

Media Convergence Innovation in China: An Exemplary Case Study of Guiyang Daily Media Group (Postprint)

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Abstract

The Research Report on Media Convergence Innovation in China represents a significant research outcome from the China Press and Publication Research Institute. Convergence innovation, as defined in this context, refers specifically to innovation driven by the pursuit of integrating traditional and emerging media—a fundamentally distinct phenomenon from innovation arising from other causes. The following analysis presents a case study of Guiyang Daily Media Group, examining how theoretical framework...

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Preamble

The *Research Report on Media Convergence Innovation in China* represents a significant research outcome from the China Press and Publication Research Institute. Convergence innovation, as defined in this context, refers specifically to innovation driven by the pursuit of integrating traditional and emerging media—a fundamentally distinct phenomenon from innovation arising from other causes. The following analysis presents a case study of Guiyang Daily Media Group, examining how theoretical frameworks translate into practical implementation across media platforms.

Development History of Guiyang Daily Media Group

From its origins as Guiyang Daily Press to its current form as Guiyang Daily Media Group, and from a traditional newspaper organization centered on *Guiyang Daily* to a diversified media conglomerate encompassing newspapers, magazines, websites, WeChat official accounts, and mobile news applications (currently represented by the Guiyang Headlines client), comprehensive reform has remained

the critical driving force behind the group's continuous growth and advancement. This evolutionary journey has been marked by several major transformations.

In 1980, *Guiyang Evening News* was founded, filling a void in the inland provincial capital's newspaper market. Two decades later, in 2000, the *Guiyang Daily*—an eight-page, folio-format municipal party organ—received formal approval from the State Press and Publication Administration to commence publication, while *Guiyang Evening News* evolved into a true “citizen newspaper.” This pivotal moment launched the organization's trajectory toward becoming a modern media group.

Building on this foundation, the group initiated a new round of more extensive and demanding institutional reforms in 2006, aiming to establish a qualified market entity with substantial scale and strength while laying a solid foundation for accelerated industrial development. The formal establishment of Guiyang Daily Media Group in December 2008 marked a decisive step in the transition from traditional to modern media. In 2010, the group implemented the reform requirement of separating “propaganda” and “business operations” by registering Guiyang Daily Media Group Business Co., Ltd., which assumed responsibility for managing the group's commercial assets. Operating under modern enterprise principles of “clear property rights, well-defined rights and responsibilities, separation of government and enterprise, and scientific management,” this move resolved fundamental issues regarding market entity status and achieved genuine operational independence from editorial functions.

The group further advanced its transformation in 2015 when the State Press and Publication Administration approved its designation as a “National Digital Transformation Demonstration Unit.” In accordance with national and provincial requirements for reforming non-current affairs publishing units, Guiyang Daily Media Group adopted an innovative bundled restructuring approach, establishing Guizhou Guibao Media Co., Ltd. with State Press and Publication Administration approval to oversee the publication and operation of subsidiary newspapers and periodicals. This approach, widely praised within the industry, ensured timely completion of the enterprise transformation task for non-current affairs publications while preventing fragmentation and weakness in the governance structure, thereby facilitating centralized resource allocation.

Throughout these reforms, the group has adhered to the development philosophy of “refining the daily newspaper, strengthening the evening newspaper, expanding the website, making subsidiary media profitable, and diversifying industries.” By operating assets and managing personnel according to modern enterprise systems, the group has achieved strong economic and social benefits. Today, Guiyang Daily Media Group stands as one of China's fastest-growing newspaper groups in terms of operating profit and per capita output value, commanding the highest market share and profitability among Guizhou's media organizations. The group has expanded beyond traditional printing, distribution, and advertising businesses into tourism, exhibitions, real estate, and other

media-related industries, forming a corporate cluster with the business company as the flagship and multiple specialized subsidiaries as its fleet, establishing itself as the province's most influential media institution.

Media Convergence Practices at Guiyang Daily Media Group

While comprehensive reform drove the group's transformation from a newspaper to a media conglomerate, convergence innovation represents its strategic response to the challenges and opportunities of the "Internet Plus" and all-media era. Through years of accumulated development, the group has implemented targeted measures to integrate traditional and emerging media, launching a series of influential new media products.

