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Key Issues and Strategies for Media Convergence: Postprint

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Abstract

Media convergence in the new context refers to the ability to utilize current innovative technologies and methods to improve and innovate existing media communication modes, thereby maximizing information dissemination capacity. According to the current state of media development, media convergence will still face numerous challenges. This paper expounds on the key issues that need to be addressed in media convergence and proposes certain solution strategies.

Full Text

Preamble

Title: Key Issues and Strategies in Media Convergence

Abstract: In the new context, media convergence refers to the application of innovative technologies and methods to improve and transform existing media communication patterns, thereby maximizing information dissemination capacity. Given the current state of media development, media convergence will face numerous challenges. This paper elaborates on the key issues confronting media convergence and proposes corresponding solutions.

Keywords: media convergence; issues; strategies; development

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Media convergence represents an innovative model for media development. Consequently, there are no reference examples to follow in its practical implementation, which has led to issues such as unclear focus, unbalanced development, and excessive emphasis on integration. What exactly should integration look like? Should it use internet thinking to transform existing media practices, or should it give equal weight to both form and content? Moreover, traditional media encompasses many types, and not all can be converted through the internet. Some niche media forms, such as books and journals, may be neglected in media convergence efforts and could easily be eliminated in future media development. This is also a problem that cannot be ignored in media convergence.

Emerging media has impacted traditional media, posing significant challenges while also providing development opportunities. Traditional media relies on newspapers, periodicals, broadcasting, and other forms to disseminate information, which has become outdated under the current internet model. Much information cannot be updated in a timely manner and fails to meet public demands for information. Emerging media utilizes various internet channels such as Weibo, WeChat, and apps to spread information, making information updates and dissemination more convenient, broader in scope, and capable of real-time transmission. Therefore, the convergence of old and new media is not only an inevitable requirement of the times but also enables complementary advantages and mutual benefit.

1. Current State of Media Convergence

Some argue that current media convergence is not only a transformation but also a form of disruptive innovation. This description vividly captures the fundamental nature of this change. The rapid development of new media has altered traditional media's communication patterns. Fewer people obtain information through traditional means; newspaper sales have been declining, television viewership has decreased, while the number of internet users has grown substantially, making the internet the primary carrier for information dissemination. Traditional media has recognized this reality and consequently proposed strategies for media convergence. Traditional media professionals have actively engaged in innovative practices, bringing vitality and hope to media development and convergence.

2. Key Problems Facing Media Convergence

Broadly speaking, media convergence involves the integration of traditional and emerging media. Because these use different carriers for information dissemination and face different audiences—or rather, because audiences have different concepts and thus choose different channels to obtain information—conceptual issues constitute the first problem that media convergence must address. For many people, traditional concepts are deeply ingrained, not only among audiences but also among traditional media operators. They still cannot clearly see

the current state of media development, believing that media convergence is impossible or unsustainable, and that only traditional media methods can endure. Some do not view media convergence as an inevitable trend but rather consider internet-based media dissemination merely as an information channel, not mainstream media, and incapable of integrating with traditional media—essentially just a simple differentiation of communication methods. Such concepts have, to some extent, hindered the development of media convergence.

Another major challenge in media convergence is the shortage of interdisciplinary talent. Talent issues have always been a concern in the development of any new endeavor. Media convergence requires professionals who are familiar with traditional media while also having innovative ideas about emerging media. However, there are currently few qualified individuals available. Alternatively, due to constraints imposed by existing media models, relevant departments lack policies to encourage such talent, and no specialized training institutions have been established for talent cultivation. Additionally, current teaching models are relatively rigid, making it difficult to cultivate courageous professionals who can boldly engage in innovative media convergence practices in the short term.

Originally, “convergence” was merely a general concept, with no clear standards for specific integration methods or degrees of integration. This has created many misunderstandings and practical pitfalls regarding the extent of media convergence. Today, when many regional or media organizations implement media convergence, although they consider how traditional media should be expressed on the internet, the integration remains merely formal rather than deep—such as resource sharing and complementary advantages. The focus is primarily on one-way resource and data transmission, mostly limited to the integration of information dissemination methods, without achieving integrated convergence of media operation models, organizational structures, group reforms, and editorial processes. Moreover, there is a lack of innovation in convergence efforts, with no breakthrough innovative achievements. Although the number of so-called integrated media entities has increased, existing examples show no qualitative improvement in convergence models.

