

Core Business Focus, Diversified Expansion, Accelerated Transformation, and Integrated Development — He Kun, Director of the Information Technology Department of Southern Media Group, on Post-Print Integrated Development

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Abstract

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Full Text

Introduction

He Kun holds a Ph.D. and serves as Director of the Information Technology Department at Southern Media Group, Deputy General Manager of the Group's New Media Company and Director of its Science and Technology R&D Center, member of the Southern Client Operations Committee and the Southern Public Opinion Data Research Institute's governing committee, Vice Chairman of the China Federation of News Technology Workers, Deputy Director of the Technology Committee of the China Newspaper Association, and Director of the "Media Big Data Application Laboratory," one of the first batch of key laboratories in press and publication technology and standards designated by the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television.

Interview: Southern Media Group's Convergence and Innovation Strategy

China Media Technology: Following President Xi Jinping's "2.19" speech, what initiatives has Southern Media Group undertaken regarding media convergence and new media innovation, and what achievements have been made?

He Kun: In recent years, Southern Media Group has deeply implemented the strategy of "deepening core business, diversifying development, accelerating transformation, and integrated convergence" to advance media integration and new media initiatives. The goal is to enhance the influence of flagship new media products, accelerate benchmark projects for industrial transformation, and continuously strengthen the mainstream public opinion 阵地. Over the past year, the Group's new media innovation has focused on platform construction and resource integration, creating key products such as the Southern Plus client, "Southern Account" platform, Bingdu client, Southern Finance & Economics All-Media Group, the corporate restructuring of Southcn.com, Southern Public Opinion, and the 289 Art Park.

Among these, the Southern Plus client has rapidly established itself as Guangdong's premier authoritative mobile publishing platform, completing ten version iterations with downloads exceeding 11 million and revenue surpassing 10 million yuan. The "Southern Account" platform has attracted over 200 institutional self-media accounts and aggregated 33 services from 25 provincial departments, establishing itself as "the platform that understands Guangdong best" and "Guangdong's mobile service hall." The Bingdu client has accumulated over 88 million downloads, with 10 million monthly active users and 1.35 million daily active users, ranking among China's leading news information apps. The Southern Finance & Economics All-Media Group represents Guangdong's media transformation benchmark—a cross-media, cross-sector, cross-industry entity and the only all-media group of its kind in China, rapidly deploying media, data, and trading operations. Southcn.com's corporate restructuring is advancing toward listing, serving as a crucial vehicle for integrating quality new media resources and increasing asset securitization. Southern Public Opinion 2.0 has improved service quality for over 100 party and government users and numerous enterprise clients, with its mobile "Yutang" platform acquiring 1,980 users in its first year, playing a more significant role in modernizing governance systems and capabilities. The 289 Art Park, opened in 2016, has formed an integrated cultural and artistic resources operator combining offline (289 Art Park) and online (289 Art Play) platforms, hosting over 70 enterprises and earning recognition as one of the "Top Ten Cross-Strait Cultural Innovation Parks" in 2016.

Beyond these flagship projects, the Group's media outlets have launched numerous new media innovations, including Southern Weekend's "NanGuang Video," Nandu's "Smart Media" and "Nandu Education," all generating significant industry impact.

China Media Technology: As Guangdong's provincial Party organ, what guides Southern Media Group's media convergence and new media initiatives?

He Kun: Following President Xi's "2.19" speech, Southern Media Group has deeply implemented the "deepen core business, diversify development, accelerate transformation, integrated convergence" strategy, actively exploring a "Media Plus" industrial expansion model to accelerate deep media integration and build influential new media products. The Group has constructed a comprehensive media matrix spanning newspapers, periodicals, websites, clients, microblogs, and screens, creating a grand "mega-communication" pattern and a multi-voice mainstream chorus. By leveraging its authoritative information flow to drive technology, capital, talent, and material flows, the Group optimizes resource allocation, enhances total factor productivity, and serves the province's innovation-driven development strategy.

China Media Technology: How does Southern Media Group integrate its media resources through new media platforms like the "central kitchen"?

He Kun: To strengthen new media product development and transformation projects, Southern Media Group actively builds a healthy ecosystem that fosters orderly competition and Group-wide development. The editorial integration "central kitchen," launched on October 23, 2015, comprehensively integrates the Group's editorial and information resources to enable sharing across production, distribution, and operations. Positioned as a 7x24 physical operations platform for integrated development, it focuses on information formats for all-media gathering and on media terminals for multi-channel distribution. Under the command of the all-media editorial planning organization, it aggregates the Group's information resources, supports multi-media product production and operation, and provides overall editorial guidance. Currently, the "central kitchen" database has integrated Southern Daily, Southern Magazine, Southern.com, and the Southern Plus client, achieving resource sharing across newspapers, periodicals, websites, and clients, as well as deep integration of information collection, processing, and distribution. As the "central kitchen" is actively promoted across the Group's media outlets, it will play its essential role in future media competition.

China Media Technology: What is your vision for Southern Media Group's new media platform construction on the convergence path?

