Postprint: Current Status, Issues, and Trends of Media Convergence Innovation in China

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Abstract

The "Research on China's Media Convergence Innovation" project is funded by the Central Public Welfare Research Institutes' Basic Research Business Expenses Special Fund and represents a key research initiative of the China Press and Publication Research Institute. The Report on China's Media Convergence Innovation Research constitutes the primary output of this project. Edited by Huang Xiaoxin (Secretary of the Party Committee and Vice President of the China Press and Publication Research Insti…

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Preamble

The "Research on China's Media Convergence Innovation" project is funded by the Central Public Welfare Research Institutes' Basic Research Business Expenses Special Fund and represents a key research initiative of the China Press and Publication Research Institute. The *Report on China's Media Convergence Innovation Research* constitutes the primary output of this project. Edited by Huang Xiaoxin (Secretary of the Party Committee and Vice President of the China Press and Publication Research Institute), Liu Jianhua (Executive Director and Associate Researcher of the Institute's Media Research Center), and Lu Jianfeng (Director of the New Media Research Office), the report is published by China Book Press. The report defines convergence innovation as innovation driven by the pursuit of integrating traditional and emerging media—a fundamentally distinct motivation from other innovation drivers. This definition serves as both the conceptual foundation and starting point of the research, representing the unique value of this differentiated study.

This special issue features the project's comprehensive report, "Current Status, Problems, and Trends of China's Media Convergence Innovation." The main report analyzes the theoretical, policy, market, and technological contexts

underpinning China's media convergence initiative, summarizes current practices in Chinese media convergence innovation, and examines existing challenges and bottlenecks, including vague convergence objectives, insufficient motivation among key actors, weak capital support, and distorted consumption habits. The report further proposes practical and actionable recommendations for achieving breakthroughs in institutional mechanisms, policies and regulations, operation and management, content production, and profit models.

Current Status, Problems, and Trends of China's Media Convergence Innovation

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I. The Context of China's Media Convergence Proposal

1. Theoretical Background 1.1 International Research Trajectory and Current State

International scholarship on media convergence began in the 1970s. In 1978, Nicholas Negroponte, founder of the MIT Media Lab, first proposed the concept of "Media Convergence" and envisioned its blueprint. Using three overlapping circles to represent the print publishing, computer, and broadcasting industries, he illustrated the trend toward mutual integration among these sectors, with the overlapping areas representing the fastest-growing domains. Subsequently, Professor Pool from MIT, in his book *Technologies of Freedom*, conceptualized functional convergence—the idea that a single medium could simultaneously possess the functions of other media. Pool argued that media convergence begins with technological integration, which then generates new communication methods possessing both the characteristics of original technologies and unique features of their own. The work *The Great Convergence: Information and Communication Integration* by Baldwin, McVoy, and Steinfield represents a milestone in media convergence research, proposing that broadband technology and policy guidance would drive systematic convergence and create a "great confluence" in media. This comprehensive work not only summarized convergence across various media dimensions but also anticipated future development directions, addressing both macro-level aspects like technology, management, markets, and policy, and micro-level elements such as audio, video, and data. Evidently, Western scholars initiated media convergence research early, adopting diverse and comprehensive perspectives.

1.2 China's Research Trajectory and Current State

Chinese scholars began researching "media convergence" in 2005. That year, Professor Cai Wen from Renmin University of China's School of Journalism introduced the concept after conducting research in the United States, noting that "media convergence" encompassed not only cooperation models among various media organizations but also the true aggregation and integration of different media types through new mediums to form an independent operational model. In 2007, Wang Fei from Renmin University published *Media Convergence: A Theory of Media Convergence in the Digital New Media Era*, which deeply explored integration among media, telecommunications, and internet industries, analyzing production, policy, and organizational convergence phenomena. This work is considered China's first monograph dedicated to "media convergence," proposing that media convergence represents an evolutionary process of media forms comprising content convergence, network convergence, and terminal convergence, driven by digital and network technologies and oriented toward information consumption terminal needs. Subsequent publications include Luo Xiaoping's *Research on News Editing in the Media Convergence Era* (2006), Yang Jihong's *New Media Convergence and Digital Television* (2008), Zeng Xianbin's *Media Convergence and Television Transformation* (2011), Li Bin's *Television Convergence Transformation: The Transformation Path of Traditional Television in the New Media Era* (2011) and *Television Convergence Transformation* (2011), Cai Wen's *Media Convergence and Convergent Journalism* (2012), Su Yonghua's *Media Convergence and New Business Models* (2012), and Liu Muyu's *China Media Convergence Development Report 2012* (2013).

2. Policy, Market, and Technical Background 2.1 Policy Context

On August 18, 2014, the fourth meeting of the Central Leading Group for Comprehensively Deepening Reform reviewed and approved the *Guiding Opinions on Promoting the Integrated Development of Traditional and Emerging Media*, formally elevating media convergence to a national strategy—2014 thus became known as the inaugural year of media convergence. On August 26, 2014, Liu Qibao, Minister of the Central Propaganda Department, published an article on People's Daily Online titled "Accelerating the Integrated Development of Traditional and Emerging Media." Subsequently, a series of new policies on media convergence were introduced, making "media convergence" the hottest term in both academic and industry circles, with related research proliferating rapidly across multiple dimensions.

From a policy perspective, the promulgation of the *Guiding Opinions* and President Xi Jinping's series of important speeches marked media convergence as a formal national strategy, receiving high-level attention from the Party Central Committee and the State Council. President Xi Jinping emphasized the need to build a batch of new mainstream media with diverse forms, advanced methods, and strong competitiveness, and to establish several new media groups with powerful strength, communication capacity, credibility, and influence. He also pointed out that adapting to the continuously evolving social informatization requires accelerating the integrated development of traditional and emerging media, fully utilizing new technologies and applications to innovate media communication methods, and seizing the commanding heights of information dissemination. Under the impact of emerging media, traditional media—particularly print media—have experienced cliff-like declines in advertising and circulation, with diminished communication power and public opinion guidance capacity. Traditional media urgently need to integrate with emerging media to regain market share and audiences, thereby reclaiming discourse power and reoccupying mainstream public opinion positions.

Following the *Guiding Opinions*, relevant departments issued documents to promote media convergence, including the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television's *Implementation Plan for Deepening Press and Publication System Reform*, the State Council's *Guiding Opinions on Actively Promoting "Internet Plus" Action* and *Action Outline for Promoting Big Data Development*. The central government is determined to enhance Chinese media's international communication capacity and public opinion influence through media convergence, which is also closely related to China's international discourse power, soft power, and international status. As media bear important professional missions and social responsibilities, the integration of traditional and emerging media must be accelerated.

2.2 Market Context

From a market perspective, the general trend toward media convergence has become unstoppable. With the rapid development of internet and mobile internet technologies, the content production models, transmission channels, receiving terminals, and audience markets of newspapers, periodicals, radio, television, websites, and mobile self-media are gradually converging. Moreover, the media industry is increasingly integrating and permeating with telecommunications, finance, gaming, technology, logistics, services, and other sectors, with industry boundaries becoming increasingly blurred. This has not only brought enormous impact to China's media communication landscape but also generated significant influence across all aspects of society, revolutionizing people's production and lifestyle patterns. Changes in user media contact habits, usage patterns, and consumption behaviors have driven dramatic transformations in the media market, compelling reforms in the media industry's institutional mechanisms and operational management. The market-driven nature of media convergence has become increasingly prominent.

