

Reflections on the Convergence Development of Traditional Media in the New Media Technology Environment: Postprint

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

Abstract

As mobile Internet technology and digital technology applications gradually mature, the landscape of information production and dissemination has been transformed under the backdrop of new media technology, and traditional media is undergoing progressive transformation and upgrading. This paper analyzes the dilemmas and pathways in the transformation of traditional media within the current new media technology context, providing reference and guidance for the integrated development of traditional media.

Full Text

Abstract

With the gradual maturation of mobile internet technology and digital technology applications, the landscape of information production and dissemination has undergone fundamental transformation under the new media technology context, and traditional media is gradually upgrading and transforming. This paper analyzes the dilemmas and pathways of traditional media transformation under the current new media technology background, providing reference and guidance for the integrated development of traditional media.

Keywords: new media technology; traditional media; new media; integrated transformation

According to a report released by CNNIC (China Internet Network Information Center) in August 2017, China's internet users had reached 751 million, of which mobile internet users accounted for 724 million. The proliferation of mobile terminals has directly severed traditional media's audience channels. Although many traditional media outlets have already "tested the waters" of new media

integration and transformation, the results have been unsatisfactory because they have not fundamentally analyzed the essence of transformation dilemmas under the new media technology context, making it difficult to achieve tangible results. Currently, the dilemmas facing traditional media transformation are concentrated on two levels: First, the failure of user connection is the essential reason for transformation difficulties—the massive loss of traditional media users has led to the devaluation of entry points. Second, there is a lack of new media technology application and technical talent. Some traditional media have adopted outsourcing to obtain technology platforms, which is costly and lacks personalization, thus failing to achieve the transition from “physical reaction” to “chemical reaction” in media convergence.

In 2014, the *Guiding Opinions on Promoting the Integrated Development of Traditional Media and Emerging Media* provided direction for China’s traditional media transformation: traditional media and new media should leverage complementary advantages, integrate innovations, and develop as one entity, adhering to a people-oriented approach with technology as support and content as the foundation, promoting deep integration in content, channels, platforms, and operations management.

1.1 New Media Technology

UNESCO defines new media as “media that use digital technology as the foundation and networks as the carrier for information dissemination.” *Wired* magazine defines new media as “communication from everyone to everyone.” These two definitions highlight two core transformations: the communication medium has shifted from channel-based media to internet-based media, and the communicator has shifted from authoritative media organizations to everyone connected via the internet. New media technology refers to media means in the new media environment, based on modern digital technology, network technology, etc., that can provide users with needed information services.

In 2001, Andrew Nachison, a media researcher at the American Press Institute, defined media convergence as “the diversified integration of different media such as newspapers, radio, television, and new media at the levels of concept, technology, and content.” Clearly, media convergence is a dynamic development process. Its essence is to break the spatial and temporal limitations of text, images, video, and audio through technical integration, achieving interactive integration and digital connectivity, merging content with carriers and enriching media with carriers. The boundaries of media are constantly blurring, gradually becoming “content is media, media is content.”

2. The Significance of New Media Technology for Traditional Media Development

In the Web2.0 era, social media has transformed communication patterns. The development of the internet through Web1.0 and Web2.0, particularly the “au-

automatic distribution effect” and “multi-node, centerless spontaneous broadcasting” characteristic of Web2.0, has maximized two-way communication. Media “audiences” have become “users,” and user value has become increasingly prominent. With new media technology support, new media can efficiently connect with users, centering on users and focusing on experience as the core—this is internet thinking. Traditional media transformation needs to cultivate its own internet thinking, but it is not simply a matter of “traditional + digitalization” or copying existing content onto the internet. This is also an important reason why most traditional media currently struggle with transformation.

The single “content is king” model has been significantly impacted by new media technology. “Content is king” reflects the authority and high quality of traditional media, and this concept cannot be abandoned in the process of integrating traditional media with new media—it must even be strengthened. Content must be created under the user-centered internet thinking concept. As the internet has evolved from Web1.0 to Web2.0, its philosophy and ideological system have upgraded from a top-down, centrally controlled resource system to a bottom-up system dominated by vast numbers of users. Meanwhile, with the development of internet technology, UGC (Users Generate Content) has gradually emerged. Users are no longer just browsers who obtain information from websites but have become producers and creators of content. Their wisdom and creativity are continuously unleashed through the internet, and interactive platforms such as Weibo, WeChat, SNS social networking sites, BBS forums, and video sharing communities have become increasingly popular and prosperous. Traditional media should also value user contributions, prioritize user value, integrate information content, use big data analysis to understand users’ real needs, and provide higher-quality content that is closer to users—content that is both broad horizontally and deep vertically, attractive, comprehensive, in-depth, and possesses credibility.