(1) Strategic Foresight: Top-Level Design

Guiyang Daily Media Group embarked on new media ventures early, launching Jinyang Times Network in 1999—Guizhou's earliest media website and the province's second to receive a "National Class-A News Website" certificate from the State Council Information Office. However, as internet technology and applications evolved, the website's development pace increasingly lagged behind the surging tide of new media. Recognizing this challenge, the group's leadership adopted a forward-looking approach, designating 2013 as the "Year of New Media Development" and formulating a "Twelfth Five-Year New Media Development Plan." This blueprint emphasized "holistic layout, trend alignment, increased investment, support acquisition, project fission, and rolling development," aiming to integrate high-quality traditional journalism with modern digital technology. The strategic goal was to digitize the group's traditional newspaper industry and establish a new digital news dissemination system based on modern communications and internet technology, with the ambition of becoming a "first-class Guizhou, southwest-leading, nationally competitive" digital content production and distribution conglomerate within 5-10 years.

(2) Structural Integration: Establishing the New Media Operations Center

Under the group's media convergence strategic plan, the New Media Operations Center was established in April 2013 as the strategic body responsible for coordinating and advancing the digital transformation of traditional journalism. The center comprises five divisions: Guiyang Network, Online Video, Network Technology, Digital Publishing, and Convenience Network, breaking through the previous single-website paradigm. Since its establishment, the center has achieved leapfrog development through extraordinary efforts. Website revisions increased daily page views/IP values twentyfold, while the redesigned "Guiyang Headlines" APP attracted 60,000 users with nearly 10,000 daily active users. The center independently produced three microfilms—*Returning Home*,

Changing Faces, and *Guiyang • Past Events*—and co-produced *Qingyan* with the Guizhou Provincial Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television Bureau. It also launched Guizhou's first big data professional website, China Big Data Industry Observation Network.

(3) Editorial Integration: Establishing the Media Convergence Editorial Center

Although the group's new media business centered on Guiyang Network achieved progress, the rapidly evolving global new media landscape and the central government's emphasis on the internet as the primary battlefield for public opinion presented enormous challenges. To strengthen the party and people's internet presence, the group established the province's first "central kitchen"-style "Media Convergence Editorial Center" after extensive research, integrating resources across traditional and new media platforms.

The center has effectively consolidated human, media, and technological resources, transforming editorial processes from "newspaper first, then online reprint" to "online first, then newspaper publication." Instant and rolling news through Guiyang Network, Guiyang Headlines APP, and multiple WeChat and Weibo accounts have enhanced newspaper-network interaction and maximized the effective use of print media's quality resources in new media platforms, significantly improving new media's capacity for opinion guidance. Major events such as the Guiyang high-speed rail launch and the city's first heavy snowfall were covered through this "online first" model, greatly enhancing timeliness, readability, and interactivity.

In September 2014, the group launched its first news client, the "Guiyang Headlines" mobile application—a bold experiment in media convergence. Integrating quality resources from *Guiyang Daily*, *Guiyang Evening News*, and Guiyang Network, the app adopted a collaborative, rolling, 24-hour continuous update model. Covering seven categories including local, domestic, international, social, entertainment, and sports news, it aimed to become Guizhou's largest mobile local information platform. A March 2016 redesign added activity, service, and citizen journalist functions, enhancing user interaction.

The Media Convergence Editorial Center represents a major reform in content production, achieving integration between traditional and emerging media through content consolidation, process reengineering, and all-media talent development. This enables one-time news gathering with multiple edits and multi-screen distribution, realizing multi-channel, multi-format news dissemination.

(4) Cross-Boundary Integration: Implementing the "Media Plus" Development Strategy

Cross-industry convergence effectively dissolves boundaries between old and new media while aligning with the "Internet Plus" era's trend of blurring distinctions

between traditional and internet media. Guiyang Daily Media Group has actively pursued “going out” and cross-boundary integration strategies.

1. “Media Plus” Big Data

As Guiyang emerges as China’s “Big Data Valley,” the group seized the opportunity to align with provincial and municipal big data strategies by establishing China Big Data Industry Observation Network. Positioned as a national big data industry media platform with think tank characteristics, the network has partnered with over 40 industry, academic, and research institutions including the China Information Industry Association Big Data Committee, Tsinghua Big Data Industry Federation, HP China, and numerous big data companies. Strategic cooperation agreements with the Zhongguancun Big Data Industry Alliance and Tsinghua Big Data Science Research Institute provide professional resource support.

