

Editorial Career Transformation in the Digital Publishing Environment: Post-print Edition

Authors: Zhao Wenjing

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Abstract

Faced with opportunities afforded by new media, digital publishing has gradually emerged as a new direction for the development of the publishing industry, exerting a significant impact on its evolution. Consequently, traditional print book publishing is confronted with enormous challenges. For editors, it is imperative to adapt to the trends of the times and undergo professional transformation, transitioning from textbook editors to course editors, with emphasis on the key aspects of editorial transformation, seizing development opportunities, endeavoring to modify working methodologies, endowing editors with sufficient vitality, and gradually acclimating to the digital publishing environment. This paper primarily expounds upon the professional transformation process wherein traditional textbook editors shift forward and progressively transition into course editors within the digital publishing context.

Full Text

Abstract

Faced with opportunities presented by new media, digital publishing has gradually emerged as a new direction for the publishing industry's development, exerting significant influence on its evolution. Consequently, traditional print book publishing faces enormous challenges. For editors, adapting to the times requires professional transformation—from textbook editor to course editor—focusing on key transformation points, seizing development opportunities, actively changing work methods, and revitalizing the editorial role to gradually adapt to the digital publishing environment. This paper primarily elaborates on the professional transformation process of traditional textbook editors shifting forward in the digital publishing environment to gradually become course editors.

Keywords: digital publishing; textbook editor; course editor; transformation

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Author: Zhao Wenjing

In today's landscape, digital publishing is steadily growing and developing, bringing tremendous changes to publication formats, publishing processes, marketing methods, and readers' reading patterns. As an emerging publishing trend, digital publishing differs from traditional publications not only in product form but also in planning, production, marketing, sales, and operations, blurring the boundaries between publishing and media. This is particularly evident in textbook publishing, where—driven by educational and information technology—textbook publications have become more diverse and multidimensional, marking a clear departure from traditional print book publishing. Against this backdrop, traditional editors must undergo professional transformation, grasp the dynamics of digital publishing, thoroughly understand its technologies and workflows, and simultaneously pay attention to developments in the educational environment. By moving to the front end and actively transitioning from the role of textbook editor to course editor, they can achieve a genuine transformation into digital publishing editors.

1. The Concept of Digital Publishing

Digital publishing refers to a new publishing method that employs digital technology for in-depth content editing and processing, disseminating digital content products via networks. Its most important characteristics include digital content production, digital product forms, digital management processes, and network-based distribution channels. Digital publications encompass a broad range of materials, including digital newspapers, digital journals, online original literature, online maps, digital music, online animation, and online educational publishing. Digital publishing integrates publishing, digital technology, communication technology, multimedia technology, and communication studies. Editors in digital publishing must possess a deep understanding of digital product and service development, planning, promotion, marketing, and sales. Consequently, they need extensive knowledge. Currently, many traditional editors demonstrate insufficient attention to the industry, inadequate understanding of digital publishing technologies, and unclear comprehension of how digital publication content is expressed, disseminated, and sold. Since digital publishing workflows differ significantly from print publishing, most editors require further training. Moreover, digital publishing involves extensive and complex knowledge, leading to resistance among many editors.

3. From Textbook Editor to Course Editor

Amidst the emergence of various new publishing methods, books are no longer limited to print publishing; digital publishing has been added and is flourishing, gradually becoming the future trend and focus of the publishing industry. During this process, the primary role of editing has also transformed alongside the digital publishing environment. Therefore, editors must transition from textbook editors to course editors, making changes in both topic selection planning and editorial processing to adapt to the digital publishing environment.

3.1 Changes in Topic Selection Planning

Book content is inseparable from topic selection, which represents the most critical aspect of the editorial process. Good topic selection meets reader needs and creates strong publishing performance. Due to changes in the publishing environment, editors have undergone a significant transformation from textbook editors to course editors, requiring careful attention to the shift in topic selection planning. Advanced internet information technologies—such as analog audio-visual technology, digital audio-visual technology, satellite broadcasting technology, computer multimedia technology, artificial intelligence technology, internet communication technology, and virtual reality simulation technology—have been widely applied in education, leading to the emergence of diverse educational forms and publication formats.

In the digital publishing environment, editors must immerse themselves in course teams when planning topics, understanding course content, teaching methods, learner characteristics, and the timing and location of instruction. They should design topics based on these course features and requirements. For example, designing medical textbooks requires deconstructing traditional print book content according to the curriculum, presenting suitable reading material in text form while employing VR technology to visualize knowledge such as human anatomy and blood circulation systems in three dimensions. Similarly, for language textbooks, editors understand that learners may study in various environments and that language learning often involves individual study. Therefore, when planning such textbooks, editors can design dialogues, grammar knowledge, and cultural information as animations or Flash elements integrated into traditional publications. When planning topics, editors must consider not only the content itself but also whether and how that content can be converted into digital products, and how to make these courses more accessible to the public. All these considerations must be incorporated into course editing to meet digital publishing requirements and achieve successful professional transformation.

3.2 Changes in Editorial Processing

In the digital publishing environment, the content and methods of editorial processing have also changed significantly. Unlike textbook editors, who focus on

textual refinement, course editors emphasize deep processing and diverse development of content resources. Editors should adopt a “process once, use multiple times” approach, striving to deeply process and develop content resources so that these developed resources can meet various needs and requirements, thereby gaining strong vitality. Course editors must adapt to emerging carriers, understand their characteristics, and select appropriate carriers for classification based on relevant topic content. In this process, editors no longer serve merely as editors of textual content but act as intermediaries between content and technology. For instance, when creating animations for language textbooks, editors must understand teachers’ needs, personally write scripts, and transform text into feasible animated formats. When editing architecture textbooks, editors may review not only text but also virtual three-dimensional building structures. All these tasks require editors to master certain technical application skills and to design and review professional knowledge resources. The editorial process becomes a dialogue between teachers and technology, and between teachers and learners, with editors serving as indispensable “translators” in this conversation.

4. Key Points of Editor Transformation

Editorial transformation must begin with mindset shifts. For veteran textbook editors who have accumulated substantial experience and become proficient in textbook editing, their thinking patterns and work habits are already well-established. Transitioning to course editing is challenging, as they often approach course editing from a textbook editor’ s perspective and remain unclear about digital publishing trends. To address this, they must change their mindset, broaden their horizons, carefully consider the development trends of the digital publishing industry, understand its specific dynamics, and master the information technologies required for course editing. By applying more technologies in course editing, editors can become indispensable components of course design. Editors must also actively transform their previous mindsets, consciously understand the specifics of digital publishing, engage in deep thinking and research, change their inherent perspectives, and grasp the key points of editorial transformation.

Overall, as digital publishing becomes increasingly widespread, it presents both opportunities and challenges. Therefore, we must gradually adapt to the digital publishing environment, actively pursue professional transformation for editors, grasp the key points of this transformation, and transition into course editors, enabling editorial responsibilities to truly align with the digital publishing landscape.

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(Author's affiliation: The Open University of China Press)

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