

A Preliminary Analysis of the Post-print Convergence of Traditional and New Media in the Internet Era

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Abstract

Taking the convergence of traditional media and new media in the Internet era as the primary research focus, this study introduces definitions of traditional and new media within the Internet context, elaborates on the current status of their integration, identifies improvements undertaken by major mainstream media amid challenges from new media, and acknowledges efforts made by various regional media following the exemplary model of central news media. It further proposes recommendations for the convergence of traditional and new media in the Internet era: traditional media should leverage the “two micros and one end” strategy (encompassing Weibo, WeChat, and news client applications), avoid homogenization in media convergence, promote ideological transformation within traditional media, and drive innovation in management mechanisms to truly facilitate the integration of traditional and new media.

Full Text

Preamble

Abstract: This study focuses on the convergence of traditional and new media in the Internet era. It introduces definitions of traditional and new media in this context, examines the current state of their integration, highlights improvements made by major mainstream media under the challenge of new media, and acknowledges efforts by regional media following the example of central news outlets. The paper proposes recommendations for traditional-new media convergence: traditional media should leverage the “two micros and one client” (Weibo, WeChat, and news apps) effectively, avoid homogenization in media convergence, promote ideological transformation, and drive management mechanism innovation to truly achieve integration.

Keywords: Internet era; traditional media; new media; convergence

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1. Characteristics of Traditional and New Media in the Internet Era

1.1 Traditional Media in the Internet Era

With the advent of the Internet era, traditional media has undergone significant transformation, no longer limited to conventional forms such as radio, television, and newspapers. Its platform and spatial value have become more diverse [1]. Compared with new media, traditional media enjoys a broader mass base, and with the development of the Internet and the emergence of new media, traditional media itself has also developed rapidly. It has established strong brand awareness, exerts considerable social influence, and generates significant economic benefits. For instance, radio, television, and newspapers reach vast audiences with credible, authentic information. However, in the Internet era, traditional media faces a noticeable trend of audience aging, largely because older demographics lack internet literacy and cannot use new media tools. Therefore, traditional media must keep pace with the times and align itself with contemporary development.

1.2 New Media in the Internet Era

Building upon traditional media, the concept of new media has emerged as people's use of the Internet deepens, encompassing mobile communications, digital television, and other platforms. In today's Internet era, new media demonstrates high vitality and dynamism, representing an effective extension of traditional media. The speed of online information dissemination has increased markedly, with enhanced interaction and communication that effectively overcomes the timeliness limitations of traditional media. Nevertheless, new media also suffers from certain maladies, including frequent fake news, rumor-mongering incidents, and inadequate online supervision.

2. Current Status of Traditional-New Media Convergence in the Internet Era

In the Internet era, major mainstream media have implemented a series of reforms. For example, the well-known *People's Daily* has made significant changes in response to new media challenges, evolving from a single newspaper format to a modern multi-platform outlet incorporating magazines, electronic reading screens, mobile newspapers, apps, Weibo, and WeChat. This has created a new

type of modern mainstream media with preliminary integration effects, laying the foundation for deeper traditional-new media convergence [2]. These efforts have focused particularly on developing client applications, which have already been deployed to over 20 million users, creating extensive platforms for audience communication and interaction—a genuine new product facilitating media convergence. Additionally, China Radio International has made major strides in this direction, moving toward integrated media and advancing its transformation into a modern media organization.

After two years of new media integration, “CCTV News” had surpassed 100 million users across its Weibo, WeChat, and client platforms by the end of 2014 [3]. Throughout its media transformation, convergence and development has remained its guiding philosophy: television media’s strengths provide robust support for new media, while new media channels make CCTV News more rapid, extensive, and diverse in its dissemination.

In today’s Internet era, regional media outlets have begun expanding traditional media channels by establishing websites, ensuring broader development pathways. The proliferation of smart mobile devices and widespread 4G network coverage have enhanced information dissemination efficiency and convenience, marking the arrival of the “We Media” era with significantly improved interactivity [4]. Astute media professionals have consequently prioritized capturing smart mobile platforms as the main direction for convergence development. For instance, on New Year’s Day 2015, Putian Broadcasting and Television Station in Fujian Province established a New Media Department, created its own portal website, built proprietary communication channels on mobile Internet, and developed “Urban Community Connect” and “Community New Media Systems.” This has fostered an interwoven pattern where “you are within me, and I am within you” between traditional and new media.

