media with video production technology and talent advantages can show strong competitiveness in new media as long as they effectively apply the principle of “light editing, deep reading” and push information in a “short, fast, and refined” manner.

**3.2.3 The Principle of “Network-Television Simulcast”** Introducing live web streaming into TV news programs to achieve network-television linkage is a beneficial way to expand program reach, optimize communication effects, and improve timeliness.

### **3.3 Adhering to Mainstream Values: Content is King**

Currently, online media and platforms suffer from prominent problems such as vulgar content, lack of originality, and credibility deficits. The public’s urgent demand for high-quality content and positive values has always existed. A survey shows that in 2017, about 70% of audiences used new media represented by websites and mobile apps as their primary information source, while simultaneously, about 70% of the public regarded traditional media represented by newspapers and television as the most trustworthy information source [3]. This indicates that although large numbers of audiences receive information through new media, traditional media still wield enormous influence in social discourse. “Content is king” remains the cornerstone supporting the development of the media industry.

Looking at the present, the core of “content is king” lies in adherence to mainstream values and innovation in production forms. Specifically, in editorial practice, this means strengthening news planning, improving the ability to integrate news resources, and striving for new improvements in authoritative news release, in-depth excavation, and precise interpretation. It also involves timely public opinion sorting, making new breakthroughs in rapid response, in-depth analysis, and effective guidance on social hot topics; emphasizing news theme extraction, improving network transmissibility, finding the convergence point between traditional and new media distribution; and upholding the service-to-

the-people attribute, strengthening media responsibility, telling good stories about ordinary people, and singing the melody of the times. Only in this way can TV news remain invincible in the complex information flood.

In the rapidly changing era of media convergence, the landscape of news communication continues to transform, and TV news will face increasingly more challenges on its development path. However, through the clouds, we can also see where the opportunities lie: “some things change while others remain constant.” What changes are technical means, expression methods, and communication models; what remains constant is the adherence to mainstream values and the belief in socialist journalism. Facing the future, as long as we identify communication patterns, adapt to era changes, grasp audience needs, and actively integrate the concept of “convergence” throughout, TV news can still transform magnificently and achieve great success.

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