2.3 Technical Context

From a technical perspective, media convergence represents the inevitable result of technological revolution driving productivity development. Advanced productivity created by technological revolution inevitably propels the development of the media industry, which in turn positively drives development across all sectors, thereby promoting overall socioeconomic and cultural progress. Current technologies such as the Internet of Things, intelligent media, implantable devices, wearable devices, big data, cloud computing, VR virtual reality, and AR augmented reality have fundamentally transformed media production methods, distribution channels, consumption patterns, and profit models, greatly innovating media convergence applications and providing technical momentum and support. For the media industry, actively learning and utilizing new technologies to drive media convergence is essential to improve overall service levels, reconnect with readers and markets, and maintain mainstream media's public opinion positions. This requires building professional technical talent teams for new media development and operation, as new media must continuously add new functions for version upgrades based on user habits and experiences to increase user stickiness and sustain user attention. Beyond functional development, system operation and maintenance, data computation and analysis, and interactive experience improvement all require professional technical personnel.

II. Current Status of China's Media Convergence After the 2014 Inaugural Year

The consensus in China's media industry holds that integrating traditional and emerging media involves not only merging production processes, product forms, and communication channels but also fundamentally restructuring resources according to market and user needs—from conceptual thinking and institutional mechanisms to organizational structure, operational management, product content, presentation forms, production workflows, and communication scenarios. Over the past two years, China's media industry has conducted multiple explorations in this direction.

1. Institutional and Mechanism Innovation The transformation of press and publication enterprises into market-oriented entities has laid a solid foundation for media convergence. As both system reform and convergence transformation have entered a deepening stage, they complement and reinforce each other. Today, most media have become market entities responsible for their own profits and losses, and institutional innovation in media convergence builds upon this foundation. Currently, media organizations advancing convergence typically implement integrated management systems across different media formats, where print media, websites, and mobile media operate under "one leadership team, one journalist corps, one production process, and one evaluation system." For example, Sanxiang Huasheng established a management committee to uniformly manage its various media platforms, implementing a unified management system and creating a performance-driven corporate culture with a "full coverage, task decomposition, quantitative assessment, performance-based ranking, and clear rewards and punishments" all-media evaluation system.

2. Content Production Model Innovation Content production model innovation primarily manifests as the integration of traditional and emerging media content production processes—the "central kitchen" style all-media editing and content production platform. The same information is collected in multiple formats (text, images, audio, video) and processed into content suitable for different media transmission characteristics, then published comprehensively and 立体 ly according to audience reception habits to maximize and optimize communication effects. For instance, Zhejiang Daily Press Group integrated its group digital editing center with Zhejiang Online's news center to serve as the "central kitchen" for new media content production and distribution. In 2014, Xinhua Daily's all-media "central information kitchen" project became fully operational, enabling better multiple development and deep value-added of content products. In 2015, Chongqing Daily Press Group invested 150 million yuan to collaborate with Peking University Founder and Beijing TRS to establish two-level technical platforms at both group and newspaper series levels. On one hand, centered on four major newspapers (*Chongqing Daily*, *Chongqing Evening News*, *Chongqing Morning News*, *Chongqing Business News*), the group built "central kitchens" for each newspaper series, integrating information channels across print, PC, and mobile client media clusters, reconstructing an integrated collection, editing, distribution, and broadcasting process under internet conditions, and forming a 24-hour all-media news resource collection and release mechanism. On the other hand, it established a group-level "central kitchen," creating a big data application and news content supervision platform centered on news monitoring, command and dispatch centers, communication effect analysis, intelligent decision-making analysis, user resources, and copyright protection.

Similarly, Zhengzhou Daily Press Group has built a converged media cluster management system similar to a "central kitchen," integrating video, audio, and "two micros and one end" (Weibo, WeChat, and client) from its *Zhengzhou Daily*, *Zhengzhou Evening News*, and Central Plains Network, as well as subway newspapers and community newspapers. The party newspaper, metropolitan newspaper, and network's political, economic, county, entertainment, and sports departments have gradually merged, with each media platform retaining only night shifts and distinctive feature columns comprising several dozen people. All manuscripts enter a "news supermarket," from which they are retrieved and paid for as needed.

3. Diversification of Media Product Forms Promoting media convergence begins with channel and platform integration. In the tide of media convergence, "newspaper-network integration" represents one of the earliest forms of practice. Today, traditional media have ventured into virtually all new media categories, achieving diversified media forms: electronic newspapers, newspaper news websites, mobile newspapers, newspaper QR codes, audio newspapers, 3D newspapers, iPad terminal media, e-readers, LED displays, Weibo, WeChat, clients, community websites, social networking sites, digital journals, journal websites, internet television, digital radio, and more. Traditional media have essentially covered all these media forms based on different media, receiving terminals, and internet application platforms.

The all-media concept has also brought significant changes to media layout and content production. Currently, media groups with scale—such as Zhejiang Daily Press Group, Southern Media Group, and Chongqing Daily Press Group—have basically formed all-media layout coverage. For example, Zhejiang Daily Press Group has created a media matrix comprising a core circle, close circle, and collaborative circle through different media types. The core circle includes news clients, mobile newspapers, news websites, and video news clients; the close circle includes news zones and pop-ups on the Bianfeng gaming platform, Bianfeng internet TV boxes, Tencent • Dazhe Network news sections, and regional portal websites in various counties and cities; the collaborative circle includes Weibo and WeChat accounts of various subsidiaries and specialized APPs. Similarly, after the establishment of Shanghai United Media Group in 2014, it launched three new media projects—*Shanghai Observer*, *The Paper*, and *Jiemian*—each with different content positioning, target readership, and profit model demands, yet all built upon new media platforms including web versions, WAP, and APP clients, creating mobile internet entry points for Shanghai United Media Group.

4. Cross-Border Cooperation Innovation As media convergence transformation deepens, integration within media groups or even within the media industry is no longer the only path to convergence. Against the backdrop of the "Internet Plus" era, cross-border cooperation and diversified development between media and technology, finance, telecommunications, and internet enterprises drive the reorganization and optimal allocation of production factors and advantageous resources. This not only effectively develops and utilizes media resources but also provides more value growth points through industrial chain grafting and reconstruction, offering broader development space for media convergence. For example, Hunan Broadcasting System's current businesses include cable TV networks, venture capital, TV shopping, artist agencies, film and television production, cultural performances, real estate hotels, exhibition tourism, and early childhood education, achieving cross-media and cross-industry cooperation with well-known enterprises such as Foxconn, PCCW, and Alibaba, opening more possibilities for innovating media convergence channels and business models. Similarly, Shanghai United Media Group's new media platform "Jiemian," launched on September 22, 2014, was jointly introduced with Xiaomi Technology, 360 Company, Haitong Securities, Guotai Junan, and Legend Capital, representing a strong alliance between media groups and technology, finance, and internet companies, with the goal of creating a "professional service provider for internet finance and business information." In February 2016, Guangdong Radio and Television Station cooperated with mobile internet platform ZAKER to establish a "Electric Shock" channel on ZAKER as part of its "one platform, multiple ports" all-media project, representing a product of external cooperation. Another example is the news video live broadcast platform "Beijing Time," jointly established by Beijing Television Station and Qihoo 360, which possesses both a professional television media team and relies on 360 Search Engine's powerful recommendation function to present original live-form news information to users. On October 25, 2016, Jiangxi Radio and Television Station signed a strategic cooperation agreement with Jiangxi Unicom for integrated development, with both parties collaborating on IPTV high-definition television and mobile new media projects such as the "Mobile Jiangxi" platform.