Integration is only one aspect of internal convergence; institutional mechanisms also require attention. Since traditional publishing is managed by relevant authorities while innovative media is operated by enterprises themselves, media convergence requires policy support. Both enterprises and relevant departments must work together to address problems that arise during specific development processes, ensuring effective integration of old and new media under departmental supervision and with enterprise cooperation.

Many media organizations, due to current internet development, mistakenly believe that convergence means replacing traditional media with emerging media. This has diminished the status of traditional media in the convergence process, leading to unbalanced development. Therefore, while developing the advantages of internet media, it is also necessary to maintain the strengths of traditional media and improve content quality. Both traditional and emerging media have

their limitations and should not be viewed one-sidedly. Efforts should be made to improve traditional media's problems of untimely information, slow updates, and insufficient interaction with the public, while also addressing internet media's issues of chaotic information, mixed truth and falsehood, and negative interactions. Through the integration of old and new, we must ensure that information is not only timely but also authentic and authoritative. Regardless of the convergence approach, rigorous and scientific information collection and dissemination should be ensured. Traditional media can establish information platforms and regular exchange platforms to gather feedback and make specific improvements. Internet platforms should also learn from traditional media's rigorous information verification and management systems to achieve balanced convergence.

3. Strategies for Media Convergence

Given the deep-rooted nature of traditional concepts, changing the mindset of media practitioners becomes fundamental. Traditional media professionals should develop innovative thinking, recognize current internet development trends, and understand the challenges facing traditional media. Without reform, they cannot adapt to the development of this era. The original purpose of media development was to satisfy public demand for information and meet societal needs. If traditional media can no longer effectively meet the needs of the majority, such media is certainly backward. To adapt to progress while not abandoning traditional media, we must learn to keep pace with the times, and media convergence represents an excellent reform direction. The government can organize lectures and training sessions to disseminate media convergence concepts through top-down approaches, establishing practitioners' conscious awareness and improving their quality. Changing mindsets can not only motivate professionals to participate in new media convergence work but also encourage them to learn new technologies to help media innovate better across various platforms.

Media convergence should not remain superficial; it must achieve integration in the editorial process, establish unified teams, and implement integrated management internally. Since traditional publishing is managed by relevant authorities while innovative media is operated by enterprises, media convergence requires policy support. Both enterprises and relevant departments must work together to address problems arising during development, ensuring effective integration of old and new media under departmental supervision and with enterprise cooperation.

Ensure balance in the convergence process between traditional and emerging media. Many media organizations mistakenly believe that convergence means replacing traditional media with emerging media due to current internet development. This diminishes traditional media's status and leads to unbalanced development. Therefore, while developing internet media advantages, we must also maintain traditional media strengths and improve content quality. Both traditional and emerging media have limitations and should not be viewed one-

sidedly. We should improve traditional media's issues of untimely information, slow updates, and insufficient public interaction, while also addressing internet media's problems of chaotic information, mixed truth and falsehood, and negative interactions. Through old-new integration, we must ensure information is timely, authentic, and authoritative. Regardless of the convergence approach, rigorous and scientific information collection and dissemination should be ensured. Traditional media can establish information platforms and regular exchange platforms to gather feedback for specific improvements. Internet platforms should also learn from traditional media's rigorous information verification and management systems to achieve balanced convergence.

All strategy implementation is based on talent. Regardless of the type of innovation or development, sufficient human resources are needed. The proposal of any concept requires pioneers who dare to practice. Therefore, after proposing the media convergence strategy, talent reserve issues should be considered. Encourage experienced veterans in the media industry while also introducing innovative newcomers. Regular talent exchanges on media convergence can be organized, allowing for complementary advantages and mutual technical learning among professionals. Strengthen integration across disciplines, cultivate talent regularly, and improve compensation levels to attract highly skilled and qualified individuals.

4. Conclusion

Media convergence remains an exploratory development process. Deficiencies are inevitable during development, and problems are bound to arise. However, in the tide of media convergence, we should recognize that it represents the general trend. We must not halt progress due to emerging problems and challenges but should instead face them head-on, develop innovative thinking, confront urgent issues in development, analyze their root causes, and strive to solve them fundamentally, turning difficulties into opportunities. Through unremitting efforts, we can truly achieve internal integration of traditional and emerging media.

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