

Postprint: Development Status and Strategic Approaches for Newspaper News Client Applications

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Abstract

The development of the Internet has permeated various fields, impacting all industries, and has brought about significant changes to social interaction, daily life, and information acquisition. In recent years, news clients have emerged as an important source of information in the Internet era, transforming traditional information acquisition methods and providing us with vast amounts of information. However, it is noteworthy that the development of newspaper news clients still faces certain challenges. As various parties vie for market share, homogenized competition has become increasingly evident, making user retention difficult. This paper offers several targeted recommendations based on the current development status of newspaper news clients, with the aim of contributing to their development.

Full Text

Preamble

Abstract: The proliferation of internet technology has permeated every sector, profoundly transforming social interaction, daily life, and information acquisition. News clients have emerged in recent years as a critical source of information in the digital age, fundamentally altering traditional information access patterns and providing users with vast amounts of content. However, it is noteworthy that significant challenges persist in the development of newspaper news clients. As various stakeholders compete for market share, conspicuous homogenization has become evident, making user retention exceedingly difficult. This paper proposes several targeted recommendations addressing the current development status of newspaper news clients, with the aim of contributing to their sustainable growth.

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The development of internet technology has greatly enriched our methods of obtaining information. The construction of mobile news clients has endowed newspaper journalism with enhanced timeliness and greater reading convenience, representing a crucial manifestation of newspapers' transition toward paperless and digital formats. News clients have become standard applications on our mobile devices. Furthermore, in recent years, newspapers—as representatives of traditional media—have faced increasingly severe challenges and have actively sought integrated development with new media, achieving certain progress in the evolution of newspaper news clients.

1. Analysis of the Development Status of Newspaper News Clients

Contemporary lifestyles have undergone substantial changes compared to the past, with mobile terminals establishing themselves as vital channels for information acquisition. Media organizations have increasingly prioritized the development of mobile platforms, resulting in a growing proliferation of news clients in both iOS and Android app stores. Expanding user demand has simultaneously accelerated the development of news clients.

1.1 Classification of Newspaper News Clients

Newspaper news clients can be categorized into three distinct types. The first category comprises independent clients, characterized by self-research and self-application by newspaper media organizations. These clients leverage the existing influence and brand recognition of their parent media institutions to rapidly capture market share, though they face significant challenges in development costs and operational promotion. Representative examples include *Southern Weekly* and *People's Daily*. The second category consists of non-independent clients, which emerge through the integration of newspaper websites and digital platforms, differing from independent clients in their content orientation toward newspaper websites. This type occupies a substantial proportion among news clients. The third category encompasses platform-based clients, where newspaper media organizations establish a presence on major platforms such as NetEase and Sohu. These platforms offer substantial influence, enabling newspapers to gain popularity and attention with relatively low costs, making them a frequently adopted approach.

1.2 Characteristic Analysis of Newspaper News Clients

The development of newspaper news clients is inextricably linked to network advancement, which has transformed the operational environment for newspaper media. To adapt to societal evolution, newspaper media must implement changes to remain viable. Newspaper news clients have become standard software applications on mobile devices. Additionally, as traditional media representatives facing mounting pressures, newspapers have pursued integrated development with new media, yielding certain achievements in client development.

A notable feature of newspaper news clients is their integration of rapid browsing and in-depth reading. While facilitating quick scanning of information, these platforms retain certain print reading conventions through content structures that include deep commentary and background materials, thereby ensuring reading quality and combining the advantages of both fast and thorough reading. From a communication perspective, these platforms offer greater diversification. Traditional print media, constrained by distribution methods, struggled to deliver news instantaneously, whereas newspaper news clients enable real-time information transmission and even live broadcasting of breaking events. Information dissemination is no longer limited to text but can incorporate multimedia formats including audio and video.

Another significant characteristic is the implementation of sharing and interactive functions. Users can share news content with friends and post comments, while also potentially becoming news publishers and disseminators themselves.

