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## A Preliminary Analysis of China's Media Industry Development in the Post-print Era under Media Convergence

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### Abstract

In the era of increasingly flourishing digital and media technologies, a new term—convergence—has emerged. Under the influence of self-media, traditional media must achieve convergent development through the external driving force of “convergent symbiosis” to survive. Media convergence has become both an opportunity and a challenge in the development of China's media industry; the development of China's media industry must seize this opportunity of “media convergence”, actively prepare for it, and meet the challenges.

### Full Text

#### A Brief Analysis of China's Media Industry Development Under the Background of Media Convergence

*ChinaXiv Cooperative Journal: Media and Development Research*

**Abstract:** In an era of flourishing digital and media technologies, a new term—convergence—has emerged. Under the influence of self-media, traditional media must survive through development driven by “convergent symbiosis.” Media convergence has become both an opportunity and a challenge in the development of China's media industry. The Chinese media industry must seize this opportunity of “media convergence” and actively prepare to meet these challenges.

**Keywords:** media convergence; media industry; convergence; development

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In the article “On Media Convergence in the Digital Media Era,” the author points out that against the backdrop of digital and network technologies, and oriented toward the demands of information consumption terminals, the evolution of media forms consists of content convergence, network convergence, and terminal convergence.

With rapid socio-economic development, media technology has advanced by leaps and bounds, particularly with ever-evolving new media technologies such as networks and communication devices. Traditional media (television, radio, newspapers, etc.) have suffered severe impacts, evidenced by declining newspaper circulation, radio listenership, and TV ratings, resulting in diminished influence. This has given rise to the notion that traditional media will gradually die out. Concurrently, another perspective has emerged: “Traditional media will not disappear; on the contrary, by seizing opportunities through mutual tolerance and integration, they will become more prosperous.” Currently, the development of traditional media is trending toward the latter view.

Presently, traditional media are utilizing new media technologies by establishing websites and digitizing/networking operations, attempting to make a comeback in the digital wave. However, media convergence remains in an exploratory phase without a mature model to follow, especially as the development of domestic traditional media appears unpromising. According to incomplete statistics, the adoption of promoted digital reading has been less than satisfactory, with limited benefits from digital newspapers and mobile news. This demonstrates that the convergence and development of traditional media must bring qualitative transformation to the media industry while achieving change and breakthrough.

[Figure 1: see original paper] Concept of Convergence

## 2. The Impact of Media Convergence on the Media Industry

Currently, new media have broken the monopoly of traditional media and are gradually integrating with them, bringing both opportunities and challenges to China’s media industry development. Traditional media must seize these opportunities to achieve transformation and upgrading. Although media convergence is not yet fully developed and its functions remain unclear, its impact on the media industry is already emerging, promoting transformation while providing theoretical and technical support for upgrading.

In a narrow sense, media convergence refers to the “fusion” of different media forms to produce a “qualitative change,” creating new media forms. In a broad sense, it refers to the combination and fusion of all media and related elements, including not only media forms but also functions, communication methods, ownership, organizational structures, and other elements.

Media convergence is a media development concept born from the information

age, emerging from rapid internet technology development and organically integrating with traditional media. Through the fusion of technology and business models, it enables the influence value and social value of traditional media to be preserved and developed.

In 1978, Negroponte proposed the concept of “convergence” (as shown in Figure 1, using three circles to represent computing, publishing/printing, and broadcasting), believing that the intersection of these three areas would become the fastest-growing domain in the media industry. The earliest proposal of media convergence came from MIT Professor Pool, who suggested the trend of various media evolving toward multifunctional integration, merging traditional media such as television and newspapers. The director of the Media Center at the American Press Institute defined media convergence as cooperation and alliance among various media. In 2003, a Northwestern University professor summarized five types of “media convergence” in the United States at that time: technological, ownership, tactical, structural, and news-gathering convergence.

In China, many scholars have also elaborated on media convergence. In 2007, Wang Fei in “Media Grand Convergence: On Media Convergence in the Digital Media Era” pointed out that against the backdrop of digital and network technologies, oriented toward information consumption terminal demands, the evolution of media forms consists of content convergence, network convergence, and terminal convergence.

## 2.1 Media Convergence Promotes Transformation of the Media Industry

**2.1.1 Changes in Media Forms** With the development of information technology and the maturation of broadband, streaming media, P2P technology, and wireless communication, traditional radio and television media increasingly draw upon the Internet for video and audio distribution. Currently, boundaries between media are becoming increasingly blurred, and media forms are no longer purely traditional but employ more modern information technology. This blurring has driven the updating of reception devices and, accompanied by the convergence of dissemination channels, as Jack Fuller stated in *Information Age Values*: “New media will not eliminate old media; it will only push media toward relatively advantageous domains.” Therefore, in the process of media convergence, media forms will undergo qualitative changes, such as electronic publications and Internet television.

