

He Dawei: Expanding Postprint from Traditional Manuscript Submission to Cloud Services

Authors:

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

Abstract

In the mobile internet era, propelled by new technologies such as big data, cloud computing, and sensors, mass media is evolving toward intelligence and mobility. In the video streaming domain, Reuters has launched its mobile client ReutersTV, the Associated Press has developed its live video business with products like AP Direct and Live Choice, and AFP has focused on high-definition video technology. As video content has become a critical trend in mobile development, Xinhua News Agency has achieved...

Full Text

The Transformation from Traditional News Supply to Cloud Services: Xinhua News Agency's Innovation in Media Convergence

In the mobile internet era, propelled by new technologies such as big data, cloud computing, and sensors, mass media is evolving toward intelligence and mobility. In the video streaming domain, Reuters has launched its mobile client ReutersTV, the Associated Press has developed its live video business with products like AP Direct and Live Choice, and AFP has focused on high-definition video technology. As video content has become a critical trend in mobile development, Xinhua News Agency has achieved breakthrough progress in live streaming and mobile transformation. Through initiatives ranging from On-site News to Xianchang Cloud and Xianchang Plus, Xinhua has not only realized instant capture, transmission, reception, review, and publication of text, photo, video, and live-streaming content from the field, but has also built a cloud platform that empowers media industry users to innovate their news supply models. He Dawei, Deputy Editor-in-Chief of Xinhua News Agency's New Media Center, shared these pioneering measures in Xinhua's media convergence journey in his presentation titled "Xinhua News Agency: Expanding from Traditional News Supply to Cloud Services."

The Revolution of On-Site News

True mobile transformation cannot simply replicate traditional workflows, collection methods, and editing processes, with so-called “new media editors” copy-pasting finished products onto mobile platforms—that is pseudo-mobilization. On-site News addresses a core problem by revolutionizing the source of reporting. Previously, when covering breaking events, journalists would gather substantial material, return to the newsroom to write stories, and only then transmit them for publication, causing significant delays in timeliness. With mobile reporting, journalists operate in a “reporting while moving” state. From the moment a journalist observes a scene to when editors process it and audiences receive it on their terminals—sometimes even within our news feed—the entire cycle takes as little as ten seconds, essentially synchronizing with the event itself and achieving true “what you see is what you get.” Since its implementation at Xinhua, this concept has produced remarkable changes. For over a decade, Xinhua has emphasized transforming its content structure, initially advocating for equal emphasis on text and photos. After 4G technology emerged, the agency called for increased video acquisition, yet most operations remained text-centric due to institutional inertia. However, after launching On-site News, we were astonished to find that photos now account for 60% of coverage, video for 30%, live streaming is rapidly increasing, and pure text reports have become rare. This quiet transformation in reporting structure demonstrates how product innovation can drive journalistic innovation. Another significant change involves adapting writing styles to align with mobile internet dissemination patterns, creating content that netizens genuinely want to read. On-site News enables journalists to shift their context and tone during mobile reporting, unearthing more stories and details that have earned widespread user approval on new media platforms—another business-level change driven by product innovation.

Theoretical Foundations and Platform Evolution

In November 2015, President Cai Mingzhao proposed a famous thesis: “The development of human journalism history is essentially a process of bringing audiences increasingly into synchronization with the scene.” Based on this thesis, Xinhua launched its On-site News product on the eve of the 2016 Two Sessions, with over 3,000 Xinhua journalists worldwide now using this system to file stories. President Cai’s another important assertion states: “All major transformations in the media field to date have been driven by technology, but regrettably, none of these transformations have been led by media themselves.” This raises the question of how to strengthen the application of new technologies, product innovation, and model innovation to better serve our users during media convergence. While future media convergence will not be purely technological, technology will serve as a critical lever.

In essence, On-site News allows journalists to use a single mobile device to capture text, photos, videos, and live streams from the field in real time—shooting, transmitting, receiving, reviewing, and publishing instantly. The launch of On-

site News in 2016 brought numerous changes across all dimensions, clearly pointing toward the future of media convergence. On February 19, 2017, Xinhua opened its platform, deriving the Xianchang Cloud national service platform from On-site News. Xinhua packaged its product system into an open platform for all media colleagues to use.

Xianchang Cloud: An Open Platform for Industry-Wide Mobile Reporting

Xianchang Cloud enables all media organizations to achieve mobile, multimedia collection like Xinhua. Through the Xianchang Cloud app, media can output H5 reporting pages for cross-platform distribution. Content can be published across three platforms: first, on their own platforms (WeChat, Weibo, apps, websites); second, on Xinhua's client and website to meet the need for high-end, national-level dissemination; and third, on commercial platforms like Toutiao and Yidian Zixun, helping users achieve viral, large-scale distribution.

Currently, over 2,300 organizations use Xianchang Cloud, with more than 12,800 journalists registered. The growth curve shows strong momentum and rapid acceleration. The platform has supported over 28,000 on-site news events. Xianchang Cloud includes numerous services: free tools, server bandwidth, and training. Additionally, the platform coordinates reporting initiatives, launching joint coverage operations. For example, organizing a three-day live broadcast with 16 provincial newspapers was previously difficult to achieve but can now be rapidly realized on this cloud platform in the internet era.

Future Directions: Xianchang Plus and Vertical Ecosystems

After opening Xianchang Cloud in 2017, Xinhua launched Xianchang Plus in 2018. Current user coverage primarily focuses on party newspapers at all levels, municipal and provincial party organs, television stations, and radio stations. Moving forward, we hope to conduct deep cooperation with industry sectors, associations, and vertical media to build vertical ecosystems in various fields, transforming traditional industries through online production methods and realizing the "Internet Plus" vision.

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

Source: ChinaXiv — Machine translation. Verify with original.