

Reflections on the Convergence of Traditional and New Media (Postprint)

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Abstract

In the context of the new media era, competition between emerging and traditional media is intensifying. Confronted with developmental predicaments, new media and traditional media are gradually converging, jointly ushering in the all-media era. This paper first analyzes the current development status of traditional and new media, and subsequently offers perspectives and insights on achieving their mutual integration and collaborative development, for reference.

Full Text

Reflections on the Integration of Traditional and New Media

Abstract: In the era of new media, competition between traditional and emerging media has intensified. Confronted with development dilemmas, both forms of media are gradually moving toward mutual integration and jointly entering the all-media age. This paper first analyzes the current development situations of traditional and new media, and then discusses perspectives on how to achieve their mutual integration and common development for reference.

Keywords: new media; traditional media; development dilemmas; path to integration; research

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In today's rapidly developing network technology environment, the media industry is advancing toward a networked and technologically sophisticated direction while maintaining its advanced nature and independence to adapt to the times.

Under current development trends, we must recognize the various dilemmas faced by both traditional and new media while exploring pathways for their integration and common development.

1.1 Dilemmas Faced by Traditional Media

With the popularization of smartphones and tablets, most readers under the traditional media model now choose to obtain information through smart terminals. Such phenomena have become commonplace, making traditional media development increasingly difficult.

First, traditional media's market share continues to shrink. Print media following a market-oriented development model has experienced circulation declines of approximately 20% or more, with some media outlets unable to withstand the impact and closing down in the new era.

Second, information release in traditional media suffers from significant time lags. Under the traditional media model, audience reception methods were very singular. With rapid socio-economic development and accelerating life and work rhythms, electronic media have become essential for fast-paced lifestyles. In the new era, people can obtain information from around the world within minutes or even seconds—a feat that traditional print media cannot match. In the current information age, the disadvantages of traditional media have undoubtedly been magnified.

Third, traditional media suffers from severe audience aging. For young people, PCs and smartphones are their preferred tools, with simple and convenient communication and information access becoming highly attractive. Traditional media audiences have become increasingly homogeneous, primarily consisting of middle-aged and elderly individuals, as this demographic rarely uses computers or smartphones to obtain information. Moreover, the consumption capacity of the aging population is relatively weak, making it difficult for traditional media to attract advertisers, leading to a sharp decline in advertising resources. As advertising resources dwindle, traditional media's operational motivation decreases, creating a vicious cycle that is highly detrimental to its development.

However, new media is not without its own challenges. The main problems in new media development manifest in several aspects:

First, market expansion is difficult. Currently, domestic new media such as various apps suffer from serious homogenization, with hundreds or even thousands of links to similar popular content available online. Although these new media platforms constantly claim to be distinctive, their structure and content show severe homogenization.

Second, financing channels are narrow, with difficulty in capital involvement. From previous cases of capital involvement in new media investment markets, new media operators and capital coexisted harmoniously for a considerable period. However, in recent years, as domestic capital markets have tightened and

new media types have proliferated, this honeymoon period has ended prematurely, leaving new media platforms that still require substantial capital for promotion with insufficient support. Additionally, new media platforms have poor self-sustaining capabilities, with mediocre market performance.

Third, audiences have strong autonomy, while products are relatively singular with low market recognition. In this situation, published information lacks authority. Meanwhile, many newly established new media platforms, whether in subscription volume or readership, have grown only through substantial initial investment and paid promotion. Once the capital infusion stops, audience numbers quickly decline. From this perspective, how to continuously improve audience stickiness has become a major headache for new media development. Simultaneously, many new media platforms were created to ride the wave of internet development but lack strong backgrounds in traditional media and technology, with some being individual self-media platforms. The authority of information released by these new media platforms among audiences is not high, making the enhancement of authority and exploration of new development pathways urgent issues to address.

2. The Path to Traditional-New Media Integration

Based on the above analysis of problems and dilemmas in current traditional and new media development, both media forms have their own advantages and disadvantages that should complement each other in future development.

2.1 Establishing a New Media Matrix to Resolve Development Dilemmas Since the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the flagship of traditional media—People’s Daily, along with its People’s Daily Online, “two micros and one terminal” (Weibo, WeChat, and client app), and the “central kitchen” model—have demonstrated their capabilities through matrix development. Using graphic illustrations, videos, and H5 presentations, they have created distinctive content that has repeatedly gone viral. The matrix development model of new media is essentially “one core, two wings, multi-platform development.” Specifically, this means establishing a news mobile client as the core, with official Weibo and WeChat accounts as the wings, and setting up similar accounts on other relevant new media channels. The new media matrix represents an optimized integration of existing resources, forming different new media types based on various audience styles to create a multi-channel new media cluster. While content targeting appears independent, it largely requires coordination and mutual reinforcement.

2.2 Mutual Support to Amplify Communication Effects From the perspective of platforms and content, new media’s most distinctive feature is its multiple “sub-media” that mutually promote each other, maximizing overall advantages. For sub-media with complementary content, linkage should be prioritized. Additionally, different media can achieve linkage from a channel

perspective, such as coordination between WeChat and Weibo. First, compared to the privacy of WeChat accounts, Weibo accounts have openness that can attract potential users to the greatest extent, demonstrating weak-tie relationships. Second, Weibo can attract a broad user base and direct them to WeChat official accounts, creating medium-tie relationships. Third, WeChat service accounts can maintain precise fans and users, positioning them as loyal fans, readers, or users, thereby effectively improving fan accuracy and forming strong-tie relationships.

Notably, different media can achieve linkage from a cost perspective: the same information resources can be packaged or processed according to the characteristics of different media platforms, truly realizing interaction and integration among different subsets of the same media. This enables multiple uses of information, reduces costs in information creation and dissemination, expands the information dissemination market while increasing speed, lays a solid market foundation for better revenue generation, and maximizes the brand effect of interactive media within specific regions.

2.3 Refining Content Through a Snowball Development Model New media development has profoundly impacted the media industry, but regardless of medium, content remains core. After exploring and selecting platforms and channels, media should focus on content refinement. Taking Weibo as an example, by cooperating with influencer agencies, artist agencies, and video self-media companies to support high-quality content creators, Weibo has enhanced its influence and economic benefits. In the initial development stage, traditional media on new media platforms mostly failed to break away from traditional push-thinking influences, and the crude content push model could not effectively stimulate reader enthusiasm. Content should be accurately targeted at specific demographics with personalized push, splitting different content types to attract particular groups and create a snowball effect.

2.4 Adopting an Interest Feedback Model to Enhance Influence and Economic Benefits For new media, it should play a role in feeding back to the main media to ensure successful transformation. In the process of creating and operating new media platforms, traditional media should not only leverage editorial functions but also have higher requirements for platform content. For example, creating original high-quality content and using dynamic videos and images to enhance content attractiveness makes content and platforms more valuable, facilitating mutual integration between new and traditional media. In recent years, various monetization methods have emerged in new media development, including traditional models like embedded advertising and soft articles, as well as new media's rapid dissemination effect feeding back to main media to promote traditional newspaper subscriptions and distribution revenue growth, thereby achieving successful new media transformation and mutual integration that improves economic benefits.

In summary, both traditional and new media face tremendous impacts due to various factors. As a platform and catalyst for traditional media transformation and development, new media is continuously deepening integration under new technological conditions, creating a new experience for audiences. In recent years, with continuous improvement in domestic technology levels, the boundaries between traditional and emerging media have gradually blurred, the two media forms have begun to integrate and form new media products, and media forms have effectively achieved self-upgrade and evolution.

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