The network adopts a “website + social” dissemination model, integrating with various websites, Weibo, and WeChat platforms to build a Guizhou-based, nationally-oriented big data media portfolio. Its business model combines “media + think tank + industry organization,” creating a “one network, one database, one circle” big data industry service entity with dual operations in Beijing and Guiyang. The website features eight columns including information, perspectives, cases, columns, activities, enterprises, self-media, and MOOCs, incorporating flat design principles for enhanced user experience. It has attracted over a hundred big data experts and scholars, more than a hundred enterprises, and over 30 self-media accounts.

2. “Media Plus” Education

Leveraging its editorial strengths and network technology advantages, the group established a strategic partnership with the Guiyang Municipal Education Bureau for brand promotion, event planning, and news publicity. It built the “Qianxuebang” education service platform to integrate educational administrative resources with media publicity resources.

Targeting primary and secondary school parents and students, “Qianxuebang” has operated since March 2014, adhering to a user-centric philosophy and producing highly relevant content products. The platform comprises a WeChat official account, website, Toutiao subscription account, and a dedicated column in *Guiyang Daily*. As the exclusive official partner of the Guiyang Municipal Education Bureau and Guiyang Enrollment Management Center, its WeChat account holds absolute priority and authority in releasing middle and high school examination information and subject guidance, while also providing comprehensive services from early childhood to study abroad consulting.

Content falls into two modules: authoritative, practical education information delivered Monday through Saturday, and targeted online-offline activities based on user needs. These include the “Middle School Master Teacher Online Lecture Series,” offline policy and application guidance lectures, the “Guiyang

Study-Abroad Mothers Club,” and “Qianxuebang Campus Tours.” The platform has independently organized numerous events including the 2015 middle school application consultation fair and psychological preparation lectures for college entrance examinations. It also operates the “Middle School Happy Learning Clinic,” inviting renowned Guiyang teachers to provide weekly counseling for ninth-grade students. Today, “Qianxuebang” has become Guiyang’s most authoritative and influential education brand and service platform.

Reflections on Media Convergence Development

Media convergence involves not only conceptual transformation but also cognitive renewal; not merely technological grafting but content innovation; not just structural adjustment but institutional reform; and not simply operational changes but business model innovation. Based on Guiyang Daily Media Group’s practices, further development should focus on several key considerations.

First, **unified understanding of convergence development** must be established at the conceptual level. The group operates multiple media products including *Guiyang Daily* and its digital edition, *Guiyang Evening News* and its digital edition, Guiyang Network, Guiyang Headlines client, and Big Data Industry Observation Network. Unified top-level design is essential to align these diverse products under a common convergence development strategy, requiring a shift from traditional production and management thinking to new media and internet thinking.

Second, **processes must be unified under the Media Convergence Editorial Center**. Content remains the foundation of media industries and the key to survival and development. While emphasizing technology’s driving role, content construction must be prioritized, with the editorial center at its core. All stages—from thematic planning and assignment to news gathering, editing, and publication—should be centrally coordinated. Based on news events’ characteristics, the center should mobilize resources, arrange coverage, and leverage new media platforms for instant reporting and real-time interaction, followed by in-depth analysis and commentary in print media to achieve one-time gathering, multiple edits, multi-platform dissemination, and multi-format reporting.

Third, **services must emphasize personalization and customization**. In today’s information explosion era, information is no longer scarce, but personalized and customized needs are increasingly prominent. Media products and services must focus on personalization, customization, and specialization. While providing general media products, market research should be strengthened to collect and analyze user needs, delivering targeted customized media products and services.

Fourth, **copyright protection must be strengthened**. Traditional media’s core advantage lies in its vast amount of quality original content, which has become raw material for many news websites to grow and strengthen. This has transformed traditional media into content “bases” and “warehouses” for

new media, seriously undermining traditional media's competitiveness and enthusiasm at its own expense. How to effectively protect original content and its value represents both a major challenge for Guiyang Daily Media Group and a common issue facing national media industry development.

The media convergence of *China National Geographic* did not happen overnight but requires a more extended process. This study examines the convergence innovation of *China National Geographic*'s new media platforms, demonstrating the development characteristics and existing problems of its official website, Weibo, WeChat, and mobile client, and proposes pathways for platform integration including adhering to internet principles, leveraging social platform advantages, and enhancing content innovation.

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

Source: ChinaXiv — Machine translation. Verify with original.