5. Market-Oriented Asset Restructuring, Mergers, and Acquisitions In recent years, traditional and emerging media have begun achieving convergence through market-oriented asset restructuring, mergers, or acquisitions. This integration includes both internal convergence among subsidiary media and departments within media groups—such as the integration of print media, websites, mobile terminals, and outdoor media by traditional media in recent years—and convergence within the same industry or across industries initiated by traditional media or internet emerging media. For example, on October 28, 2013, the establishment of Shanghai United Media Group attracted strong attention from the entire media industry and academia. Formed through the integration and reorganization of Jiefang Daily Group and Wenhui-Xinmin United Press Group, the group's comprehensive strength was greatly enhanced, and it immediately laid out new media projects and made heavy moves in the media convergence field after its establishment. Similarly, in October 2015, Alibaba's full acquisition of Youku Tudou was also considered a major media convergence event that year.

6. Diversification of Business and Profit Models The distinctive feature of new media business models is precision marketing based on big data and user information databases, where market effects can be accurately calculated and rapidly fed back to adjust marketing strategies and, if necessary, business and operational models. After convergence, traditional media's industrial chain has been greatly expanded, and business and profit models have become increasingly diversified based on new media technologies and by leveraging their own advantages. The integration of traditional and new media marketing has brought about all-media marketing, including offline and online marketing, content marketing and data marketing, event marketing and brand marketing. Profit models have extended from online user payment models, advertising models, and e-commerce models to offline O2O business cooperation, user payment, and event promotion, further extending the industrial chain.

7. Changes in Media Audience Research Methods In today's rapidly evolving media convergence technology environment, audience research methods have changed significantly, shifting from traditional fuzzy statistics based on sampling surveys or selected-point estimation to precise surveys supported by big data analysis technology. Traditional media audience research methods relied on sampling surveys or speculative estimation, whereas new media such as websites, official Weibo and WeChat accounts, and clients can conduct detailed big data analysis based on precise data collection. They can analyze user habits across different time periods and identify which content and applications generate greater user interest, thereby improving relevant content and applications to enhance user stickiness. This provides important basis for traditional media's frequency and program settings.

8. Reshaping All-Media Journalists with Internet Concepts and All-Media Technology Changes in content production models have placed higher demands on media practitioners, requiring journalists to master multiple business skills including interviewing, writing, photography, audio and video recording, text editing, audio-video production and editing, and data mining and analysis. They must also master network technology applications related to media such as AR augmented reality, VR virtual reality, and drone aerial photography, skillfully using various new collection, editing, and transmission tools to pursue comprehensive development in professional competence. This has given rise to the concept of the "all-media journalist." The concept of all-media journalists extends far beyond news collection methods and media content distribution; the concept of media convergence in news expression has become increasingly prominent. New media terminals in the internet era are portable and facilitate fragmented reading time, and due to the interactive nature of the internet, user discussions and opinions themselves have become components of news. Click-through rates and repost volumes have become important criteria for measuring news value realization. Consequently, media content production methods also reflect internet thinking and convergence thinking, such as rapid and timely content push, more eye-catching headlines, setting interactive functions for user participation, rapidly responding to users to continuously improve user experience, and utilizing 植入式广告 and interactive advertising for media marketing. Moreover, influenced by internet culture, news expression has long broken away from didactic tones. News has become not only informative but also more interesting and emotionally engaging to attract attention in the sea of information and meet the information needs and spiritual demands of internet user groups.

All major media outlets are sparing no effort in enhancing employees' comprehensive news literacy and cultivating all-media talent. Zhengzhou Daily Press Group has strengthened training for journalists in new media skills, creating all-media, all-skill news talent proficient in writing, photography, and skilled in applying audio, video, VR, and other technologies for reporting, making the group's news products and reports readable, visual, audible, and immersive.

III. Problems and Bottlenecks in China's Media Convergence Innovation

1. Vague and Confused Convergence Innovation Objectives As we race forward on the path of convergence innovation, most people focus on how to converge and how to promote convergence through innovation. The foundation and goal of convergence innovation is convergence itself, with innovation as the means to achieve it. However, upon careful reflection, what exactly is convergence? Is it interaction between media? Is it organizational integration? Is it multimedia convergence, where different media are integrated on the same digital platform? In reality, the objectives of media convergence have always been vague and confused. Whether among regulatory authorities, academia, or the industry, everyone talks about convergence daily without deeply examining what convergence aims to achieve or what the post-convergence media landscape should look like. If convergence simply means traditional media institutions creating some new media platforms, this cannot be called true convergence, as traditional and new media would still operate separately as parallel lines. If convergence means completely integrating onto a single digital platform, then what remains of traditional media's value? In that case, we could simply develop new media comprehensively and discontinue traditional media—but this is impossible. In fact, convergence should comprise two aspects: organizational integration and media form integration. Media form integration does not mean all media forms disappear and are replaced by a single new medium. The correct understanding should be that both traditional and new media exist as independent entities, playing irreplaceable communication functions, but occupying different proportions and roles in the overall information dissemination landscape. The post-convergence form resembles sunlight: it appears white but is actually composed of seven independent colors—red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet. In the "sunlight media" of post-convergence, newspapers, periodicals, television, the internet, and mobile internet are like these various independent colors. This should be the correct direction and objective of media convergence. Only with clear objectives can convergence and innovation based on convergence be truly valuable.

2. Insufficient Motivation Among Convergence Innovation Subjects
The primary subjects of convergence innovation are traditional mainstream media; emerging media do not face convergence development issues. For traditional mainstream media, convergence innovation requires transforming their existing survival models, meaning fundamental changes must occur in producers, production tools, production objects, content forms, communication channels, and service methods—in essence, an entirely new survival environment requiring new knowledge, capabilities, technologies, and management concepts. This is a difficult transformation, akin to well-intentioned efforts to relocate ethnic minority communities from mountain peaks to flatlands: the intended beneficiaries may not buy in, as survival methods differ drastically between mountain and flatland environments. They may not identify with or be able to adapt to the new lifestyle, preferring their traditional rope-bridge existence over convenient flatland living.

Ultimately, this reflects insufficient motivation among convergence innovation subjects. For the book publishing industry, the impact of new media has not yet reached a critical level, and original business models can still ensure good survival, resulting in weak initiative for integrated development. Publishers' digital transformation efforts either respond to administrative requirements, follow industry trends to avoid falling behind, or exploit government incentive policies to secure funding. Truly thorough, fundamental, and structural convergence innovation subjects remain rare. For the newspaper industry, severely impacted by new media and facing existential crises, the desire for convergence innovation is strong. However, vague or confused understanding of convergence outcomes, combined with insufficient talent, capital, and technology, creates deep insecurity about convergence development. This lack of confidence in the future makes active transformation difficult. Similar problems exist in radio and television, periodicals, and traditional portal websites, leading to weak convergence innovation across the entire industry.