1.3 Development of Newspaper News Clients

Newspaper news clients serve as a supplement to traditional media and represent a new direction for the future development of print journalism. However, their evolution faces increasingly complex circumstances. Portal news websites such as NetEase, Tencent, and Sohu dominate the news client market, commanding substantial market share and unique competitive advantages. These platforms hold significant influence and initiative in the communication landscape, with greater resources for operational investment. Newspaper news clients also face competitive pressure from other applications, including gaming and social media platforms. Consequently, the development environment for newspaper news clients is far from smooth, necessitating careful consideration and strategic planning.

2. Existing Problems in Current Newspaper News Clients

The actual development of newspaper news clients has encountered several critical issues that constrain their further advancement.

2.1 Severe Homogenization

Regardless of traditional or emerging media, content remains a fundamental determinant of success, and differentiation is essential for achieving prominence. Most newspaper news clients simply replicate content from their print editions, including headline sections, and adopt layout designs directly from their newspapers, essentially functioning as electronic versions of print media. This approach inherits not only the strengths but also the “thousand newspapers, one face” deficiency of traditional newspapers, resulting in a lack of distinctive personality. When users encounter similar news clients, they exhibit limited loyalty, leaving most newspaper news clients unable to attract sufficient downloads and sustained usage in the competitive mobile application market.

2.2 Lack of User Attraction

Although newspaper news clients initially generated considerable attention and downloads, user numbers have consistently declined over time, indicating weak user attraction. This reality imposes specific requirements on newspaper client development: developers must accurately grasp actual user needs and deliver authentic experiences based on those requirements. When confronting complex and voluminous information, developers must consider not only the convenience of information access from the user’s perspective but also the ease of sharing and the quality of interactive participation.

2.3 Unclear Profit Model

News clients remain in an exploratory phase without establishing a mature profit model, a situation that persists even among commercial websites. This is closely related to insufficient download and visit volumes. Additionally, most newspaper media influence remains concentrated in specific regions, and local advertising concepts exhibit excessive dependence on traditional media placement, representing current challenges for news clients.

2.4 Failure to Form Linkages with Other Mobile Communication Platforms

In recent years, newspapers have attempted internet transformation by experimenting with new media forms such as Weibo accounts and websites. However, many newspapers have failed to clarify the essence of these initiatives. Although news clients have become standard configurations for newspaper media, numerous publications rigidly adhere to conventional practices without effectively integrating these media forms. With the current trend toward mobile consumption and increasingly fragmented media contact patterns, users’ media engagement time has grown shorter—a phenomenon exemplified by social media browsing. This reality demands that media organizations establish comprehensive information dissemination systems to facilitate multi-node communication with users.

3. Development Strategies for Newspaper News Clients

As development continues, certain influential newspaper news clients have secured positions in the mobile communication market, while many others remain marginalized. This raises critical questions: What direction should newspaper news clients pursue? How should they develop amid fierce market competition and their own mobile transformation?

3.1 Transform Traditional News Content Production Concepts

Traditional news content production follows relatively fixed information dissemination patterns and processes. However, the rapidly evolving mobile internet era imposes increasingly demanding requirements for information immediacy, placing considerable pressure on news production, including synchronous live broadcasting. Consequently, news content production must extend beyond single-source information collection and provision to develop information products aligned with user interests. This requires fundamentally restructuring newspaper content production workflows, strengthening internet-oriented thinking, and striving to deliver novel reading experiences to users.

3.3 Emphasize Integrated Development with Other Media Products

Users regularly engage with various media products on mobile terminals, such as microblogging platforms, reflecting the current era of media convergence and indicating that comprehensive media experiences are what contemporary users truly demand. To achieve an advantageous position in mobile communication, traditional media must pursue comprehensive integration to realize effective information coverage. Only through mutual guidance and linking among media products can the integrated development of traditional and new media be successfully achieved.

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

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