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## Competency Development for Book Editors in New Media Environments (Postprint)

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### Abstract

The development of new media has profoundly influenced the book market, concurrently presenting book editors with greater opportunities and challenges. Book editors should proactively learn and adapt to the novel transformations ushered in by the new media environment, diligently cultivate their professional competencies, thereby meeting the exigencies of the era and securing the favor of both market and readership. This study will concisely analyze the impact of the new media environment on the book market landscape and editorial profession, subsequently investigating capability development from cognitive and operational dimensions.

### Full Text

### Preamble

#### Research on the Ability Cultivation of Book Editors in the New Media Environment

**Abstract:** The development of new media has profoundly impacted the book market, presenting book editors with both greater opportunities and challenges. Book editors should proactively learn and adapt to the new changes brought by the new media environment, striving to cultivate their own capabilities to meet the demands of the era and win the favor of both the market and readers. This paper will briefly analyze the influence of the new media environment on the book market environment and book editors, and subsequently explore ability cultivation from both cognitive and operational perspectives.

**Keywords:** New Media; Book Editors; Ability Cultivation

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With the rapid development of society, new media has now penetrated all industries and millions of households. New media is profoundly changing development trends in many sectors as well as people's living habits, including those related to the book market and reading practices. The entire industrial chain of the book industry, from upstream author publishing to downstream market sales and secondary development of derivative products, has undergone earth-shaking transformations. This requires book editors to accurately recognize the situation, earnestly learn new skills, and innovate their professional capabilities to adapt to the demands of the era and win the favor of the market and readers.

## 1. Changes in the Book Market and Reading Habits Under the New Media Environment

The changes that new media has brought to the book market and electronic reading methods have directly impacted book editors, affecting both upstream and downstream aspects of the entire industrial chain. In a broad sense, any media emerging after traditional media with media characteristics can be called new media. In a narrow sense, new media is generally accepted and studied as being centered on the Internet. The social environment formed by the widespread application of new media is referred to as the new media environment.

The changes that the new media environment has brought to the book market and reading habits are mutual. The key manifestation is that new media is prompting more people to adopt electronic reading, which has directly led to the shrinkage of the paper book market and the growth of the e-book market. Conversely, changes in the book market have fostered more widespread electronic reading habits. An important reason for this transformation is China's large netizen population. According to the 40th China Internet Statistical Report (hereinafter referred to as the "Statistical Report") released by the China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC) on August 4, 2017, by June 2017, China's netizen population had reached 751 million, accounting for one-fifth of the global total, with an Internet penetration rate of 54.3%. In the new media environment, this massive netizen base and high Internet penetration rate have laid a solid foundation for the rapid cultivation of electronic reading habits.

Taking online literature as a key area of electronic reading, the Statistical Report shows that the user base for online literature reached 353 million, an increase of 19.36 million since the end of the previous year, accounting for 46.9% of all netizens. In other words, nearly one out of every two people uses electronic reading. Under the influence of this vast user base, in 2016, the proportion of copyright income in the online literature industry nearly doubled year-over-

year, with copyright revenue becoming the core of the industry's revenue growth. The ecological construction of the online literature industry is also becoming increasingly sophisticated, providing greater convenience for electronic reading. Meanwhile, data released by the China Publishing Association in January 2017 indicates that in 2016, China's total book retail market reached 70.1 billion yuan, representing a year-over-year growth of 12.30%. However, physical bookstore channels experienced a slight decline with a growth rate of -2.33%, while online bookstores maintained growth of approximately 30% in 2016, with total sales exceeding those of physical bookstores.

These data clearly show that in the new media environment, electronic reading habits are gradually forming, online bookstores have promising development prospects, and physical bookstore sales face a crisis. This new trend in the book publishing industry requires book editors to have a clear understanding and to innovate their capabilities to adapt to the era's demands and win the favor of the market and readers.

### **2.1 Upstream of the Industrial Chain: Book Editors Must Proactively Seek Quality Authors and Works**

In traditional book publishing, the connection between book editors and quality authors was bidirectional: on the one hand, publishers would sign contracts with quality authors, and on the other hand, some authors would submit manuscripts to publishers, which editors would review and approve before proceeding with editing and publishing. However, in the new media environment, the emergence of numerous online literature websites has led more and more well-known quality authors to turn to online channels for further development, while this channel has also enabled many previously obscure quality authors to rise to fame. It can be said that book publishing is no longer the only way for quality authors to obtain economic benefits, as online literature websites offer more flexible and efficient profit models. Therefore, this requires book editors to change their past work style of "waiting for works" and instead delve into the Internet to actively search for quality authors across various new media platforms.

