

A New Paradigm for Media Convergence Development: Creating a New Model for News Agency Integration Through System and Product Innovation — Postprint of a Case Study on Xinhua News Agency’s “All-Media Reporting” Innovation

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Abstract

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Full Text

Preamble

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Media Convergence Strategy and Platform Development

Since the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China made its major deployment on media convergence, Xinhua News Agency has actively explored and innovated with determination. In accelerating this convergence process, the agency has adhered to the General Secretary’s requirement of “integrating into one and merging as a whole,” embraced the concept of “all-media release with mobile priority,” and insisted on balancing content innovation with institutional innovation. By focusing development on the construction of “one network, one terminal, and one platform,” Xinhua has produced a series of

online “page-defining works” with screen-dominating effects during major thematic reporting campaigns, creating a new convergence development model with distinctive agency characteristics.

The Xinhua All-Media Reporting Platform, operational since July 2015, has been configured with six major functions: resource integration, convergence processing, public opinion monitoring, business management, influence evaluation, and remote command. In daily operations, the platform has established a director-general meeting mechanism that integrates resources and strengths from all editorial departments and terminals across the agency, coordinating and organizing key convergence reports in various forms each day. This All-Media Reporting Command Center, Planning Center, and Coordination Center has fully realized the comprehensive benefits of multi-departmental collaboration.

From Product Innovation to Systematic Innovation

The transition from single-product innovation to establishing a product R&D system and achieving systematic innovation represents the inevitable outcome of editorial process reengineering and platform expansion. The Xinhua All-Media Reporting Platform coordinates multi-line production by leveraging the strength of its bureaus worldwide, fundamentally ensuring the continuous supply capacity of convergence media products. In early 2017, the platform established the “First Studio,” with text, photography, and audio-video journalists covering the General Secretary as its core reporting force, integrating the agency’s premium reporting resources to focus primarily on visualized reporting of key convergence media products. This initiative has continuously produced works such as *The Care in His Heart*, *Small Accounts Connect to Great Sentiments*, *Deliberating National Affairs*, *Leading a Major Country’s Opening-up*, and *The Power of Rule of Law*.

Short-Form Video and Live Streaming as Drivers

In 2016, short-form videos and live streaming developed rapidly like bamboo shoots after spring rain. According to the *2017 China Mobile Short-Form Video Market Special Analysis Report* released by Analysis, by December 2016, China’s mobile online video user base had reached 499 million, accounting for 71.9% of mobile internet users and 91.8% of all online video users. In media convergence practice, mainstream media have also targeted short-form video as a breakthrough point for creating multi-form convergence media products. Driven by product innovation, the Xinhua All-Media Reporting Platform has evolved from single products to serialized product exploration, forcing the reengineering of editorial processes, enhancing the sustainability of convergence product innovation, and establishing long-term mechanisms for visualized reporting on major themes.

The *National Photo Album* micro-documentary series, based on the Xinhua News Agency’s China Photo Archive, has formed a regular broadcasting

mechanism with weekly themes that integrate on-location filming with computer-generated effects. According to relevant personnel, each episode currently achieves over ten million views. The recent coverage of renowned geophysicist Huang Dajian exemplifies how the agency leverages its traditional strength in long-form communication while accommodating visualized reporting, achieving a “dual-wing” approach to hero reporting in the convergence media context.

Major Thematic Reporting and Process Reengineering

Since its official launch in July 2015, the Xinhua All-Media Reporting Platform has continuously explored the path of convergence development innovation. Beginning with the animated music video *Four Comprehensives* as an initial foray into visualized reporting on major themes, the platform has subsequently released a series of such works including *Four Comprehensives*, *Red Temperament*, *Red Pursuit*, and *Space Diary*. These initiatives have broken down silos between editorial, technical, and new media processing segments, reshaped editorial processes, and developed an entirely new convergence media editing system that realizes the development path of “one-time collection, N-times processing, diversified dissemination, and multi-terminal adaptation” within the convergence communication context.

This exploration has extended from one-time collection to multi-stage processing, from cross-platform to wave-based continuous dissemination, combining distribution across multiple platforms both within and outside the agency with matrix push distribution methods to create “screen-dominating effects.” It represents a successful experiment in moving from single “phenomenal” product distribution to systematic innovation.

“On-Site News” and the “Live Cloud” Initiative

The year 2016 was regarded within the industry as the inaugural year of live streaming. In February 2016, Xinhua News Agency’s Client 3.0 launched “On-Site News,” utilizing mobile internet technology to pioneer an online news editing process and create holographic live-news products. “On-Site News” has moved all aspects of news content production, editing, and publishing online, creating an “online news agency.” In February 2017, Xinhua Client 4.0 further optimized and upgraded “On-Site News” with appointment and reminder functions, refined on-site content, and continuously improved the on-site news channel functionality while expanding access to more “Live Cloud” content.