Innovation in traditional media transformation development concepts requires a role transformation from gatekeeper to service provider. Before the internet era, in an age of information scarcity, traditional media faced static audiences. Based on limitations of layout, time, and space, traditional media needed to interpret, filter, and screen numerous external events to ultimately present “valuable” information to audiences. Clearly, traditional media played the role of gatekeeper with strong authoritative media attributes. With the gradual maturation of internet technology and digital technology applications, the era of information explosion has arrived. In the context of widespread mobile terminals, self-media leads the trend, and everyone is a communicator. News communication has already shifted from the traditional media model of “I report, you receive” to “I break the news, you report.” However, this role transformation does not mean that traditional media’s authoritative media functions are lost—this is also one of the advantages of traditional media transformation.

3.4 Developing Advantages and Deep Integration

Traditional media has developed over a long period and possesses irreplaceable advantages. In the new media era, it is even more important to strengthen and develop these advantages. Only on this basis, by using platforms built with new technology to display higher-quality content and disseminate it more effectively, can true deep integration of old and new media be achieved, with complementary advantages and diversified symbiosis.

The advantage of traditional media's in-depth reporting must be further strengthened. In this era of universal dissemination, information is already flooded, and what users need is not a massive amount of information but a sense of security about information. Traditional media has strong credibility and high social trust. As opinion leaders, traditional media's in-depth reporting, unique analytical commentary, and exclusive elaboration on news events are extremely important. Moreover, with the current advanced network and cloud computing technologies, users have become accustomed to obtaining timely information from the internet. Theoretically, the time difference for each individual to obtain information tends to zero, and users crave the most professional and authoritative voices. The advantage of traditional media's in-depth reporting is becoming increasingly prominent.

Traditional media should combine its own advantages with new media, using the characteristics of new media technology through methods such as integration, symbiosis, and complementarity to continuously compensate for traditional media's deficiencies in content form and communication carriers. It should fully integrate digital technology and use new media technology as a solid foundation. No matter how Web3.0 technology develops in the future, traditional media must absorb the communication advantages of new technology, effectively utilize the "long tail theory," and through the zero marginal cost characteristic of the internet, gather the vast number of personalized, distributed users in the "long tail" to issue authoritative voices and guide public opinion.

3.2 Building Technical Support Platforms

Currently, under the trend of media convergence, traditional media transformation needs to rely on internet, cloud computing, and big data technologies. The application of new media technology to traditional media transformation will not lead to the replacement of traditional media but will form an integrated, converged modern communication system.

First, regarding internet technology, the essence of internet applications is decentralization. New media forms such as blogs, Weibo, WeChat, and news clients continue to emerge, reflecting diversified user participation, sharing, and interaction to meet users' diverse needs. For example, as mobile internet technology applications gradually mature, mobile internet can be used to achieve live broadcasting on mobile terminals, enabling efficient interaction and participation between communicators and audiences. RSS aggregation technology can

be used to achieve “private customization” of content users care about. Under mobile internet technology, various terminal products can truly reach user needs, thereby profiling and retaining users.

Second, from the perspective of traditional media transformation dilemmas, cloud computing and big data technologies can achieve intelligent matching of customer data, thereby reconnecting with customer needs, and building big data information resource platforms, intelligent production and dissemination platforms, and user retention platforms. For example, intelligent production and dissemination platforms can reconstruct news production using the “central kitchen” model, achieving the effect of “one-time collection, multiple processing, multiple releases.” Phoenix TV cooperated with Huawei to introduce cloud computing, virtualization, and other technologies, building a global 2+7 distributed cloud data center, constructing an SDN business-aware network, integrating cloud resources, and logically unifying management of physically dispersed data centers to achieve cross-regional business deployment.

3.3 Adhering to a User-Centered Approach

As of June 2017, China’s internet user scale reached 751 million, accounting for one-fifth of the global total. Faced with such a huge internet user base, traditional media must fundamentally shift its approach to user engagement.

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