

Analysis of Convergent Communication Strategies for TV People's Livelihood News (Postprint)

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Abstract

The rapid rise of new media has shattered the tripartite pattern of traditional media, ushering in a converged media ecological environment where old and new media counterbalance each other. Under this new communication landscape, technological upgrades driving media convergence have propelled transformations in news production methods, information reception patterns, and information dissemination modes. As a former high-rating program format, people's livelihood news programs have become mired in development within the new media environment. This paper explores development strategies for TV people's livelihood news within a converged communication environment from aspects including development philosophy, content innovation, technological upgrading, communication channel construction, and talent team building, aiming to provide new perspectives for the development of TV people's livelihood news.

Full Text

Analysis of Convergence Strategies for Television People's Livelihood News

Abstract

The rapid rise of new media has shattered the traditional tripartite dominance of conventional media, ushering in a converged media ecosystem where old and new media coexist as rivals. In this new communication landscape, technological upgrades driving media convergence have transformed news production methods, information reception patterns, and dissemination approaches. People's livelihood news programs, once high-rating formats, now find themselves mired in difficulties within this new media environment. This paper examines development strategies for television people's livelihood news from the perspectives

of development philosophy, content innovation, technological upgrading, communication channel construction, and talent team building, aiming to provide new insights for the evolution of this genre.

Keywords: television people's livelihood news; new media; transformation; strategies

In the early 21st century, a wave of television people's livelihood news (Public Journalism) swept through China's television industry. Local stations led the reform charge, with Jiangsu Television's City Channel launching *Nanjing Zero Distance*, which focused its lens on ordinary Nanjing residents and highlighted interesting stories from their daily lives. This format quickly proliferated across regional television channels nationwide, becoming a crucial ratings driver for local broadcasters. People's livelihood news emerged in response to audience demand for program diversity, representing a unique journalistic form that aligned with domestic news development patterns. However, in recent years, this genre has developed serious maladies—including sensationalism, homogenization, and vulgarization—that have created bottlenecks for its development in the converged media ecology, making transformation imperative.

The concept of Public Journalism, proposed by American scholars such as Stanley Baran in the late 20th century, advocated actively engaging audiences in reporting important civic events to organize and promote public discussion and revitalize civic life. It aimed to inform the public about how to address social problems and help people actively seek solutions. As an imported concept, Public Journalism was overshadowed by domestic people's livelihood news from its inception, never gaining practical traction and remaining merely an academic research hotspot in Chinese journalism circles. Subsequently, as people's livelihood news momentum waned, American Public Journalism theory evolved toward "citizen journalism" in China. Whether Public Journalism can serve as a cure for domestic people's livelihood news remains unverified by practice.

1. Philosophy Transformation: Shifting Traditional Media Management Concepts

On August 18, 2014, the Central Leading Group for Comprehensively Deepening Reform reviewed and adopted the *Guiding Opinions on Promoting the Integrated Development of Traditional and Emerging Media*, which stated that "promoting media convergence development requires placing technological construction and content construction in equally important positions" and called for efforts to "create a batch of new mainstream media with diverse forms, advanced means, and strong competitiveness, build several new media groups with powerful strength and communication credibility, influence, and shape a modern communication system with three-dimensional diversity and integrated development." Under the accelerated transformation from traditional to emerging media, conventional media management concepts have become unsuitable for

the converged media environment. In terms of creative philosophy for television people's livelihood programs, continuing traditional production and dissemination methods will inevitably result in the loss of emerging online users.

Although television media remains the authoritative channel through which most people currently obtain news and a trusted public medium, new media grown from internet soil have allowed traditional television audiences to experience the benefits of interactive communication and diversified usage scenarios. Particularly when facing a new generation of internet users, new media has become a formidable competitor to television. Television media must accelerate the transformation of its management and production philosophies, employing internet thinking to drive integrated media development and launching comprehensive media innovations from content production to operational services.

2. Content Production: Boldly Innovating News Genres

Industry scholars focusing on the transformation of television people's livelihood news have concentrated their discussions on Public Journalism and "big livelihood news." Big livelihood news represents a journalistic style relative to "small livelihood news," emphasizing universal and common issues among ordinary people. It shifts from simple factual reporting to interpreting issues through a livelihood perspective, requiring both detailed coverage of individual events and in-depth exploration of broader social problems. This shares common ground with Public Journalism's concern for public discussion and social issue agenda-setting. However, given divergent political and public policy contexts, the imported Public Journalism concept is unsuitable for direct transplantation and faces operational difficulties. While experiments with big livelihood news demonstrate higher feasibility, they must avoid the homogenization plaguing domestic people's livelihood news programs, otherwise they will struggle to escape the development paradox.