3. Weak Capital Support for Convergence Innovation With sufficient subject motivation and basic availability of technology and talent, capital becomes the engine driving convergence innovation. Capital is like fuel: without injection or with insufficient injection, the convergence innovation motor cannot operate efficiently. Media is inherently a high-investment industry. For example, producing a film or television drama may require 500 million RMB; even with 490 million invested, the product may remain incomplete, and consumers will not pay for an unfinished product. Similarly, in the convergence innovation project, insufficient investment makes fundamental innovation impossible, let alone minor improvements, eliminating the possibility of true transformation and upgrading.

Currently, capital is not lacking. First, total investment from national and local finances in convergence innovation projects is substantial. However, when allocated to individual projects, funding is limited. For instance, the Ministry of Finance's Cultural Industry Development Special Fund, established in 2008, has cumulatively allocated 24.2 billion yuan to support over 4,100 projects, many of which are convergence projects. Yet upon closer examination, each convergence project receives only 10 to 30 million yuan—insufficient for fundamental changes in talent, technology, and production equipment required by convergence innovation projects. Convergence innovation subjects either are unwilling to invest more capital or do not genuinely pursue integrated development and transformation, resulting in these tens of millions of yuan being used to purchase services from social technology companies to simply digitize print content. Consequently, these funds become scattered like pepper, unable to drive fundamental integration between traditional and emerging media.

Second, capital within the industry is also abundant. Whether publishers, newspaper groups, or broadcasting institutions, their own funds represent considerable sums. Some large publishing groups possess hundreds of millions or even billions of yuan in capital. The entire press and publication industry's internal capital rivals that of some financial institutions and could be integrated to establish a press, publication, and cultural bank to support key industry convergence innovation projects. Finally, external capital represents an inexhaustible source. Capital seeks profit; regardless of industry, good returns will attract investment automatically. The new media industry offers relatively high returns. For example, Zhejiang Daily Group raised nearly 2 billion yuan through the stock market to acquire gaming companies Bianfeng and Haofang, while Jiangxi Publishing Group raised over 1 billion yuan to acquire gaming company Zhiming Xingkong, demonstrating capital's strong preference for new media. Of course, the media industry has its particularities and operational laws. As a spiritual industry, its profit model differs significantly from material product industries, requiring the media industry to better explain itself and guide more external capital toward media convergence innovation projects.

4. Distorted Convergence Innovation Consumption Habits As a structural force, digital technology and mobile internet technology have significantly impacted human social existence, with accompanying new cultural connotations and extensions undergoing changes and adjustments. Regarding media, changes in reading habits have caused knowledge and information carriers to almost overwhelmingly favor digital media—specifically, mobile devices have increasingly become the primary or even sole medium for reading and consumption. The emergence of self-media such as "two micros and one end" has greatly altered people's reading and consumption habits. However, this does not fundamentally change human existence. In fact, humanity's meta-survival mode remains eternal; regardless of technological development, natural human attributes like eating, drinking, and sleeping cannot change, which also means atomic media in communication cannot disappear. Although reading habits have changed significantly and digital media increasingly occupy mainstream positions, print media will follow humanity's natural attributes forever.

Currently, media consumption habits have entered a distorted stage, where "two micros and one end" seem to be the only media for knowledge and information acquisition, creating a false impression for the media industry. For economic benefits, social benefits, or survival, everyone tacitly pursues digital media in this convergence project without genuinely seeking integration between traditional and emerging media, further strengthening the distortion in digital media consumption choices. In reality, for deep, systematic, and timeless knowledge, learning through print media is more effective. "Two micros and one end" have inherent shortcomings: fragmentation, randomness, and chaotic disorder, which are weak in promoting systematic knowledge learning and even social foundational innovation. Therefore, the media industry must maintain necessary calmness and foresight, shoulder profound social responsibilities, and actively cultivate and guide consumption habits to prevent society from falling into the abyss of single digital media consumption. Instead, the convergence innovation project should be built into a "sunlight media" that is independent yet unified in red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet—providing consumers with diverse media choices, injecting new connotations into human existence modes, and creating an unprecedented new culture.

IV. Innovative Breakthroughs and Trends in Media Convergence

Wearable devices, implantable devices, the Internet of Things, artificial intelligence, VR virtual reality technology, and other concepts continuously refresh media usage experiences. The rapid iteration of mobile technology, convergence technology, and big data technology has opened infinite possibilities for the future development of media convergence. To address current development bottlenecks, transformations and breakthroughs are needed across institutional mechanisms, policies and regulations, operation and management, content production, and profit models. These innovative approaches and experiences also reveal future development trends.

1. Institutional Mechanisms The greatest difficulty in integrating traditional and emerging media remains institutional and mechanism barriers. Reforming and innovating institutional mechanisms is a long-standing topic, yet how to reform them remains a constantly renewed discussion.

1.1 Establishing Modern Enterprise Systems and More Flexible Incentive Mechanisms

Maximizing human initiative and creativity is the key and essence of institutional reform. The competitive advantage of media convergence innovation lies in people—talent is always the most precious resource for media and the key factor for successful media convergence. Only by activating institutional mechanisms, especially by establishing more flexible incentive mechanisms, can we ensure that outstanding talent is both attracted and retained. Only by breaking institutional shackles and bottlenecks can we truly deepen media convergence, strengthen mainstream media, improve the scale and specialization of the media industry, promote cross-regional and cross-industry development, and drive Chinese media to go global and enhance international competitiveness.

In recent years, a large number of senior executives and industry elites have left their long-held positions to join new media companies, media firms, or cultural enterprises. This brain drain reminds us that media convergence must deepen institutional reform, establish modern enterprise systems, standardize corporate governance structures, further clarify property rights relationships between media groups and new media enterprises established by their newspapers and periodicals, and regulate market behaviors. Convergence support departments should be established to oversee group media convergence business planning, promote research and development cooperation, investment and financing, resource optimization, talent cultivation and recruitment, and other aspects of group media convergence. Diversified equity incentive mechanisms should be implemented, such as special management share systems in media enterprises. For media leading talent, equity incentives undoubtedly represent an effective way to advance their careers. Performance evaluation mechanisms should be innovated to establish all-media performance evaluation systems integrating print media, websites, Weibo, WeChat, and clients, stimulating all editorial staff to apply all-media technologies and grow into all-media journalists.

In this regard, *Xinhua Daily*'s training methods provide valuable reference. Shortly after its official Weibo account launched in November 2013, the newspaper required all young reporters and editors with less than three years of service to participate in weekend Weibo shifts on a rotating basis, institutionalizing this requirement. The different work requirements for Weibo content selection, news perspectives, discourse styles, and interactive feedback quickly equipped this young team with new media thinking and professional qualities, which in turn positively impacted the improvement of writing styles in the print media.

