

Postprint: The Survival Path of Traditional Legal Media in the Self-Media Era

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Abstract

This article, drawing upon the media convergence development approach of the Inner Mongolia Legal Daily in recent years, proposes three strategies for the development of traditional legal media: addressing readers' skimming reading patterns through integrated communication content; confronting readers' discerning selection by enhancing content quality; and meeting users' diverse needs by accelerating convergence development. In the era of information explosion, where readers are confronted with massive information overload, editors must respond to readers' fragmented reading habits by curating valuable information to provide optimal choices, thereby retaining readership. Against the backdrop of media convergence, the audience has fundamentally transformed into clients; consequently, how traditional legal media professionals develop markets, deliver online and offline services, adapt to the mobile, social, and video-based trends of internet communication, establish interactive relationships with clients, and provide targeted services constitutes a strategic option for media convergence development. Although media transformation inevitably entails growing pains, it remains the only viable path forward for traditional media.

Full Text

The Survival Path of Traditional Legal Media in the Era of Self-Media

Abstract: This article examines the media convergence strategy of *Inner Mongolia Legal Daily* in recent years, proposing three developmental approaches for traditional legal media: addressing readers' skimming habits through integrated content dissemination; meeting selective reader preferences by enhancing content quality; and responding to diverse user demands by accelerating integrated development. In an age of information explosion, readers face massive amounts of data and have developed fragmented reading habits. Editors must curate

valuable information to provide optimal choices for readers, thereby retaining their audience.

In the context of media convergence, readers have essentially transformed into clients. The key challenge for traditional legal media professionals lies in market development and providing online-to-offline services. Adapting to internet trends toward mobility, socialization, and video content while establishing interactive relationships with clients and delivering precise services represents a viable path for media integration. Although media transformation inevitably involves growing pains, this remains the necessary route for traditional media development.

Keywords: traditional legal media; *Inner Mongolia Legal Daily*; fragmented information; self-media era

A sense of crisis has pervaded traditional media for years. People now spend less time with traditional media, as a single smartphone provides access to countless new media contents. Traditional media's singular news content can no longer attract readers, and what proves even more challenging is new media's strong interactivity—its rapid online-offline communication quickly retains users. As legal media practitioners, we observe countless individuals constantly switching between webpages and refreshing content whether on buses or walking down streets. Evidently, traditional media lacks these advantages, including specialized legal media. So how should traditional legal media break through amidst new media's impact?

Media, broadly defined, refers to the medium of information dissemination—in essence, any platform that facilitates information propagation. By content scope, media can be categorized as comprehensive or specialized. Comprehensive media covers broad topics for society at large, targeting all readers without emphasizing specific groups or industries. Specialized media focuses on news and commentary reflecting particular industries, systems, or social strata, targeting specific reader groups. Legal media primarily engages in legal publicity, legal education, legal supervision, and legal services.

While the internet facilitates convenient communication, it has also spawned self-media. Also known as “citizen media” or “personal media,” self-media refers to private, civilian, universal, and autonomous communicators using modern electronic means to deliver both normative and non-normative information to unspecified majorities or specific individuals. Platforms include blogs, Weibo, WeChat, Baidu Tieba, and forums. Self-media's quick registration and convenient publishing have rapidly gained public favor. Undoubtedly, we now inhabit a self-media era—even media professionals maintain their own new media accounts.

In this self-media age, how much survival space remains for traditional media? Do specialized media still have room to exist? I believe legal media in particular

possesses substantial survival space. The critical question is whether media professionals can effectively integrate resources to capture their audience.

1. Addressing Skimming Readers: Integrating Dissemination Content

Content integration remains a powerful tool for attracting readers. As legal media, we must center on the rule of law in all integration efforts. Content production must meet reader needs; in the self-media era, we must create content that readers care about. Faced with abundant daily information, readers' choices become crucial. As professional media practitioners, we must understand reader psychology, aggregate information, and present curated content.

Inner Mongolia Legal Daily maintains regular columns such as “Focus,” “Viewpoint,” and “Broadcast,” which provide comprehensive coverage of social hotspots. Editors consistently integrate fragmented information before presenting it to readers. For International Labor Day, the paper planned two topics: “New Regulations Taking Effect May 1” and “Unreasonable Labor Rights Protection Difficult to Defend.” Editors provided legal interpretations on issues ranging from urban management officers requiring certification to real-name registration for online games and prohibitions against court presidents handling cases in name only. For the labor rights topic, editors selected perspectives from experts and judges on cases involving irrational worker rights protection and executives suing for high compensation upon resignation, helping readers understand legal principles and the need for rational litigation rather than wasting time on lawsuits. This edition received positive reader feedback, with many learning rights protection knowledge from real cases.

This demonstrates that integrating fragmented information around central themes facilitates reading. From a legal media perspective, producing needed legal news products requires persistence—if readers need it, we produce it; if they continue paying attention, we re-plan and create quality work that readers will re-disseminate. This is the standard for integrated content dissemination.

