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Post-Print Media Convergence in the All-Media Era

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Abstract

Under the impact of the new media and ‘Internet Plus’ wave, the ecological environment of media has undergone fundamental transformations. Throughout this process, the convergence of traditional and new media has become an overarching trend. Within the new media paradigm, how can traditional media break through from the interstices and carve out a development path suited to their own characteristics? This constitutes a critical issue that demands earnest contemplation and resolution for traditional broadcast media in the all-media era.

Full Text

Preamble: ChinaXiv Partner Journal Research on Convergence and Development

Abstract: Under the impact of new media and the “Internet Plus” tide, the media ecological environment has undergone fundamental transformation. In this process, the convergence of traditional and new media has become an irreversible trend. From the perspective of new media thinking, how can traditional media break through the cracks and forge a development path suited to their own needs? This is a critical question that broadcast traditional media must seriously contemplate and resolve in the all-media era.

Keywords: Traditional Media; New Media; All-Media Era; Convergent Development; Supply-Side Reform Thinking; Transformation and Upgrading

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With the rapid development of internet technology, the ways information is disseminated and received are undergoing profound changes. Confronted with the penetration of emerging media such as networks, mobile phones, Weibo, and WeChat, broadcast media that rely on traditional concepts and methods of communication face severe challenges. In this era where everyone can be a journalist, new media represented by the internet are playing an increasingly important role in communication. Interactive, personalized, segmented, and diversified communication methods are changing how people access information, bringing disruptive impacts to traditional media.

1. The Internet Transforms Media Ecology: Broadcast Media Face Challenges

For traditional media, entering the new media battlefield and pursuing media convergence presents enormous practical challenges. Moving from “simple addition” to “deep integration,” it is insufficient to merely achieve “you have me, I have you”; rather, they must accomplish the sublimation and transformation of “you are me, I am you.” For traditional media represented by radio and television, the most important task at present is to take active action, master the communication laws of emerging media, integrate various resources on the basis of fully utilizing new technologies and methods, strengthen the convergence of content, channels, and markets, achieve integrated development of platforms, operations, and management, reconstruct the business processes and operational mechanisms of radio and television, and forge a new convergence development path of “1+1>2” to realize a true all-media strategy.

With the emergence of smart electronic devices, broadcast media’s advantages have almost vanished in the face of new media’s fierce offensive. Audience habits for receiving information are changing, advertising placement strategies are changing, and capital and human resources are also tilting toward new media. Faced with industry difficulties—whether to innovate or wait and see, whether to converge or hold firm—practitioners in traditional broadcast media like us must clarify our direction and sort out our thinking. The era of linear, one-way broadcasting can no longer satisfy contemporary audiences’ needs for information selection and expression. Many local television stations can only produce content according to “prescribed actions,” while vivid and flexible “optional actions” are greatly restricted, directly leading to the gradual loss of audiences. In contrast, new media that use the internet as a carrier and real-time interactive methods to disseminate information, with their characteristics of convenience, multi-directional communication, wide channels, universal participation, and multi-point interaction, greatly satisfy audience personalization and choice.

2. Urban Broadcast Media’s Transformation to All-Media is Imperative

The arrival of the internet era has undoubtedly launched the all-media era. Centered on audiences and dominated by content, the organic integration of traditional and emerging media through transformation, upgrading, and content optimization is more conducive to the healthy and stable development of the media industry. Currently, many radio and television stations are building and developing new media, but their methods of integrating into the internet have not achieved significant results. The main reason for this failure lies in simply moving television and newspaper content to websites and mobile phones with changed headlines—while possessing some promotional and retrieval value, this approach has little practical utility. In fact, some current cooperation between television stations, radio stations, and new media is merely copy-and-paste based on mutual willingness. Although everyone attaches great importance to the cognition of media convergence and media transformation, they are not very clear about the pathways to achieving these strategies, including how to transform, how to converge, and how to break through institutional constraints from the perspectives of content integration, distribution, and presentation. This is the so-called “clear strategy, weak implementation.” The internal operation of “one sign, two teams” and the physical displacement of content are only formal multimedia clusters. This “two skins” phenomenon is not true convergence and has not brought any new benefits to traditional media.

At present, many local television stations have begun to accelerate their transformation and upgrading pace with “supply-side” reform thinking, achieving cross-media development through integration, alliance, and convergence, and realizing profound changes throughout the entire system from institutions and mechanisms to production, communication, and operations. In 2017, Kunming Radio and Television Station established an All-Media News Center, All-Media Marketing Center, and Converged Media Development Center, reorganizing and integrating resources previously scattered across various channels, frequencies, websites, Weibo, and WeChat, laying out new communication channels and terminals. It launched the “All-Media Convergence Release Center” and “Converged Media Release Cloud System,” upgraded and launched its official website, mobile client, and WeChat official account, optimized the collection, editing, and broadcasting processes, and promoted the transformation of organizational structure, editorial teams, communication mechanisms, content products, and technical services to build a new regional media convergence group featuring “all-media aggregation, co-platform production, multi-channel distribution, and all-media integrated marketing.”

