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Exploring a Media Convergence Development Model Characterized by ‘Science and Technology’: Postprint

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

Abstract

On the path of media convergence development, each media organization should, based on its own actual conditions and distinctive characteristics, proceed from practical needs to forge a convergence path with its own unique features. Science and Technology Daily has actively explored this approach, taking the construction of the China Science and Technology Information Database as its breakthrough point to integrate information, platforms, and think tanks. By transitioning from a single newspaper to all-media, it has established a converged media matrix that integrates newspaper, website, microblog, and app, thereby enhancing the dissemination capacity, guidance power, influence, and credibility of news and public opinion.

Full Text

Abstract: Exploring a Media Convergence Model with “Science and Technology” Characteristics

In the pursuit of media convergence, news organizations should chart their own path based on their unique circumstances and characteristics, grounded in practical needs and utility. *Science and Technology Daily* has actively explored this terrain, using the construction of a China Science and Technology Information Database as its breakthrough point to integrate information, platforms, and think tanks. Transitioning from a single newspaper to a comprehensive media operation, the organization has built an integrated media matrix encompassing print, web, social media, and mobile platforms, thereby enhancing its capacity to disseminate news, guide public opinion, and bolster its influence and credibility.

Keywords: media convergence; central kitchen; mobile-first; new media; integrated media matrix

1. Media Convergence Begins with Demand

In recent years, media organizations across China have continuously explored pathways to convergence, yet no unified standard or fixed model exists. Each organization must combine its own realities and distinctive characteristics, proceeding from actual needs and practical utility to forge a convergence path suited to its unique features. To drive deep media integration and further enhance its social impact, *Science and Technology Daily* has identified the construction of a China Science and Technology Information Database as its strategic breakthrough. By developing comprehensive plans for this database and its implementation, the organization has established a three-step strategy: building a central kitchen, an information release platform, and a think tank service platform. This approach gradually integrates internal newspaper, web, and new media resources from the *Science and Technology Daily* organization, as well as information resources from the Ministry of Science and Technology system, other ministries, local science and technology authorities, and international science and technology sources.

Throughout this platform construction process, *Science and Technology Daily* has continuously explored and developed new platform-based products, expanding from the initial “one database, three platforms” model toward a more flexible “one database, N platforms” framework. Simultaneously, the organization has prioritized international cooperation and exchange in science and technology information products. By actively planning the construction of a science and technology think tank service platform, *Science and Technology Daily* aims to integrate scattered information resources within the science and technology system using a convergence-based approach. This initiative seeks to achieve deep integration of scientific and technological information resources, address current challenges such as information fragmentation and exclusive data control, accelerate the opening of public innovation information resources, and better unleash the economic and social value of innovation information to provide high-quality decision-making consultation services for national science and technology management departments.

2. The Central Kitchen Model Shows Results

The “central kitchen” has become the standard configuration and flagship project for advancing deep media integration. While practices vary across organizations, the basic consensus centers on “one-time collection, multiple generation, diverse distribution, all-day rolling updates, and multi-channel coverage.” Tailoring this model to its own editorial characteristics, *Science and Technology Daily* formulated a “Central Kitchen Operation Plan” that addresses editorial process reengineering, institutional restructuring, system construction, and physical workspace arrangements.

Rather than pursuing superficial integration, the organization has focused on practical process reengineering, clearly defining responsibilities for strategy, collection, editing, distribution, and evaluation while strengthening coordinated management of release ports. Institutionally, *Science and Technology Daily* has piloted a central command center dispatch mechanism. To realize the command and coordination functions of the central kitchen, the command center comprises the editor-in-chief, deputy editors-in-chief, and executive chief editors (heads of first-level editorial departments). The editor-in-chief provides overall coordination, deputy editors oversee daily operations, and executive chief editors rotate among department heads. Executive chief editors preside over daily topic selection meetings, pre-editorial conferences, and final manuscript approval sessions, organize coverage of major and breaking news, and are responsible for reviewing and approving manuscripts across all release ports. Based on operational needs, executive chief editors can temporarily reassign editorial staff to form project teams for breaking news or major event coverage.

To ensure smooth central kitchen operations and achieve editorial process reengineering, the organization has formulated and improved corresponding regulations covering the three editorial meetings, multi-level review, online and offline management, all-media performance assessment, and technical support. The three editorial meetings have strengthened planning and writing support for front-page stories, increasing both quantity and quality while enhancing manuscript control. As the central kitchen's online system remains under development, the organization has extended its existing editorial system's functionality by adding topic selection and dispatch manuscript databases to the Founder typesetting system.