As legal media, we must maintain our positioning and not stray from our industry. Experience from specialized media nationwide shows that legal media can only forge a distinctive path by relying on the rule of law. To address changing reading habits, we must preserve legal news characteristics while integrating content thematically. By curating fragmented legal news for readers, we become indispensable.

2. Facing Selective Readers: Enhancing Content Quality

In the self-media era, information floods in constantly—people lack not content but assistance in judging and selecting information that suits them or serves public needs. To gain reader favor, we must establish trust relationships, a traditional media strength and particularly a legal media advantage. Over three decades of development, legal media has imprinted objective, truthful content

deeply in readers' minds. If truthfulness is the lifeblood of news, legal media holds incomparable advantages in building trust.

Quality media requires quality content and refined products. First, we must meet user needs and exceed their expectations, maintaining a consciousness of excellence in news production. Second, we must provide precise services, tailoring content for specific groups. Finally, we need persistence to satisfy user demands and gradually enhance brand value.

News surrounds us, but quality matters most. *Inner Mongolia Legal Daily* strengthens reporting on legal figures as a specialized legal media outlet. The paper excels at meticulous characterization, revealing significance through small details. Its coverage of Chen Lihua, one of Inner Mongolia's top ten legal figures, exemplifies this approach. Under the headline "Supporting Fairness and Justice with Ideals and Conviction," the paper reported on a prosecutor from the Ar Horqin Banner People's Procuratorate in Chifeng City. Based on Chen Lihua's decades of 坚守底线 (adhering to principles) and diligent work, the report used real cases to portray an upright prosecutor. Chen's words proved deeply moving: "Corruption is a social tumor; you are the scalpel that removes it." This single sentence captured a prosecutor's professional dedication. By elevating news quality through legal figures, the report gained reader recognition.

Legal media must not only capture news but enhance its quality, inspiring and resonating with readers. Facing new media competition, traditional legal media must innovate conceptually, organizing content concisely and elegantly to establish order from chaos and target uncompetitive spaces, aiming to "create influence" or "seize interpretive authority." We must acknowledge that in-depth reporting's "complete logic, high-quality professional operation, and customized text" remains a formidable core competency.

3. Facing Diverse User Needs: Accelerating Integrated Development

The internet has narrowed the distance between media and readers, ushering public life into the self-media era. New media treats readers as users—a shift related to recent rapid media development. In the media convergence context, the media-reader relationship has evolved into a media-user relationship.

Decades of media work reveal that in the self-media era, user needs have diversified. Many users demand interaction through their own media to realize their value—something traditional media cannot provide. In timely information delivery, traditional media completely loses to emerging online media. However, traditional media holds absolute advantages in professional depth, analysis, interpretation, and authority.

User demands drive traditional legal media to transform and develop through media convergence. The new task is transforming linear editors focused solely on print content into versatile all-media creative teams. Through media convergence, digital-age editorial departments will become comprehensive information

integration engines.

In the self-media era, media faces two relationships: content-reader and media-user. Why? Because “user” encompasses a broader meaning than “reader.” By daring to serve readers as users, we expand traditional media’s cause. Former readers no longer choose media merely for reading but demand more: interaction, services, precise content—these have become basic requirements. Many users hope one converged media can link to any needed information.

How can we effectively combine traditional and new media into an integrated whole through optimal resource allocation to achieve perfect online-offline integration? *Inner Mongolia Legal Daily* has adapted to internet trends toward mobility, socialization, and video content by strengthening content construction, innovating editorial processes, and optimizing information services, winning development advantages through content superiority. First, the paper merged its previous editorial department and new media department to establish an all-media editorial center, reforming the review process based on the center’s workflow. After reporter submissions are reviewed, they are quickly published on new media platforms, achieving complete integration in all-media editorial operations—“You are me, and I am you!”—accelerating media convergence.

All-media operations quickly demonstrated dissemination effects and reflected legal media’s brand value. After an all-media reporter’s article “Milk Crisis: Perpetrator Arrested” was published, it immediately attracted users, surpassing 100,000 views. The newspaper then followed up. The public quickly learned the truth, restoring corporate reputation. Legal media’s authority was demonstrated, resolving a corporate public relations crisis.

Undoubtedly, traditional media’s development involves transforming from serving readers to serving users, providing services and disseminating information until interaction achieves online-offline integration and deep media convergence development. We can foresee that transitioning media all start from the same line. For all traditional media, success lies not at the starting line but at turning points—this is undeniable. Therefore, media must integrate dissemination content, enhance content quality, and accelerate integrated development according to their characteristics—the only path to survival and development.

[1] Hu Zhengrong. How Traditional Media Can Build an All-Media Ecosystem [N]. *Inner Mongolia Legal Daily*, 2017-5-2.

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

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