Compared with traditional news production and broadcasting methods, the integrated all-media platform has obvious advantages, which were particularly prominent in Kunming’s 2017 Two Sessions coverage. Through innovative concepts and ideas, all interviews were uniformly planned and dispatched by the All-Media News Center, coordinated by the Converged Media Development Cen-

ter, and supported by the technical department. This approach broke down platform resources and achieved multi-form reporting including video, audio, graphics, and H5, establishing a multi-channel three-dimensional release system covering television, radio, websites, clients, WeChat, and Weibo. Supported by cloud technology, Kunming Radio and Television Station achieved the first-ever full-process simultaneous live broadcast of video and graphics in the history of Two Sessions reporting. During the Two Sessions period, in addition to television and radio news reports, it conducted 10 video and graphic live broadcasts through the “Wireless Kunming” client and website, released 225 news reports, and published 12 push notifications on WeChat and Weibo. Simultaneously, in cooperation with the Xinhua News Agency client, it synchronized live broadcasts of two “Direct Access to Two Sessions News Corners,” interviewing relevant department heads, and bringing citizens’ views on social hot topics to the Two Sessions through live page message interactions. In this debut “all-media” reporting, one group of journalists was simultaneously responsible for production across three media types—television, radio, and internet—collecting graphics, video, and audio information at the first moment. From report planning to manuscript editing and broadcasting, all elements were fully considered for all-media communication, achieving synchronized release across radio, television, internet, and mobile clients while maintaining different focuses. Instant reports, follow-up reports, rolling reports, interactive reports, in-depth reports, and multi-media reports—news products tailored to different communication channels and audience preferences were refreshing, greatly enhancing influence and communication power.

Compared with traditional radio, all-media radio has obvious advantages in communication channels and methods: citizens are no longer limited to listening to programs only through radios but can also watch video and text live broadcasts through televisions, computers, and mobile phones without time and location constraints. Participation and interaction are no longer limited to calling hotlines; more audiences leave real-time messages through new media, achieving broader participation and more interactive listening and viewing effects. By fully utilizing the advantages of new technologies and new media, hosts can easily switch between the internet, workstations, and Blu-ray players by simply pressing a button in front of the live broadcast stage, achieving interconnectivity among audio, video, online, print media, manuscripts, and new media businesses. The fusion and upgrading of traditional media programs into intelligent and digital all-media program formats have also revitalized this brand column with new vitality.

Thus, the all-media release model of “one content, multiple media, multiple channels, multiple releases” is the path to media convergence. Only by actively expanding channels, optimizing resource allocation, strengthening user segmentation, accelerating platform construction, and improving product layout can we make communication forms more diversified and three-dimensional, thereby expanding influence and improving communication effects.

4. Leveraging Inherent Advantages to Achieve “Convergence”

Although new media has brought huge impacts to the survival of broadcast media, media development is a state of competitive cooperation. While new media has its advantages, broadcast media also has its own traditional strengths. In today’s era where mobile new media is prevalent, traditional media such as television and radio, in addition to their authority and influence, are more vivid, rigorous, reliable, and have regional characteristics. Their influence in public opinion supervision, social education, and local political, economic, cultural, social, and ecological construction is something many new media cannot match.

Through comprehensive analysis of the dilemmas faced by traditional broadcast media and their unique advantages, it is evident that supported by new media, new technologies, and new methods, doing well in both “localization” and “media convergence” articles, solving problems in content production, communication channels, and interactive communication, and promoting cross-media development with strong brand and content productivity through internal and external cultivation, mutual promotion, and continuous breakthroughs are the coping strategies and effective approaches for broadcast media to solve current survival and development problems. Specifically, there are mainly the following aspects:

- (1) Establish user concepts, enhance product awareness, change the one-way linear communication method, and achieve two-way communication between media and users through “station-network linkage.”
- (2) Based on radio and television, develop new media, transform from “single propaganda” to “multiple services”; innovate communication channels, integrate media resources, and achieve comprehensive three-dimensional communication.
- (3) Break down channel and frequency barriers, implement joint corps operations, expand cross-screen, cross-network, and cross-terminal convergence businesses, and enhance news communication power.
- (4) Integrate information, strengthen content, conduct in-depth planning, obtain greater development space for program content and form, and enhance the influence of mainstream media.
- (5) Open media platforms, share resources, and allow more new media and mobile users to participate in program production through forums, blogs, text messages, online live broadcasts, online surveys, etc., to win better listening and viewing effects.
- (6) Leverage resource advantages, actively participate in new media construction, excavate and create programs that better meet audience needs and have more network communication characteristics, as well as more exclusive, original, and in-depth video content.

- (7) Target market demand, extend the development chain, strive to build a modern media industry system, transform from relying solely on advertising revenue to a combination of advertising operation and industrial development, and achieve both social and economic benefits.

5. Conclusion

During the convergence process, facing transformation challenges, broadcast media must adjust strategies in real time, conduct research from aspects such as form, content, carriers, and management systems, adhere to content as king and channels as key, strengthen the characteristics of news live broadcasting, news scenes, news stories, and public opinion supervision, pursue the qualities that media should have such as speed, freshness, vitality, and exclusivity, and deeply, thoroughly, strongly, and excellently cover local news. By grasping new media thinking and carrying out content innovation reforms, all aspects of program production—including planning, collection, production, arrangement, and communication—can achieve seamless linking, real-time interaction, and interaction. Through project-based process reengineering, the ultimate goal of deep-level station-network convergence and network-station interaction can be achieved.

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

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