1.2 Innovating Talent Incentive and Training Mechanisms, Adopting Project Operation Mechanisms, and Creating a True "Entrepreneurial Culture"

Traditional media practitioners have long been labeled as lacking internet thinking, weak convergence awareness, and having singular professional qualities. However, facts prove that traditional media practitioners possess rich media experience and solid content foundations. With proper guidance and incentive mechanisms, they can fully adapt to media convergence development trends and produce excellent convergence projects and products. Zhejiang Daily Group's "Media Dream Factory" under its all-media strategic action plan serves as an excellent example, featuring both talent cultivation and incentive mechanisms through activities and competitions to select outstanding projects and talent, as well as cooperation with enterprises and universities for talent training and recruitment—a model worthy of adoption by other media organizations.

In the second half of 2014, the "Media Dream Factory" launched an internal new media innovation competition within the group. More than 200 editorial staff participated with over 50 projects, and ultimately more than 20 new media projects were selected. The Media Dream Factory provides these projects with comprehensive support ranging from strategy, funding, and human resources to technology, as well as entrepreneurial services including finance, legal affairs, and business registration. In addition, Zhejiang Daily Group has established a full-staff training system composed of Zhejiang Media Research Institute, Media Dream Factory, and well-known industry professionals, combining organized group training with self-directed participation, and integrating systematic full-staff training with position-specific training to fully stimulate traditional media personnel's enthusiasm for operating self-media. Currently, the group has opened over 200 Weibo and WeChat public accounts, using social media to enhance the mobile communication influence of print media.

Furthermore, Zhejiang Daily Group has launched a global recruitment plan to introduce new "internet-native" talent with "internet genes," establishing systems for internet technology talent recruitment, management, cultivation, and utilization. Through public recruitment, internal recommendations, establishing talent reserve pools at key universities, and talent poaching from well-known internet companies, the group selects technical talent and has established a technical committee with a chief technology officer. In recent years, Zhejiang Daily Group has hired over 60 internet technology talents from companies like Alibaba, with technical talent reaching one-quarter of the group's total workforce in 2014. These talents have promoted innovative integration between traditional and new media.

In terms of establishing project operation mechanisms and cultivating an "entrepreneurial culture," Chongqing Daily Press Group has also made explorations. The group issued documents encouraging employees to innovate and start businesses based on media convergence, established the Chongqing News Maker Space, trained young entrepreneurial teams, incubated some new media projects, cultivated entrepreneurship awareness among all staff, and played an incentive role.

Besides forming specialized training teams like Zhejiang Daily Group for systematic full-staff and position-specific training, talent cultivation can also be conducted in daily work. In the United States and Europe, many media convergence transformation decisions are based on laboratory research results. Through laboratory research and experimental data analysis, empirical results and convergence patterns are obtained and then applied to relevant decisions in media convergence transformation to ensure correct decision-making directions. For example, The New York Times R&D Lab developed an information cascade project (Project Cascade) that captures how reports spread across different online media after being published on the Times' website, visually presenting connections between readers and reports, identifying the most influential communication channels for different news events, and displaying their communication life cycles, making each communication channel a potential product prototype or new news creator.

Some Chinese internet giants also have powerful R&D teams with massive capital investment, such as Baidu and Alibaba. For example, due to the lack of substantive breakthroughs in VR virtual reality technology applications in video and gaming fields, with current applications having low technical content, Alibaba cooperated with VR R&D enterprises in February 2016 to establish its own VR laboratory for specialized R&D on VR technology applications. Due to limitations in capital, talent, and resources, establishing such R&D laboratories is difficult for traditional media. They can cooperate with internet giants to share resources and complement each other's strengths, or establish industry-university-research integration mechanisms with universities to jointly build laboratories or conduct project cooperation. In these laboratories, exploratory R&D on media convergence can be conducted to explore how to better serve convergence businesses with technology and how to deeply integrate technical genes with creative genes. Such teams should be open and innovative, absorbing talents from different fields, making judgments on convergence trends and conducting R&D, making important contributions to convergence technology, models, businesses, and projects while cultivating converged media talent. In the United States, many such examples exist, such as the MIT Media Lab, established 30 years ago with 33 research groups conducting R&D cooperation with over 180 global enterprises, multiple government departments, and related research institutions, continuously generating forward-looking projects whose intellectual property rights and achievements leave other institutions far behind.

2. Policies and Regulations 2.1 Improving and Perfecting Copyright Protection Laws and Regulations

This constitutes the foundation and prerequisite for media convergence innovation. In the process of integrating traditional and emerging media, emerging media have long been content-dependent on traditional media, yet many have not obtained permission, conducted copyright transactions, or paid remuneration according to copyright protection laws and regulations. The phenomenon of 无偿使用 traditional media's original content is widespread. This not only damages traditional media's interests but also restricts emerging media's development and is detrimental to achieving higher-level, true media convergence.

Historically, Chinese traditional media's own copyright awareness has been relatively weak. When emerging media rose on the internet, traditional media with strong content advantages panicked, mistakenly believing that distributing content through internet or mobile channels was necessary to avoid losing audiences. This cultivated a "habit" among many emerging media and audiences to enjoy free content or obtain related services without compensation. Therefore, traditional media must first consciously enhance copyright awareness and actively apply copyright-related laws and regulations to protect their rights. Only by protecting the copyright of original content can we stimulate passion and motivation for content creation, produce more original content suitable for new media, and thereby promote media convergence innovation.

2.2 Strong Government Support in Policy and Finance

Governments should further increase support in capital raising, information release, and policy support to create favorable conditions and environments for traditional and emerging media convergence. Shanghai Municipal Government's strong policy and financial support for Shanghai United Media Group serves as a demonstration. According to relevant news reports, after the establishment of Shanghai United Media Group, *Jiefang Daily* and *Wenhui Daily* have received 50 million yuan in special municipal financial support annually since 2014. Shanghai's publicity and culture special fund also arranges funding to support major newspapers in developing new media and to foster external publicity media and influential publications. Government support for traditional and emerging media convergence development can alleviate financial pressure on traditional media in developing new media, help them overcome difficulties and bottlenecks during the convergence exploration period, and strengthen their confidence in convergence transformation. Government support should also include increasing assessment of media convergence aspects for traditional media, rather than focusing solely on traditional metrics like circulation, ratings, advertising revenue, and profit margins.

2.3 Tolerance in Government Management

Media convergence is an unknown and entirely new phenomenon without existing paths to follow or known experiences to reference. This is true for the global media industry, including Western developed countries' media—making it an international challenge. Therefore, governments should also encourage mainstream media to dare to experiment and explore, allowing failure during the exploration process to create a more relaxed and inclusive atmosphere for promoting integrated development.

2.4 Selective Promotion of Media Convergence Based on Actual Conditions and Within Capacity

Currently, influenced by policies and the environment, Chinese media are rushing into media convergence, all pursuing all-media convergence as if convergence must involve newspapers, websites, Weibo, WeChat, QR codes, electronic newspaper kiosks, mobile newspapers, mobile websites, mobile clients, internet television, and almost all other new media forms—otherwise, it is not considered media convergence. But does China need so many all-media groups? Not necessarily. Since new media are not geographically constrained, media competition has rapidly expanded to national and even global scales. Under these circumstances, first, local traditional media that previously enjoyed regional competitive advantages have lost their original edge in the rapidly expanded market. Second, traditional media's new media must also face strong competition from various social media and self-media. Third, operating new media requires substantial capital and resource investment, yet new media profit models remain unclear, affecting investment and revenue from traditional media's main businesses. If new media content innovation is insufficient and relies on traditional media for "blood transfusions," this free content also reduces the value of traditional media's original paid content, affecting traditional media's original circulation and ratings. Under such circumstances, forced media convergence may result in similar positioning, homogeneous content, and functional duplication, causing tremendous resource waste.