### **2.2 Downstream of the Industrial Chain: Book Editors Must Expand Online and Offline Sales Space**

In traditional book publishing, the primary task of book editors was to perform content editing and ensure book quality, with marketing personnel responsible for sales volume. However, as the industry environment changes and market competition intensifies, book editors must fully consider the target audience environment when editing content, tailoring content and layout according to audience needs, and collaborate with marketing personnel for online and offline marketing. This is especially critical for quality authors found through online literature websites, whose book content has already been partially disseminated online and has built some popularity. How to maintain this online momentum before formal publication to lay a foundation for subsequent sales is a key

requirement that the new media environment places on many book editors. Additionally, in today's climate of declining traditional bookstores, how to accurately grasp market trends and reader tastes to efficiently and quickly launch books that can achieve substantial sales in bookstores undoubtedly represents an even higher and newer requirement for book editors.

### 3. Research on Cultivating Innovative Abilities of Book Editors in the New Media Environment

The new environment demands new capabilities, which is particularly important for book editors amid the rapidly changing waves of book market development. However, some book editors currently exhibit various shortcomings, such as clinging to traditional patterns, lacking new media thinking, prioritizing editing work over marketing methods, and adopting a "self-centered" approach to book editing and publishing. These outdated concepts and practices are actually undesirable and will soon be eliminated by the new media environment. Only by innovatively cultivating abilities at both the cognitive and operational levels can book editors better adapt to the new media environment.

#### 3.2 Innovation and Ability Cultivation at the Operational Level

**3.2.1 Taking the Initiative to Seek Quality Online Literature Resources** With numerous domestic publishers and intense competition, quality author resources are scarce, and quality book content resources are even more sought-after. In many cases, book editors must take the initiative to seek out quality authors and works. Editors can search from three types of "sources." First, quality literary websites such as "Qidian Chinese Network," "Huanjian Shumeng," and "Hongxiu Tianxiang," whose different characteristics must be thoroughly understood. For instance, Qidian features high-quality entertainment literature, Huanjian Shumeng is popular for fantasy literature, and Hongxiu Tianxiang has a strong reputation for women's literature. By understanding these differences, editors can identify promising book content among various online literary works. Second, quality literary forums. Years ago, netizen "Dangnian Mingyue" published "Those Things About the Ming Dynasty," which became a phenomenal historical work, originally serialized on the "Tianya Forum." Currently, forums like "Longkong" remain active and of high quality. Third, knowledge Q&A and story-sharing websites. Knowledge Q&A platforms like "Zhihu" have produced quality authors such as Zhang Jiawei and best-sellers like "Passing Through Your Entire World," while original story-sharing websites like "True Story Project" also contain substantial material worthy of careful reading by book editors.

**3.2.2 Transforming Concepts and Establishing "Reader-Centered" Thinking** The traditional "editor-centered" mindset has lost its luster in the new media environment. Readers now need books actively pushed to them according to their tastes, rather than passively searching for needed books among

published works. In the past, communication between editors and readers was inconvenient, causing editors' responses to readers and market feedback to lag. However, the greatest characteristic of new media—"interactivity"—has enabled truly zero-distance, barrier-free communication between editors and readers. Through platforms such as "Weibo Hot Search" and "Today's Hot Topics," book editors can quickly understand readers' concerns, and by analyzing download and sales data from numerous online book platforms, they can swiftly identify popular book genres among readers. Only in this way can they target their efforts effectively and conduct book editing with a "reader-centered" approach.

### 3.3 Establishing Marketing Awareness Through New Media Tools

There is a saying in the publishing world: "Editors who don't value marketing can only produce waste paper." This vividly illustrates the importance of book editors cultivating marketing capabilities. Book editors must fully utilize various new media tools to "whet" readers' appetites and subsequently guide them to purchase books. For example, through WeChat public accounts and mobile reading apps, book editors can release early chapters or exciting passages of edited books to attract audiences, while requiring purchase of e-books or physical books to access subsequent content. This is a relatively common marketing method, though more frequently used by marketing personnel. However, since book editors have a deeper understanding of book content, if they can participate in selecting which chapters to release and comprehensively employ various content editing techniques to attract readers, they can strengthen reader interest and facilitate marketing.

## 4. Conclusion

In summary, the new media environment places higher demands on the cultivation of book editors' capabilities. The scope of book editors' work must extend across the entire industrial chain, requiring them to have holistic management capabilities. While developing such capabilities requires a process, it is hoped that editors themselves can complete this transformation as soon as possible to better adapt to the new media environment and promote the development of the book publishing industry.

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