He Kun: For media convergence, Southern Media Group has formulated a three-year action plan for transformation and integration, adopting a Group-wide perspective to build a robust media ecology with prominent, complementary, comprehensive, interconnected, and organically integrated newspapers, periodicals, websites, clients, microblogs, and screens. The editorial integration "central kitchen" is the key focus of our deep media integration efforts. It supports production and operation across multiple product lines including newspapers, periodicals, websites, and social media. The platform has transitioned from a dual-track to a single-track system, where all editorial, review,

and distribution operations are completed on one platform, optimizing workflows, reducing complexity, improving user experience, enhancing efficiency, and truly achieving a “central kitchen” integrated work model. Building upon the massive content resources and cloud computing infrastructure of Phase I’s integrated database, the “central kitchen” will focus on developing content creation capabilities for emerging media markets, lowering technical barriers for editorial teams, creating conditions for editorial oversight, building a quantitative evaluation platform for online dissemination impact, improving internal data exchange standards and connectivity, removing technical obstacles to resource sharing and workflow integration, and using technological transformation to drive integrated content production between traditional and emerging media.

China Media Technology: Many traditional media professionals are transitioning to self-media, with some outlets like Chengdu Business Daily and Beijing Youth Daily encouraging journalists to operate WeChat public accounts. What is your view on this phenomenon and its impact on traditional media?

He Kun: Self-media represents the current trend, and journalists launching public accounts is the general direction. Southern Media Group, always pursuing innovation, encourages its media professionals to innovate independently in new media. Since last year, we have implemented the “Internet Celebrity Reporter” program to cultivate all-media and expert talent in specific fields like politics, economics, military, entertainment, and video, with personalized “one person, one policy” development plans. Two cohorts of “internet celebrities” have already been launched.

While self-media prosperity impacts traditional media, this influence is not entirely negative—it can also catalyze traditional media transformation. Successful self-media entrepreneurs from Southern Media Group’s 289 compound, such as “Mi Meng,” “Li Beika’s Fantasy World,” and “Late Night Talk,” all benefited from the Group’s early cultivation of their founders. Traditional media professionals moving into self-media represents positive adaptation and exploration of the new era and technology.

Traditional media’s advantage lies in content production and processing experience, while self-media excels in internet distribution channels and more segmented content positioning. Their mutual influence and integration will deliver more effective and timely information to audiences. Content remains fundamental to competition; what changes are technology and channels. The direction of traditional media transformation is to leverage new technologies and channels for more precise audience and content positioning, production, and distribution.

China Media Technology: What innovative measures has Southern Media Group implemented in talent team building during new media platform construction?

He Kun: Southern Media Group consistently prioritizes talent as its primary productive force. Following a shared development philosophy, we have comprehensively reformed personnel systems, evaluation mechanisms, and incentive

structures to create an environment that encourages innovation, entrepreneurship, and shared development outcomes, striving to build a diversified, multi-level talent structure emphasizing both editorial and product development, operations and management, and technology and capital.

During new media platform construction, we have intensified efforts to recruit and cultivate new media professionals, prioritizing staffing needs for flagship products and benchmark projects. We strengthen all-media skills training for editorial and business personnel, actively guiding and assisting various business segments in introducing urgently needed talent in data technology, computer technology, and new media product operations, particularly compound talent who understand both new media technology and operations. We are also exploring broader talent acquisition channels, introducing and cultivating technical teams through open and shared models, emphasizing team growth, and exploring a technical sequence rank management system to ensure internet professionals like R&D engineers and product managers can be “recruited, retained, and effectively utilized.”

China Media Technology: The central government emphasizes that content innovation is fundamental and advanced technology is the supporting force in media convergence. What content and technology innovation initiatives has Southern Media Group undertaken?

He Kun: 2016 was Southern Media Group’s “Innovation Development Year,” with innovation established as the primary driving force for convergence. We have built and improved mechanisms for contribution, assessment, and distribution that support new media products and services, creating scientifically managed and efficiently operating organizational processes and communication systems. We have intensified supply-side structural reform in the media sector, reducing low-end excess capacity and concentrating resources to support transformation advantages.

In content innovation, we have innovated communication forms, leveraging the “1+X” editorial planning linkage mechanism to advance integrated reporting across newspapers, periodicals, websites, clients, microblogs, and screens, creating a grand “mega-communication” pattern and multi-voice mainstream chorus.

In technology innovation, we utilize integrated platforms, big data, cloud computing, and other technical means to support media convergence. The Group has established a Science and Technology R&D Center to enhance internal R&D resource coordination and sharing, forming a long-term mechanism for unified technical resource planning, coordination, and management. We conduct concentrated R&D on key technologies needed for flagship products and benchmark projects, and coordinate the construction of group-wide general business frameworks and shared core business platforms for new media development.

China Media Technology: What are Southern Media Group’s key tasks and strategic deployments for convergence development in 2017?

He Kun: In recent years, Southern Media Group has actively explored the “Media Plus” industrial expansion model. In 2017, our focus is on four major new media flagship products and six major industry transformation benchmark projects.

The four major new media flagship products are:

2017 New Media Flagship Products

Southern Plus APP: Aiming for total downloads to exceed 30 million in 2017, over 60 million in 2018, and reach 100 million in 2019, with active user ratios maintained at 8-10%, leading in user volume, influence, and activity.

Bingdu APP; Ark APP; Gebi Community—These four new media flagship products will serve as the spearhead to build a new media matrix and healthy media ecology that is prominent, distinctive, complementary, comprehensive, organically integrated, and collaboratively developed. By 2019, we aim to have two to three products reach over 100 million users.

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

Source: ChinaXiv — Machine translation. Verify with original.