Therefore, for a very few powerful and influential media groups such as Xinhua News Agency, Shanghai United Media Group, and Southern Media Group, all-media convergence should be vigorously promoted. However, for highly specialized media, industry media, or prefecture-level media, media convergence should be planned according to their own conditions. There is no need to be overly ambitious or comprehensive, as this is neither feasible nor realistic. Everything should proceed from the perspective of promoting development. When traditional media layout new media, they should avoid trying to cover everything, scientifically analyze their own strengths and weaknesses, conduct convergence pilots in phases, evaluate convergence effects, and ultimately find suitable convergence models and paths.

3. Operation and Management Using internet thinking and methodologies to operate and manage new media is both an important means to break through current media convergence bottlenecks and an inevitable trend for deepening media convergence in the future. The rapid rise of new media has brought new products, channels, and platforms, while traditional media audiences' needs and consumption behaviors have undergone major changes in the new media era. To change the current situation where media convergence is praised but not profitable, traditional media must transform traditional thinking patterns and operate new media using internet thinking and methodologies. The core of internet thinking and methodologies is establishing comprehensive connections with users. Media convergence is merely a process and means, not an end or motive; its fundamental purpose is to reconnect with users and regain continuously lost users through media convergence. In this sense, media convergence is completely consistent with internet thinking and methodologies in terms of thinking and methodology.

3.1 Continuously Enhancing User Content Acquisition Experience

From the perspective of current user content consumption time slots and usage habits, mobile and fragmented reading has become the development trend. Content production must first meet users' reading needs in mobile states and conform to the principle of accessibility, including convenience in content acquisition time and channels. Even in content production and layout, content classification and segmentation, large headlines, and content summaries can be used to meet readers' needs for rapid reading and obtaining required content.

3.2 Content Segmentation, Interaction, and Socialization: Optimizing User Deep Consumption Experience by Addressing User Needs

Today, user demands are more personalized and diversified. Successful new media have long recognized that in the internet's sea of information, survival requires segmentation and niche targeting. Another major characteristic of the internet is interaction and sharing, which new media's interactive and social functions fully embody. By allowing users to use new media to expand relationship chains or service chains during information acquisition and dissemination, and then converting these relationships or services into value, user deep consumption experience is optimized by addressing user needs. For example, while watching videos, users can click to shop and share with friends. On the internet, beyond information dissemination, media must also pursue the extension of relationship chains, service chains, and value chains based on media positioning and content-market integration. This is the key to improving user loyalty and stickiness.

3.3 Operating New Media with New Reporting and Operation Models

After the proposal of media convergence, the integration of traditional and emerging media processes and operations has become industry consensus. Indeed, in the internet era, traditional and emerging media should share common operational concepts and methods. However, integration at the "strategic" level does not mean integration at the "tactical" level. New media should still make content and model innovations based on their own characteristics, finding new points of interest and perspectives according to new media user characteristics, adapting to internet discourse systems, innovating expression methods and analysis models, and innovating content models and reporting methods.

3.4 Establishing Dynamic Audience Databases and Public Opinion Monitoring Systems

"User-centricity" is also an internet characteristic. New media users based on the internet must be maintained and expanded through data. Using internet and big data technologies to establish comprehensive connections with readers, building dynamic audience databases, and conducting audience analysis and public opinion 研判 are essential paths for media convergence. Traditional media require considerable effort to understand their readers and may still fail to achieve comprehensive understanding. New media, however, can conduct detailed tracking, statistics, and analysis of users' gender, age, occupation, interests, media usage habits and scenarios, and consumption patterns based on user behavior trajectories and backend data. Therefore, establishing audience or user databases based on this data can serve as important basis and guidance for media content production, product design, service provision, value chain extension, and marketing channel expansion. Only in this way can user stickiness be enhanced, and winning users means winning the market.

Establishing public opinion monitoring systems can better leverage mainstream media's public opinion guidance role through media convergence. Building public opinion monitoring systems based on big data technology to reshape mainstream media's authoritative status and occupy the commanding heights of information dissemination is both an inevitable requirement of the Party and government for media convergence and a social responsibility that media should undertake. Currently, industry public opinion monitoring systems have emerged but still face technical bottlenecks and application shortcomings, requiring integrated resources, technology, and talent to improve and optimize. Zhengzhou Daily Press Group is currently building its big data and public opinion monitoring system, aiming to continuously monitor and collect information from print media, websites, forums, blogs, Weibo, and WeChat, comprehensively and accurately grasping various information trends in a timely manner. Using intelligent semantic analysis, natural language processing, machine learning, and other data mining and analysis technologies, the system can summarize public opinion viewpoints and tendencies, grasp public attitudes and emotions, conduct public opinion 研判 and trend prediction based on historically similar events, propose response recommendations, and thereby improve the group's own reporting plans to conduct correct public opinion guidance.

3.5 Innovating the Operational Thinking and Models of the "Central Kitchen" Convergence Method

Media convergence is the integration of traditional and emerging media, but it does not mean eliminating differences between media. Instead, it requires providing richer and more diverse media products in terms of both content and form, based on respective communication advantages and laws. Newspapers, periodicals, radio, television, internet television, mobile video, social networks, mobile newspapers, electronic journals, Weibo, WeChat, mobile clients, and other media forms must necessarily differ in topic selection, interviewing methods, and reporting means. Therefore, media convergence should not blindly pursue formal integration but should leverage the respective advantages of different media to greatly enrich media products. Successful cases of newspaper-network convergence, such as Hangzhou Daily Press Group's 19lou website and Jinan Daily Press Group's Shun Network, have succeeded by creating genuine internet products independent of their newspaper parents and growing through community forums. This represents new media created by newspaper groups using internet thinking and methodologies based on their own advantageous resources. Similarly, today's popular newspaper APP clients will certainly fail if treated merely as another channel for publishing newspaper news. However, if they leverage technical advantages, start from user needs, and build platforms that publish characteristic content, leverage regional advantages, and provide localized services to greatly facilitate users' lives, they will certainly receive widespread user welcome and improve user loyalty.

4. Content Production "Content is king" remains timeless for media. High-quality content never lacks readers and markets in any era. In the mobile internet and big data era, media must combine creative genes with technical genes, using data analysis and user experience improvement as important means to enhance reporting methods and content quality.

4.1 Building Professional Data Analysis Teams to Timely Utilize Data Analysis Results for Improving News Reporting and Push Methods

Data analysis team members must not only be able to interview, edit, search, and program but also understand communities, master data technology, and possess data mining, statistical, and analytical capabilities. The veteran newspaper *The New York Times*'s improvement of content reporting fully demonstrates leveraging technology development to play to its content advantages, providing a model for the industry. The Times' newsroom established a data analysis team to rapidly enhance data collection and analysis capabilities, expand the scope of collecting and using structured data, explore methods for building new links and attracting attention to reports, and find more effective ways to share information with others in the newsroom. Integrating the internet industry's technical genes with the content industry's creative genes is an inevitable trend for improving news reporting content.

