

Xie Guoming: Value as the Soul, Innovation as the Application—Postprint

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Abstract

Editor's Note: At the 2017 Second China Industry-Economic Media Convergence Development Summit Forum, Xie Guoming, former Deputy Editor-in-Chief of People's Daily, delivered a keynote speech titled "Value as Soul, Innovation as Tool," sharing his insights on technology, content, and pathways in media convergence. In his view, "changing lanes to overtake" is superior to "overtaking on a curve"; orientation should take priority over mobile; and the goal is not to develop all-purpose journalists bu...

Full Text

Preamble: Editor's Note

ChinaXiv Partner Journal: Xie Guoming—"Value as Soul, Innovation as Tool"

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2017: A Year of Intensifying Developments

In media convergence, this principle is particularly crucial. From the launch of *People's Daily's* "National Party Media Public Platform" to the Wuzhen World Internet Conference, and from Xinhua's "Media Brain" ushering in the era of AI-powered media, many have observed that the pace of media convergence is

too rapid to keep up with. My response is: where we cannot catch up, we should change lanes to overtake.

Innovation as Tool, Two-Way Integration

Third, media convergence must prioritize innovation as a tool and achieve two-way integration. While new technologies serve as an important driving force for media convergence, convergence itself is not merely a technical issue—it encompasses comprehensive, multi-dimensional innovation in content, form, production processes, and technology. Mainstream media and traditional media are all engaged in content production, yet the fields we once excelled in now reveal significant deficiencies that require vigorous innovation. These include a lack of original thinking, conceptual coordination, public opinion capture, and information primacy. Poverty of thought and shortage of content have become fatal weaknesses for media. In the public opinion arena, media must neither speak recklessly nor remain silent: reckless speech creates chaos, while silence leads to loss of power—the loss of agenda-setting authority and discourse guidance. Therefore, in the internet age, we must never be silent or absent.

According to my understanding, media convergence represents a Chinese solution; abroad, no one speaks of “media convergence.” Of course, foreign media adopted new technologies earlier than we did. For instance, Jeff Bezos, founder and CEO of Amazon, acquired *The Washington Post* in 2013. When internet giants 涉足 traditional media, they do not pursue convergence but rather establish a technology company to manage content. *The Washington Post* focuses solely on content production, while the technology company handles content management and promotion. It is reported that the Associated Press’s intelligent robot currently produces approximately 1,500 articles, with an estimated 80% of news 稿件 to be written by robots by 2020, freeing up substantial human resources for tasks only humans can perform. Western countries use technology to integrate content, adapting processes to technology. Our approach to media convergence, by contrast, integrates technology into content, allowing technology to enhance dissemination power—this is the difference.

Content Innovation: The “Weather” and “Earthly Energy”

The key to content innovation lies in understanding both “weather” and “earthly energy.” “Weather” refers to the central spirit, while “earthly energy” represents public sentiment and popular will. The Communist Party’s purpose is to center on the people. Our “weather” must reflect “earthly energy”; only when we thoroughly understand earthly energy can we accurately grasp the weather. The General Secretary demands that politicians run newspapers. As I understand it, this requires us journalists to observe, analyze, pose, and elaborate on issues from a political height—that is, to live and think politically.

Form Innovation: Openness and Inclusiveness

The key to form innovation is openness and inclusiveness. For example, *People's Daily's* military uniform photo campaign this August 1st achieved nearly 400 million views in ten days, becoming an instant hit as an interactive gaming product. Thus, the key to form innovation lies in openness and inclusiveness. In the development of media convergence, whether through traditional methods or gaming approaches, any form that can disseminate positive energy is a good method; any approach that can enhance dissemination power and expand reach is a good approach.

Technology Innovation

Any technology experiences a budding period, growth period, maturity period, and decline period. I have long used this analogy: twenty years ago, drivers were highly sought-after—whoever held the steering wheel mastered modern transportation—yet now everyone can drive. Technology is merely a tool; we must view it rationally while remaining sensitive to it. Regarding technological innovation, there is the barrel theory. For a nation, a people, or a large organization, the shortest board determines capacity; but for small groups or individuals, the longest board determines height. Professional content producers should 坚守 their proper role, identify their position, take value as soul and innovation as tool, and achieve integration from top to bottom.

Media Convergence Watchtower: Special Topic

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

Source: ChinaXiv — Machine translation. Verify with original.