

How to Accelerate the Integrated Development of Traditional and Digital Publishing in the New Era: Postprint

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Abstract

Under the impetus of digital technology and the Internet, the digital publishing industry has emerged and achieved vigorous development, while simultaneously exhibiting a trend of convergence in its competitive development with traditional publishing. This paper analyzes the advantages of digital publishing and the current development status of both traditional and digital publishing, and summarizes strategies for accelerating the integrated development of traditional and digital publishing in the new era.

Full Text

Abstract

Driven by digital technology and the Internet, the digital publishing industry has emerged and achieved vigorous development, while simultaneously showing a trend of integration amid its competitive relationship with traditional publishing. This paper analyzes the advantages of digital publishing and the current development status of both traditional and digital publishing, and summarizes strategies for accelerating the integrated development of traditional and digital publishing in the new era.

Keywords: Traditional Publishing; Digital Publishing; Integrated Development

Introduction

In the new era, both traditional and digital publishing hold significant importance. Therefore, how to leverage the advantages of both and achieve their integration has become a critical issue for the future development of the publishing industry.

1.1 Advantages of Traditional Publishing

Digital publishing's greatest advantage over traditional publishing lies in production and distribution. Traditional publishing, primarily paper-based, requires paper as a medium and produces books through printing, involving transportation and sales steps for distribution. Digital publishing uses the Internet as its medium, requires no physical distribution, and enables unlimited rapid copying after a single edit, saving substantial human and material resources while dramatically increasing dissemination speed and reducing costs. Additionally, digital publications are edited once, with subsequent distribution completed through copying, making production cycles far shorter than traditional publishing, which relies on numerous printing runs.

Paper media represents the primary channel for traditional publishing, with paper books as the main product. This publishing form has undergone extensive development in China, with every process from printing to distribution following clear and strict standards, forming a mature system that ensures high quality. Moreover, people recognize greater authority in paper books, giving traditional publishing significant advantages over the still-maturing digital publishing industry. Furthermore, paper books offer excellent reproducibility, enabling readers to engage in deeper thinking during reading, which facilitates knowledge dissemination and promotion—an irreplaceable advantage. Therefore, despite changing reading habits in the digital age and favorable conditions for digital publishing, traditional publishing maintains considerable strengths in the publishing industry.

1.2 Continuous Improvement of Digital Publishing

Propelled by rapid digital technology development and high Internet penetration, the digital publishing industry is continuously improving and developing at an accelerating pace. On one hand, widespread Internet adoption has not only transformed people's lifestyles but also created vast development space for digital publishing. By December 2016, China's Internet user population had reached 731 million, and operational data from the telecommunications industry in the first half of 2017 showed that mobile Internet users had exceeded 1.1 billion, providing an enormous market for digital publishing. Mobile newspapers, mobile magazines, Chinese literature websites, and online literature have all developed rapidly during this process [?]. On the other hand, continuous advancements in digital technology have significantly driven digital publishing development. Supported by smartphone operating systems, mobile terminals have continuously upgraded to become the primary means of digital reading, with many people developing habits of reading on mobile devices. Coupled with the development of digital readers and search engines, these factors have provided strong momentum for digital publishing growth. Throughout this process, the digital publishing industry has continuously improved, forming various effective business models, such as original online literature represented by Qidian and Zongheng, and professional academic journals like Wanfang and CNKI.

2.2 Rich Content Sources

Regarding digital publishing content, China's digital publishing industry differs considerably from developed countries with mature digital publishing industries, creating a characteristic of diverse content sources in China's digital publishing sector. This feature is primarily manifested through online literature. While conventional digital publications are digitized versions of paper books, online literature represents an entirely new reading model based entirely on the Internet after its rise, characterized by originality. The exact emergence time of online literature is somewhat unclear, with the earliest Chinese original online novel traceable to *Rat Civilization* published in 1991. However, it only gained large-scale public acceptance in the early 21st century and developed rapidly over the following decade. Platforms such as Qidian, 17K, and Zhulang provide both creation and publishing venues for authors and reading platforms for readers. These platforms make the threshold for online literature creation extremely low, resulting in far richer content sources for digital publishing compared to traditional publishing [?].