4.2 Developing Different Reporting Strategies Based on Different Media's Communication Characteristics

Each medium has different communication characteristics, advantages, and disadvantages, and should develop different reporting strategies to form synergy and enhance communication power and influence. For example, print media reporting methods may not work on Weibo, WeChat, or clients. As serious mainstream media, print media's primary duty is truthful, objective, fair, and comprehensive factual reporting. On Weibo influencers and WeChat public accounts, however, users hope to share not only facts but also viewpoints and positions, especially those of the Weibo and WeChat accounts they choose to follow, which directly influence user opinions.

Moreover, new media language and narrative styles are completely different from traditional media's serious and orthodox approach. Internet terminology constantly innovates, with some terms even being included in new editions of modern Chinese dictionaries. New media user concerns include not only content that meets their information needs or interest preferences but also content that is interesting, emotionally engaging, interactive, and communicative. Looking at currently successful self-media, none lack these qualities, such as Luogic Talk-show. Even new media advertising content has been made into interactive and 植入式广告, embedded into content narratives to promote and market without affecting user experience. Facts have proven that such advertising and marketing are more effective. Traditional media-operated new media should also strengthen internet thinking, center on user experience, and innovate reporting methods and narrative languages to better attract users.

4.3 Leveraging New Media's Technical Advantages to Innovate Content Production, Presentation, and Dissemination

Innovating content dissemination using new media's information production advantages to create diverse content products means using internet user thinking and product thinking to innovate content dissemination processes. Crowdsourced journalism, data reporting, and video content are hot spots in converged products and represent future development trends. New media technology has brought infinite possibilities for content product innovation. Crowdsourced journalism, which emphasizes user participation and interaction, greatly mobilizes content producers' enthusiasm. Since topics are largely determined by majority opinions in communities, crowdsourced journalism has the attributes of social investigation reports and often carries significant social influence.

Data news produced based on big data analysis is popular among users due to its visual and concrete nature, as well as its authority and foresight. DT Finance, a data finance new media platform jointly created by Yicai and Alibaba, features the use of data to express financial news, combining Yicai's financial news reporting advantages with Alibaba's data resources. Applying data analysis to news production has generated numerous data news reports, such as "320,000 Data Points Reveal: High-Speed Rail Competition Settled, Which Small Cities Are the Real Winners?", "Big Data Tells You Why the 'Free Shipping Area' Qualifies for Free Shipping," and "Big Data Tells You Who's Already Preparing for Babies After the Universal Two-Child Policy." These data-driven reports are highly authoritative and persuasive, greatly enhancing brand influence.

Visualization has always been a trend in audience content demands, so video content has long shown infinite development potential due to its independent communication function and 立体 communication effects. In recent years, with the emergence of numerous video production software applications, commercialization of 4G, and continuously decreasing data costs, the threshold for video production and dissemination has been greatly lowered. According to iResearch's *2015 China Online Video User Payment Market Research Report*, China's online video market size exceeded 40 billion yuan in 2015, with a year-on-year growth rate of 61.2%; the online video advertising market size was 23.19 billion yuan, up 52.7% year-on-year. According to CNNIC's *38th Statistical Report on China's Internet Development* released in July 2016, as of June 2016, China's online video user scale reached 514 million, an increase of 10 million from the end of 2015; the online video user usage rate was 72.4%; among them, mobile online video users reached 440 million, an increase of 35.14 million from the end of 2015, representing an 8.7% growth rate; the mobile online video usage rate was 67.1%, up 1.7 percentage points from the end of 2015. Therefore, new media content production should adapt to the video content trend, using images, animation, or video to express information as much as possible. Intuitive and vivid visuals can enhance content's appeal and impact. Users can also interact through bullet comments, likes, recommendations, and reposts, enriching user experience while geometrically expanding communication effects. Not only internet new media but also traditional media like Shanghai Radio and Television Station have recognized this potential, integrating traditional media news advantages with video new media to launch the video news product "Knews." It not only has a 24-hour continuously updated internet video news stream "Knews24" for domestic and overseas audiences but also a news client characterized by "original + short video aggregation." On October 23, 2016, Guangdong Nanfang Vision Culture Communication Co., Ltd. was jointly established by *Southern Weekly*, Canxing Culture, and Xiaoqiang Tianzi Media Co., Ltd., marking *Southern Weekly*'s formal entry into the video field. In the future, after AR augmented reality technology, VR virtual reality technology, and other technologies mature and are widely applied in the video field, user experience will be greatly enhanced, inevitably bringing a new round of explosive growth to the video industry.

4.4 Using Convergence Technology to Build Platform-Based Journal Media

Media convergence has greatly changed journal publication processes and forms. Journal manuscript remote processing systems have improved journal publication workflows, enabling networked operations throughout the entire process from submission, group manuscript, review, editing, to publication, greatly improving publication efficiency. Digital publishing forms such as journal websites, digital journals, mobile journals, database publishing, Weibo, WeChat public accounts, and APPs have also improved journals' communication power and influence to a certain extent.

In the future, the development trend of journal media convergence is to build platform-based journal media, integrating various journals' past issues and continuously updated current content. Authors can submit manuscripts directly, editors can review, edit, illustrate, and typeset directly online and publish with relevant links, and experts can evaluate online. Online communication and interaction among authors, editors, review experts, and users can be realized. Readers can search for needed articles, upload content, recommend content, create their own "favorites," post comments and evaluations, and build communities to recommend and evaluate journals or journal content. For example, the journal "domain publishing" platform launched by Beijing Century Superstar Information Technology Development Co., Ltd. is a mobile client for academic exchange platforms that cooperates with academic journals, including column publishing, special topic planning, literature, images, audio, video, forums, and teaching functions. It uses the mobile internet's community function to gather authors, editors, experts, and readers on the same platform for direct exchange and discussion on relevant topics, where everyone can initiate academic research and evaluation. Another example is the "Yi Xuezhe" mobile academic research one-stop service platform launched by Renmin University Digital Media Technology (Beijing) Co., Ltd. The platform integrates Renmin University's "Replicated Newspaper and Periodical Materials" and other academic content resources, forming four core functions for scholars and academic institutions: academic libraries, academic paper databases, academic social platforms, and research tool services, covering WeChat service accounts, Android clients, iOS clients, and PC terminals.

These media convergence products for academic journals produced by technology companies include content and evaluation, marketing and payment, customer service and logistics. They not only enhance academic journals' communication frequency and scope, fully leveraging journals' academic innovation guidance and knowledge dissemination functions, but also meet individual users' and relevant institutions' academic research needs and demand for purchasing research products. They have formed academic journal business models ranging from academic services to scholar services to think tank services, driving the development of the academic industry chain. Moreover, platform-based journal media based on media convergence concepts and technologies have formed new evaluation and recommendation mechanisms that gather authors, editors, experts, and readers, potentially establishing new academic communication orders and scientific research achievement evaluation systems. Backend mobile big data may become journal operation indicators and serve as one of the standards in journal evaluation systems.