According to He Dawei, Deputy General Manager of Xinhua New Media Culture Communication Co., Ltd., during this year’s Two Sessions the organization mobilized “Live Cloud” users to conduct on-site news reporting. By establishing a “Live Cloud Broadcast WeChat Group” to coordinate with editorial directors from partner media, they collectively planned Two Sessions topics and distributed high-quality content to users in a tiered manner through the Xin-

hua client. Statistics show that during the Two Sessions period, 74 new media organizations and institutions joined “Live Cloud,” bringing the total to 137 covering 28 provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities. By March 15, they had conducted 178 on-site news reports, including 55 related to the Two Sessions.

In terms of reporting format, “On-Site News” supports multiple forms including video, animated GIFs, VR, text, and voice, presenting news scenes in multiple dimensions to deliver immersive, interactive experiences for users. In terms of distribution mode, “Live Cloud” enables cross-platform, cross-terminal multi-channel distribution of collected news materials, realizing the development path of one-time collection, multiple processing, and diversified dissemination.

Building a Convergence Ecosystem

To further optimize the on-site news content production mechanism, Xinhua News Agency’s New Media Center has partnered with media organizations across all provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities to build a convergence development ecosystem, launching live coverage of the “Belt and Road” major theme. Between May 10 and 13, they conducted 16 live sessions covering 114 reporting locations, achieving 46 million views. This initial exploration of a three-dimensional service model of “platform + product + channel + reporting” has effectively established a new “media ecosystem” featuring deep interaction between the platform and users, as well as among users themselves.

Technical Support and Talent Development

Liu Qibao, Minister of the Publicity Department of the CPC Central Committee, emphasized at the “Symposium on Promoting Media Deep Convergence” that the “central kitchen” must have a technical support system, establishing a solid technical foundation and hardware facilities to provide reliable technical guarantees for the stable operation of the editing and distribution network. During construction, the technical team of Xinhua’s All-Media Reporting Platform has strived to leverage technological innovation in supporting the reshaping of editorial processes and institutional reform.

According to Guo Hongfei, Deputy Director of Xinhua’s Technology Laboratory involved in the platform’s backend technical construction, in recent years the technical bureau’s relevant project teams have comprehensively advanced the platform’s backend technical construction in accordance with the leadership’s requirement that technical work must integrate with the entire editorial chain. Unlike other mainstream media, Xinhua’s technical construction system is large-scale and multi-nodal, incorporating business requirements from both headquarters and bureaus into a unified technical framework to enhance collaborative production and data-supported reporting capabilities. The backend takes editorial work as its core, uses flat online command as its link to connect all business segments and the entire workflow, and has built five core functions: all-

media editing, reporting command, business management, influence monitoring, and adoption statistics.

Media competition ultimately boils down to talent competition, and media's core advantage lies in talent advantage. In advancing media convergence, mechanism, system, and talent are all crucial, as noted by Qian Tong, Deputy Director of Xinhua's Chief Editor's Office Convergence Development Center and a participant in convergence reporting. He emphasizes that transforming existing talent and promoting full-staff digital transformation among the editorial team requires product-centered active exploration to shift from creating phenomenal products to generating overall momentum.

The Three Pillars: Sentiment, Emotion, and Rootedness

In exploring visualized reporting on major themes in 2017, Qian Tong summarized three key principles: sentiment, emotion, and rootedness. Sentiment refers to “connecting to the sky” while “connecting to the ground”—meaning that while publicizing, reporting, and interpreting the central leadership's governance principles, the agency must not forget to use small stories, ordinary people, and everyday objects as entry points. Through micro-narratives reflecting macro themes, users can receive positive messages conveyed by convergence works through immersive experiences.

Finding emotional resonance points is key to delivering immersive experiences. In the short video *Three-Year Wait and Thirty-Three-Year Return*, which tells the story of three ordinary migrant workers returning home on the “Targeted Poverty Alleviation Special Train” during Spring Festival travel season, Xinhua journalists conducted follow-up interviews in Huayuan County, Hunan—where General Secretary Xi officially proposed the targeted poverty alleviation policy. The scene of 33-year-old painter Shi Xin meeting his 3-year-old son at the village entrance moved countless netizens, with comments on Tencent's photo channel soaring to nearly 70,000 within a short period. According to the accompanying Xinhua journalist, this scene was captured spontaneously during the follow-up interview, fully demonstrating that in the new media public opinion field, the excavation of sentiment and emotion cannot be separated from journalists' in-depth investigation at news sources with their footwork, vision, intellectual capacity, and writing skills.

Qian Tong states: “Only through deep rootedness can products avoid being formalistic and superficial; only through good innovation can products occupy positions and generate dissemination power.”

Conclusion

Since 2015, Xinhua News Agency has taken solid news gathering and editing business as its root, new media public opinion field exploration as its breakthrough, and iterative technological innovation as its support. While continu-

ously enriching its news products, the agency has driven the reengineering of editorial processes and institutional reform for news agencies, creating a new convergence development model with agency characteristics and producing a batch of excellent works for the internet era.

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

Source: ChinaXiv — Machine translation. Verify with original.