**2.1.2 Transformation of News Operations** With the convergence and development of media forms, their primary product—news—will also enter people’s lives in a converged form, known as convergent journalism. Media convergence will inevitably generate transformation in news operations, forming the foundation of convergent journalism. Convergent journalism is manifested not only in coordinated cooperation among media news operations but, more

importantly, in realizing resource sharing from news gathering and processing to presentation before audiences.

The transformation in news operations—the emergence of convergent journalism—has greatly promoted the deep development and integration of news resources, maximizing their exploitation and utilization. Simultaneously, news dissemination has become more free and humanized.

### **2.1.3 Shift to Convergent Economy in Media Business Models**

Whether in media form changes or news operation transformations, both serve the media industry's economy. With the emergence of convergent media and convergent journalism, traditional business models can no longer satisfy the development needs of growing new media, and a new business model—convergent economy—has emerged accordingly.

The characteristics of convergent economy are, first, the adjustment of media's operational role, transforming from an information provider to an information operator to maximize media value. Second, it adopts new operational models and establishes comprehensive information platforms. Simultaneously, the media marketing system has transformed, abandoning the old “product-centered” concept and shifting toward a “user-centered” marketing model.

## **2.2 Media Convergence Promotes Upgrading of the Media Industry**

Implementing digital strategy and promoting convergence between traditional and new media is an important direction for current media industry development and an objective requirement for achieving upgrading. The media industry is gradually upgrading toward the cultural industry. Due to information technology development, the media industry is gradually converging at various levels including technology and markets, promoting the upgrading of traditional industrial structures—a phenomenon known as “industrial convergence.” With continuous development of industrial convergence, media convergence is also undergoing qualitative changes, enabling the media industry to gradually upgrade toward the cultural industry. This is specifically manifested in the upgrading of media service methods, the repositioning of media functions, and the transformation of media profit models.

## **3. Path Selection for China's Media Industry Development Under Media Convergence**

China's media industry did not appear in industrial form from the beginning; its development has gone through a stage from non-existence to existence. However, with rapid current development, media convergence has become the core of China's media industry development. Against this backdrop, the future direction of China's media industry has become an important question for Chinese media scholars.

### 3.1 Current Status of China's Media Industry Development

The *China Media Industry Development Report (2016)* shows that while the media industry has developed steadily overall, its structure has undergone profound changes. In 2015, two “surpassings” occurred: First, although newspaper advertising and circulation revenues declined significantly, movie box office revenues far surpassed the newspaper market. Second, while TV advertising experienced weak development and obvious decline, the online gaming market far outpaced TV advertising revenue.

In 2015, the market share of Internet media increased by 4 percentage points compared to 2014, successfully widening the scale gap with traditional media. Traditional media have suffered severe impacts, and their discourse power and influence face serious challenges. The highlight of the 2015 media industry was mobile media; according to incomplete statistics, mobile Internet users exceeded 600 million, approaching the total number of Internet users.

### 3.2 Direction of China's Media Industry Development

The development of convergent media has brought both opportunities and challenges to China's media industry. Therefore, China's media industry development must seize opportunities, establish the main body of media innovation, strengthen specialization in media convergence, promote regional media development, meet new media challenges, and achieve healthy and rapid development.

**3.2.1 Establishing the Main Body of Media Innovation** The essence of media convergence is media innovation. The development of China's media industry is based on media convergence, market-oriented, technology innovation-based, market innovation-driven, and product innovation-focused, establishing the main body of innovation (through conglomeration reform), deepening the conglomeration transformation of China's media industry, building media groups that meet media convergence standards with intellectual property rights and management capabilities, absorbing various excellent resources, fully utilizing private and foreign capital, forming a diversified and multi-level media convergence innovation 主体 centered on the industrial value chain and led by brand-oriented enterprises.

**3.2.2 Strengthening Specialization in Media Convergence** Content is king—the core resource of media industry development and its fundamental profit point. The development of the media industry must establish this core principle and achieve specialization. Only specialized content can avoid imitation, gain professional advantages, win audience influence, and enhance core competitiveness.

**3.2.3 Promoting Regional Media Development** With China's continuous economic development and the rising tide of regional economic integration,

China's media industry development should also adapt by constructing a relatively complete regional development system that is market-oriented, broadening development space and scope, and achieving the ultimate goal of regionalization: a unified national and even global media market.

Regionalization is a fundamental path for China's media industry to achieve healthy and rapid development under media convergence. It can not only break market barriers to realize market integration but also effectively promote rapid development of the media industry.

#### 4. Conclusion

Media convergence will become the entry point for China's media industry development, providing both opportunities and challenges. China's media industry development must seize current opportunities and firmly believe that media convergence is the inevitable trend for future media development in the digital age. By interpreting media convergence through innovation economics and industrial economics and integrating it into the perspective of China's media industry, we should adapt to the times and become pioneers and explorers of media convergence.

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

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