Current operations demonstrate that *Science and Technology Daily's* central kitchen has begun to fulfill its unified dispatch and coordination functions. The reengineered process enables collaborative topic planning across collection, editing, and distribution stages, mobilizing most editorial staff and release ports to participate in topic selection. This approach achieves shared topic and information resources while fostering positive interaction and linkage among strategy, collection, editing, distribution, and evaluation functions.

3. Mobile-First Strategy and New Media Focus

Since launching its new media operations on June 1, 2016, *Science and Technology Daily* has adhered to the principles of “content is king” and “mobile-first,” employing text, images, video, AI voice broadcasting, animated graphics, H5, and other new media formats to continuously deliver high-quality content to mobile users. The platform has accumulated 300,000 followers, with articles frequently reaching millions of views. While effectively guiding public opinion, this effort has further expanded the brand influence of *Science and Technology Daily*.

Exemplary cases illustrate this impact. Exclusive coverage of the demolition of

the China Institute of Atomic Energy's former site achieved nearly one million reads through integrated print and new media distribution, with extensive media forwarding expanding the readership. New media platforms also enable real-time tracking and immediate commentary on developing events, significantly enhancing brand influence. Reports on the destruction of Weng'an ancient biological fossils and China's first domestic human cryopreservation case garnered 15 million and 12 million reads respectively within a single day after being pushed on WeChat, Weibo, and Toutiao. These reports sparked intense public discussion, were widely reprinted by major media outlets including *People's Daily*, *Guangming Daily*, and *The Paper*, and prompted follow-up coverage by other media organizations.

As the Ministry of Science and Technology's official government new media platform, "Rui Keji" serves as the premier channel for national science and technology policy releases, authoritatively publishing and exclusively interpreting the latest national science and technology policies. It has become a crucial bridge connecting government science and technology management departments with scientific workers, accumulating hundreds of thousands of followers and strong brand influence. Articles such as "The 973 and 863 Programs Have Been Cancelled: What Happens to Future Research? The National Key R&D Program Officially Launches" and "Central Government Science and Technology Plan Management Reform Plan Issued: Resource Allocation No Longer 'Scattered Like Celestial Maidens'" have each achieved over 100,000 reads on the Rui Keji WeChat official account.

The organization's research project service platform, "Rui Dongyuan," focuses on serving scientific researchers by interpreting science and technology policies, providing full-process project services, and promoting research achievement transformation and transactions. Through models such as "policy analysis + consulting guidance," "website information integration + policy release + online Q&A," and "all-media communication + policy interpretation + media promotion," the platform provides systematic publicity solutions for project and fund management, establishing significant influence. Rui Dongyuan actively addresses public concerns and confusion, clarifying issues and building consensus to enhance understanding and support for government work across society. Original articles such as "Comparison Between Old and New Management Measures for Major Science and Technology Projects" and "Don't Create New 'Obstacles' for the 'Decentralization, Management, and Service' Reform of Research Funds" have attracted widespread attention from the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Science and Technology, and the research community.

4. Integrated Matrix Across Print, Web, Social Media, and Mobile Platforms

On the path of media convergence, *Science and Technology Daily* has actively explored the transition from a single newspaper to comprehensive media, building an integrated matrix that combines print, web, social media, and mobile

platforms to further strengthen its position in mainstream public opinion.

The print component includes the main *Science and Technology Daily* as well as *Popular Science Times* and *College Student Science and Technology News*. The web component comprises China Science and Technology Network and China Popular Science Network, both aggregating authoritative “science” sector information for aggregated science and technology news production. The social media component encompasses over 50 accounts across Weibo, WeChat, Toutiao, and other platforms. Beyond its official Weibo and WeChat accounts, the organization has created specialized micro-portals such as “Morning Science News,” “Technology Changes Life,” “Rui Keji,” and “Rui Dongyuan” to meet the reading needs of specific audiences. The mobile component includes the self-developed and operated Innovation China APP, positioned to “promote Chinese technological innovation, disseminate the spirit of innovation, stimulate innovative thinking, and provide innovative services.”

The organization has also integrated its own multimedia channels by creating a “Convergence Matrix” menu on its official WeChat account, providing one-click access to the digital newspaper, official website, Innovation China APP, Weibo, Toutiao, and WeChat matrix for convenient reading.

Upholding the principle of “science and technology as the source, readers as the foundation” and highlighting its “science and technology” positioning, *Science and Technology Daily* produces high-quality news and information while innovating communication methods. This integrated development across print, web, social media, and mobile platforms has significantly enhanced its public opinion guidance capabilities.

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

Source: ChinaXiv — Machine translation. Verify with original.