When planning topics, production teams can search online for hot issues based on audience preferences to discover quality information resources. They need no longer rely solely on traditional phone tips for story leads but can increasingly obtain news clues and integrate materials through new media platforms, enhancing program content diversity to meet audience demand for multifaceted information. Traditional media maintains strict information gatekeeping with more mature content production processes and professional editorial teams. New media, however, surpasses television news in timeliness, channel diversity, and information interactivity—precisely compensating for television's shortcomings. Production teams can leverage the internet's characteristics of immediacy, freedom, interaction, and sharing by uploading people's livelihood news program resources to online platforms, achieving "multi-screen dissemination" of people's livelihood news and providing audiences with diversified access points. Simultaneously, they can use new media channels to promote television programs, collect audience feedback, interact with fans, broaden dissemination channels, and effectively achieve communication impact conversion to enhance program

influence.

3. Channel Upgrading: Building a Multimedia Communication Matrix

“Television media going online represents the first step in responding to internet impact and achieving new media transformation.” Actively utilizing new media technology to build new media communication platforms and achieve integrated resource sharing between television and internet represents the top priority for expanding the reach and enhancing the brand influence of television people’s livelihood news. In the new media environment, it has become an irreversible trend for television people’s livelihood news to ride the internet express and achieve integration and interaction with new media. Network technological transformation has greatly improved information production efficiency and reduced information search costs, making mass production and rapid iteration the replacement pattern for all types of information in the internet era. This enriches audience media access rights and provides ample news lead sources for people’s livelihood news programs.

4. Technology Upgrading: Comprehensively Enhancing News Production Technology

Portable devices and the internet have turned everyone into a journalist and news commentator. Technology serves as the primary driver of media convergence while also catalyzing a fusion in news production. Massive online news information sources allow journalists to know world affairs without leaving home and conduct news feature planning. The mainstream media’s verification and filtering of online news becomes even more important. The UGC (User-Generated Content) news production model has gained recognition from television media, blurring the traditional identity boundaries of television news producers. The emergence of news robots has replaced formulaic news production work, allowing news editors to devote more energy to in-depth news excavation. Data news has prompted news producers to focus on technological innovation in news genres, with television news production organizations actively responding to media convergence by upgrading technological shortcomings, building information resource databases, all-media information distribution systems, and “Central Kitchen” production platforms to actively advance organizational transformation driven by technology.

In the new media era of information overload, television people’s livelihood news, as “old media,” must still adhere to its advantages, strictly screen information resources, produce high-quality content, uphold journalistic professionalism, emphasize the intrinsic value of news information, balance diversity and depth, gradually develop distinctive characteristics, and build a people’s livelihood news program brand.

In terms of technological innovation in journalism, robot news, data news, and

collaborative journalism have emerged in recent years, with data news having the most significant impact. Data news is not a single news genre but a general term for news narratives encompassing leading statistical tools and news production methods, with visualization as its crucial manifestation. Data news derives new insights from dry numbers through data mining and information processing technologies. CCTV's news program *Number Says Community of Shared Future* mined over 100 million GB of data, employing visualization data analysis software, 3D modeling software, and post-production compositing software to complete 32 sets of big data visualization videos, thereby analyzing and discovering connections among over 4 billion people in countries along the Belt and Road.

CCTV's "Central Kitchen" integrated media news production process essentially constructs an all-media shared news production platform. All news materials can be shared in the database, and editing software, H5 templates, data calculation software, and other tools for both old and new media can also be shared. This news production method and organizational structure enables one-time collection with multi-channel distribution, selecting multiple media for tiered dissemination through intensive content production, balancing both news timeliness and in-depth reporting profundity. This news production organization construction places high-level demands on news editors, requiring familiarity with online audience information consumption habits and keen sensitivity to big data processing and online public opinion development.

5. Organizational Level: Building an All-Media News Production Team

Building converged news communication channels ultimately depends on talent team construction. Developing editorial talent with all-media gathering and editing capabilities and internet thinking represents the key to television media building new mainstream media. In the converged media ecology, traditional news production methods suffer from low productivity and high costs, no longer suitable for the news consumption market. New media's mastery of big data and cloud computing capabilities leaves traditional media far behind, making the construction of new media talent pipelines and addressing television media team shortcomings urgent priorities.

Taking data news as an example, domestic online news media has consistently led data news practice, relying on readily available big data accumulation and logical computing programs to launch big data news since 2011, such as Sohu News' *Data Reading* and NetEase News' *Data Control*. Traditional media, as latecomers, has launched data news in a collaborative posture, such as CCTV's *Evening News* launching the "According to Data" series in January 2014, which utilized Tencent's data resources and computing—demonstrating the talent scarcity in traditional media's online news production. Another example is CCTV News' development of the "Central Kitchen" news production mechanism, where everyone can access H5 templates, data news,

editing software, and other all-media content production tools through this system. News journalists must not only master independent news production skills but also comprehensively grasp new media production and broadcasting capabilities. This represents not only technological transformation but also a revolution in thinking. Television news convergence channel construction must also emphasize resource integration between television stations and various online platforms, using diversified channels to promote people's livelihood news programs and achieving the transformation of "traditional media from 'communication function' to 'service function'" through business process reorganization and resource integration.

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

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