2.3 Diverse Product Forms

Traditional publishing generally uses only paper as its medium, resulting in relatively singular forms, whereas digital publishing products feature highly diverse forms, giving them tremendous advantages in contemporary dissemination. On one hand, although digital publications are read through mobile electronic terminals, the information age offers diverse forms of mobile terminals, enabling people to read using mobile phones, e-readers, tablets, and learning devices, making product forms highly varied [?]. Meanwhile, with the development of digital publishing and technology, readers can choose among multiple reading methods, including online reading, client-based reading, and WAP reading.

2.4 Diversified Business Models

Beyond the aforementioned advantages, the digital publishing industry has also developed diversified business models. Regarding publication and sales, publishing institutions can choose to sell complete single books or adopt serial models—the latter being common in online literature, where writers need not complete entire works before release but can serialize fixed numbers of chapters daily, with readers paying per chapter. Additionally, publishing institutions have various profit models. Beyond the most common content charges, they can leverage the massive traffic on original literature websites to establish advertising profit models by publishing page advertisements for promotional effects and profit. Furthermore, the digital publishing industry has established profit models of offering paid value-added services, primarily relying on products themselves to accumulate popularity and create community effects that attract user consumption.

3.1 Accelerating Traditional Publishing Transformation and Upgrading

Significant differences in printing, publishing, and dissemination between traditional and digital publishing create substantial obstacles to integrated development. Therefore, achieving integrated development of digital and traditional publishing in the new era requires first transforming and upgrading traditional publishing. On one hand, traditional publishing institutions must reform their operational systems, expand new content acquisition and dissemination channels, such as developing digital newspapers and establishing digital libraries, while formulating new publishing processes centered on the Internet. On the other hand, product production must be upgraded and transformed by adopting new production forms such as digital printing and audio-visual printing.

3.2 Emphasizing Digital Technology Acquisition and R&D

Digital technology is the driving force behind digital publishing development and the key to traditional publishing transformation and upgrading. Therefore, publishing institutions must attach great importance to digital technology and fully utilize it. First, publishing institutions can establish close cooperative relationships with relevant technology companies, leveraging their technical strength to fully exploit their own resource advantages. For example, establishing academic journal websites requires both digital technology support and substantial academic journal resources from publishing institutions. Second, publishing institutions can choose to conduct independent R&D of digital technology, enabling them to master core technologies with independent intellectual property rights while better meeting their own technical needs, thereby enhancing their core competitiveness in the publishing industry [?].

3.3 Strengthening Government Guidance and Policy Support

Although China's digital publishing industry has developed rapidly, the overall industry remains immature, with many issues continuously emerging during development, such as online literature copyright problems, which hinder digital publishing development to some extent. Therefore, to help the digital publishing industry achieve rapid and stable development, government departments must provide active guidance and policy support. For instance, they should increase financial investment in key projects such as knowledge resource databases and digital copyright protection technology R&D, and improve relevant legal systems to protect research content, products, and copyrights.

3.4 Promoting Publishing Resource Integration

Currently, publishing resource integration exists only in the form of digitizing paper books, with deep resource integration and development yet to mature.

Therefore, both publishing institutions and government departments should make efforts in publishing resource integration and development. Although current digital publishing resources are relatively abundant, the sheer volume of content means that digital resource organization lags far behind current digital publishing needs. Publishing institutions must organize existing digital publishing resources to ensure quality while conducting deep development to expand other business models. For example, many online literary works have recently served as scripts for films and television series or been adapted into games. These works have massive reader bases, thus generating higher attention for games, films, and television series.

3.5 Creating a Diversified Publishing Industry

The integrated development of digital and traditional publishing has become an inevitable trend in the future publishing industry, with both possessing unique advantages and irreplaceable roles. Therefore, in their integration, publishing resources must be reasonably allocated, and product positioning and business models must be adjusted to fully leverage their respective advantages, enabling them to complement each other in publishing industry development. Digital publishing features fast dissemination, broad audiences, diverse forms, and pollution-free characteristics, making it suitable for practical, news, and entertainment content to meet people's needs for information and leisure. Traditional publishing enables long-term reproduction and embodies the design and collection value of physical books, making it appropriate for educational resources, teaching supplements, or classic cultural works as premium collectibles with clear market positioning and target audiences.

Conclusion

In summary, although digital publishing holds tremendous advantages over traditional publishing, traditional publishing also has irreplaceable functions. Therefore, future efforts must focus on digital technology and publishing resource integration to promote the integrated development of traditional and digital publishing, creating favorable conditions for the publishing industry's development.

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