

People's Daily “Central Kitchen”: Introduction to Post-prints

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Abstract

In 2014, under the leadership of the People's Daily editorial committee, a joint task force comprising relevant departments was established to launch the construction of the People's Daily “Central Kitchen.” The system became operational in 2016, primarily serving the newspaper's chief editor's office, its print, web, mobile, and social media business units, as well as newly established “Media Convergence Studios.” The “Central Kitchen” functions as the command hub and central control platform f...

Full Text

Introduction to the People's Daily “Central Kitchen”

In 2014, under the leadership of the People's Daily editorial committee, a joint task force comprising relevant departments was established to launch the construction of the People's Daily “Central Kitchen.” The system became operational in 2016, primarily serving the newspaper's chief editor's office, its print, web, mobile, and social media business units, as well as newly established “Media Convergence Studios.” The “Central Kitchen” functions as the command hub and central control platform for news gathering, editing, and operations management at the People's Daily, enabling senior editors to coordinate all media outlets under its umbrella and efficiently execute the collection, production, and distribution of omnimedia products. Adhering to the design philosophy of “integrated planning, one-time collection, multiple generation, diversified dissemination, all-day rolling, global coverage,” the system comprises three major platforms: a spatial platform, a business platform, and a technical platform [Figure 1: see original paper]. The “Central Kitchen,” constructed and operated by the People's Daily Media Technology Company, is located in the newspaper's new media building.

2.1 Business and Process Innovation

The business platform of the People's Daily "Central Kitchen" consists of the Chief Editor Dispatch Center and the Editorial Linkage Platform. The Chief Editor Dispatch Center serves as the command nerve center and core layer for planning, gathering, editing, and distribution, responsible for key topic selection and coordination of reporting resources. The Editorial Linkage Platform operates as a permanent coordinating body comprising the Reporting Center, Omnimedia Editing Center, and Technology Center, tasked with executing directives and collecting feedback. Platform staff are drawn from across the newspaper's print, web, mobile, and social media departments, forming a unified team that operates under the direction of the Chief Editor Dispatch Center to produce and process omnimedia news products [Figure 2: see original paper].

3. Technical Platform Innovation

3.1 "Planning, Gathering, Editing, Distribution, and Evaluation" Technical System

The technical platform development and innovation of the People's Daily "Central Kitchen" center on the core business processes of "planning, gathering, editing, distribution, and evaluation." The reporting planning phase comprises elements such as "clue discovery, topic selection, and manuscript review," supported by public opinion monitoring systems and news hotspot analysis systems that provide technical assistance for topic mining. The gathering and editing phase primarily consists of the Editorial Linkage Platform, an intelligent newspaper layout design system, and a visual product production platform. The Editorial Linkage Platform serves as a coordination tool for content production, responsible for executing reporting commands and collecting feedback. The intelligent newspaper layout design system enhances overall layout efficiency, integrating functions such as content arrangement, review and approval, and information retrieval into a single intelligent design tool. The visual product production platform is an H5 production tool for editors and reporters that eliminates technical barriers and improves production efficiency.

The distribution phase is supported by a "converged distribution system" that enables one-click publishing across websites, mobile internet, apps, WeChat, Weibo, and other platforms. With support from a content recommendation system, news can be precisely pushed to users. The evaluation phase is equipped with a "communication effect tracking system" that conducts statistical analysis and targeted monitoring of news dissemination effects while tracking feedback on topic selection performance. Through technical support across these five phases, the system achieves the objectives of "integrated planning, one-time collection, multiple generation, diversified dissemination, all-day rolling, global coverage."

3.2 “Media Convergence Cloud”

The Media Convergence Cloud, developed by the People’s Daily Media Technology Company, provides production and application technology tools for the media industry. By connecting to the China Media Convergence Cloud, media organizations can access services including news 线索 tracking, topic selection assistance, communication and operational effectiveness analysis, news hotspot analysis, dissemination effect evaluation, and user profiling. The construction of the “China Media Convergence Cloud” marks the first time the media industry has been offered complete services spanning the IaaS, PaaS, and SaaS layers, providing technical support for media organizations during convergence development and enabling them to reduce technical barriers and focus on news gathering and editing operations.

3.3 “Xiaorong” Intelligent Robot

During the 2017 Two Sessions, an physical robot named “Xiaorong” was deployed in the People’s Daily Central Kitchen hall, utilizing machine learning, speech recognition and interaction, and motion control technologies. The robot featured capabilities including real-time broadcasting of hot public opinion topics and voice interaction with frontline journalists. During voice interactions with reporters, Xiaorong could not only provide voice query services but also enable the duty chief editor at the Central Kitchen to locate frontline journalists within the shortest possible time, thereby enhancing collaborative operations and communication efficiency for Two Sessions coverage.

Operational Process

The People’s Daily organizes and coordinates daily editorial operations through chief editor coordination meetings and pre-editorial meetings. The chief editor coordination meeting represents the highest decision-making body for the daily operation of the “Central Kitchen.” Held every Monday afternoon, the meeting is chaired by the chief editor to deploy important publicity tasks for the week, discuss major reporting topics, review weekly communication effectiveness, and coordinate editorial resource integration. The pre-editorial meeting system is chaired by the deputy chief editor on duty and held every morning, with participants including heads from the Chief Editor Dispatch Center, Omnimedia Editing Center, Technology Center, and the newspaper’s reporting departments. The meeting covers topic selection planning, news 线索 briefings, daily public opinion analysis, key manuscript determination, and editorial coordination arrangements.

4. Current Status and Future Development

The operation of the People’s Daily “Central Kitchen” since 2015 can be divided into two phases. The first phase began with the Two Sessions in 2015, when the Central Kitchen mechanism was launched on a trial basis for major news events,

with continuous optimization of operational models and technical infrastructure through exploration and experimentation. The second phase commenced in January 2017, when the system entered regular operation and was integrated into daily editorial workflows.

In October 2016, to break down internal barriers and promote media convergence while mobilizing staff initiative and creativity, the People's Daily launched the "Media Convergence Studio" program. Leveraging the "Central Kitchen" technical system, these studios established a model that closely aligns with reporting themes and market demands while incorporating staff interests, covering domains including politics, finance, international affairs, culture, education, anti-corruption, and health.

Looking ahead, the construction of the People's Daily "Central Kitchen" will follow the central government's requirements for advancing deep media convergence. The system will continue to establish and expand data journalism and visualization reporting teams to seize opportunities in the media convergence era, develop a series of "Central Kitchen" technical tools, advance the implementation of the "Media Convergence Cloud" partnership program, enhance news productivity, utilize overseas social media accounts as the primary channel for international distribution, build an international communication platform, and strengthen international communication capacity.

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

Source: ChinaXiv — Machine translation. Verify with original.