3. Recommendations for Traditional-New Media Convergence in the Internet Era

3.1 Avoiding “Two Micros and One Client” Being Numerous but Weak

The term “two micros and one client” refers to the new media forms emerging with network development: Weibo, WeChat, and news applications. Data shows that by June 2015, China’s Weibo users had exceeded 331 million, accounting for over half of all internet users. These platforms offer advantages including timely information release, broad influence, and rapid dissemination, allowing citizens not only to access real-time information but also to express their views freely, significantly enhancing public participation. Currently, these platforms have become primary channels for information acquisition.

Many traditional media outlets launched their “two micros and one client” within just two months after embarking on the convergence path. However,

due to various factors, these client applications failed to play substantive roles, and update frequencies for Weibo and WeChat gradually declined. This stems from blind bandwagon-following in convergence efforts—superficial integration without substantive “content-is-king” fusion. Therefore, convergence should prioritize quality over quantity, ensuring genuine integration between traditional projects and new media.

3.2 Avoiding Simple Copying and Content Homogenization

In current traditional media convergence, client applications merely replicate traditional media content. However, convergence is not simple content 搬运 (relocation); it requires mutual re-examination to achieve complementary advantages, overcome traditional media’s dissemination limitations, and improve communication quality. Therefore, to achieve successful integration, communication content—including detailed design—must align with emerging media characteristics [5]. This demands content improvement and innovation in convergence efforts, with scientific planning and configuration for both editorial content and overall website, Weibo, and WeChat design. This approach ensures that traditional media’s strong professional team advantages are leveraged while utilizing new media’s big data analytics and point-to-point interactive dissemination to firmly grasp discourse power.

3.3 Breaking Through Traditional Media’s Ideological Concepts

Media convergence suffers from numerous deficiencies requiring resolution. Traditional media once monopolized information dissemination, but new media development has enabled people to access internet information freely, diversifying channels beyond traditional media and shaking traditional media’s dominant position. Under these new circumstances, media professionals must transform traditional thinking to establish a solid ideological foundation for new media integration. This can be achieved through two primary approaches:

First, transform institutional concepts. Traditional media emerged from the dual operation of public institutions and commercial enterprises, creating inherent contradictions in the convergence path. Beyond its political propaganda responsibilities, traditional media must enrich itself through new media to adapt to contemporary trends. In the convergence development process, media organizations should emphasize diverse restructuring characteristics, examine issues from new media perspectives, respond to market demands, and actively participate in modern market competition to achieve genuine innovation.

Second, transform ideological concepts. Traditional media’s historically condescending posture toward audiences has prevented it from understanding audience needs, lacking communication channels and leaving program production in a passive position. Today, personalized program customization largely satisfies audience needs and demonstrates service consciousness, receiving widespread popularity. Therefore, traditional media must correct its mindset in converging

with new media, emphasizing the egalitarian nature of Internet thinking.

3.4 Promoting Management Mechanism Innovation and Integrated Development

As mentioned above, superficial convergence has been completed; the urgent need now is deeper, substantive integration. This can be achieved through the following aspects:

3.4.1 Internal Organizational Restructuring To fully integrate with new media, traditional media should proactively restructure its organization to align with new media characteristics. This involves forming specialized teams based on different media features, supported by matching performance evaluation and personnel management systems. In talent cultivation and recruitment, emphasis should be placed on introducing high-caliber new media professionals to staff newly created positions and tasks.

3.4.2 Operational Process Reshaping Products on new media platforms cannot be simple replicas, as traditional news production chains are incompatible with new media. Traditional media's news production processes must be reformed through convergence because news about the same event requires vastly different perspectives and thinking modes across platforms. This demands higher standards for news producers, who must conduct secondary development of news products to meet different media requirements and fully attract audiences. For example, while new media is not strong in visual journalism—a traditional media strength—traditional outlets can re-edit broadcast video news into “short news” suitable for mobile phones, achieving better dissemination effects on new media platforms.

3.4.3 Establishing and Improving Information Sharing Mechanisms On the convergence path, traditional media should abandon previous siloed operations and actively collaborate with peer or related industries, leveraging respective advantages for shared benefits. Key convergence elements—including talent and technology—should be developed through practical actions to ensure multi-industry common development.

4. Conclusion

In summary, media convergence represents an inevitable trend. Traditional and new media must achieve deep integration by capitalizing on respective strengths across media technology, business operations, content, and resources, ultimately becoming interwoven as “I am you, and you are me.”

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

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