5. Profit Models When traditional media ventures into new media, the initial capital investment is often enormous, yet most new media profit models remain unclear after investment, with serious misalignment between input and output. Most operate at a loss, becoming the biggest obstacle to traditional and emerging media convergence. Traditional media is exploring innovative profit models according to new media operation and convergence laws. Appropriate profit models constitute the internal driving force for media convergence development and the key to sustainable media convergence.

5.1 User Payment Will Become One of the Main Revenue Sources

Since the birth of new media, its profit model has been a focus of industry attention. The exploration of innovative profit models for traditional and emerging media convergence has been ongoing. For traditional media, investing in new media and media convergence is a very "money-burning" endeavor. Unless financially strong, they dare not attempt it and can only watch from the sidelines. Today, as the internet and new media have penetrated all aspects of people's lives and work, and as media usage experiences continuously improve, users have begun to accept paid business models. This is evident from the formation of the video website payment market. According to iResearch's *2015 China Online Video User Payment Market Research Report*, China's online video market size exceeded 40 billion yuan in 2015, with advertising revenue accounting for 57.8% and paid membership fees accounting for 12.8%. Paid user revenue reached 5.13 billion yuan, up 270.3% year-on-year, indicating that membership payment will become one of the main revenue sources for video websites in the future. This profit model will also become a development trend for all media applications.

5.2 Cross-Border Business Models Centered on IP Sales and Marketing

In 2015, the term IP became extremely popular, with IP-based media products generating enormous market value. According to Zero2IPO Research Center statistics, China produced 42 IP-related acquisitions in 2015, with 39 cases disclosing acquisition amounts totaling 20.959 billion yuan. The acquired enterprises covered film and television, animation, gaming, novels, artists, and other fields. In 2015, 23 IP mergers and acquisitions occurred, involving a total of 7.874 billion yuan. IP marketing has also become a hot term, discussed everywhere from the film and television industry to the media industry. "IP marketing" has even become an important market phenomenon in recent years, presenting a new business model and consumption trend of cross-border cooperation.

IP is the abbreviation for Intellectual Property, referring to "intellectual property rights," including music, literature, and other artistic works, discoveries and inventions, and all "intellectual property" legally granted exclusive rights that embody the author's mental investment, such as words, phrases, symbols, and designs. Today, IP has become synonymous with a cross-border business model, though its core remains high-quality original content—high-quality original content that can be transformed into various forms of cross-border consumer goods. Early successful IP marketing cases include *Dad, Where Are We Going?*, which generated huge profits for Hunan Television from variety shows to films and derivative products. Today, more high-quality IPs are emerging in variety shows, such as *Running Man*, *Go Fighting!*, IP TV series like *The Lost Tomb*, *Candle in the Tomb*, and *Nirvana in Fire*, as well as novel IPs like *Tiny Times*, comics like *One Hundred Thousand Bad Jokes*, and games like *Warcraft*. Centered on copyright transactions, these have achieved copyright reuse through cross-border cooperation across books, new media, film and television, gaming, animation, and traditional physical markets. In the future, IP marketing will become the main business model for media with high-quality original content.

5.3 New Media Profit Models Evolving from Advertising and E-Commerce to Advertising + E-Commerce

Initially, new media's main profit models were advertising and e-commerce. In recent years, to cooperate with e-commerce development and to accelerate advertising content monetization, 植入式广告 have been embedded in website and self-media text, images, and video content, directly linking to shopping and payment pages. On one hand, users can directly click to purchase during use, pushing advertisements in contexts that minimize impact on user experience, improving user acceptance of advertisements and achieving good results. This type of 植入式广告 is also called interactive advertising. On social media like self-media, it is also known as information flow advertising—in essence, an "advertising + e-commerce" model.

Taking video website iQiyi as an example, iQiyi opened an online mall where users can click to jump directly to product sales pages to purchase derivative products related to videos while watching. During the broadcast of Korean urban idol dramas like *My Love from the Star* and *Descendants of the Sun* on iQiyi, fashion items and products worn by stars in the dramas became hot-selling items in iQiyi's mall.

5.4 Traditional Media Creating Internet Profit Models Through E-Commerce

Traditional media are also actively exploring ways to cooperate with e-commerce platforms and industrial entities, venturing into e-commerce as an important approach to innovating profit models. Currently, some traditional media have begun explorations in this area. For example, Dragon TV introduced this profit model into reality show *Goddess's New Wardrobe*, cooperating with Tmall to create a "watch and buy" e-commerce platform. Audiences can scan the station logo through the mobile Tmall client to enter the "watch and buy" page and directly purchase clothing and other products appearing in the program. This profit model was also adopted in the broadcast of *My Sunshine*.

On October 9, 2015, the e-commerce platform "First Farm" with the theme of modern agriculture was officially launched. This e-commerce platform was jointly created and operated by mainstream newspaper media such as *Beijing Times*, *Peninsula Morning News*, and *Yanbian Morning News*. Local 加盟 media can either organize local famous and special agricultural products to enter the "First Farm" online mall or offline physical stores, or rely on their own communication power, influence, and credibility for product distribution, mainly focusing on discovering, producing, packaging, and pushing local agricultural products in different media locations. This is a typical case of newspaper groups developing e-commerce. In fact, this measure is not entirely innovative. *Yangzi Evening News*'s Yangzi Yigou official shopping platform had already exceeded 100 million yuan in turnover by 2012. On December 9, 2015, as the newspaper shopping brand fully created by Yangzi Evening News Agency, the "upgraded version" of Yangzi Yigou's official shopping platform—the micro-mall—was officially launched. By scanning QR codes or entering Yangzi Evening News' official WeChat account, users can log in and obtain convenient one-click services. This also serves *Yangzi Evening News*'s advertising clients, some of whom require new media cooperation when placing ads in the print edition, and some clients only place ads on official Weibo or WeChat accounts.

This internet profit model conforms to future development trends and is worth further in-depth cultivation by traditional media to enhance user shopping experiences, cultivate consumption habits, enable traditional media to obtain brand placement fees through 植入式广告, help e-commerce gain traffic entry points and improve purchase conversion rates from programs, and share channel revenue. Alternatively, like "First Farm," media can dominate all links, conduct advertising placement themselves, operate platforms themselves, and obtain sales profits themselves. For smart TVs that can already connect to the internet, they can become internet TV malls integrating viewing and shopping and multi-screen integration in the future, which will greatly enhance audience shopping experiences.

5.5 Conducting Data Marketing to Provide Customized Content and Services for Users

Using new media to build their own databases and user information databases, and providing customized content and personalized services for users through data marketing, can both attract user payment and absorb more advertising placements. With support from big data, cloud computing, intelligent push, and intelligent search technologies, customized content and personalized services should become important components of media convergence products and the prerequisite for data marketing. The success of Toutiao has already demonstrated the bright prospects of this profit model to the industry. In 2015, Toutiao's advertising revenue reached 1.6 billion yuan. Liu Zhiyi, Executive Director of Toutiao's Data Center, said at the 2016 China Media Annual Conference: "Toutiao is more like a personal interest aggregator." He believes: "Toutiao's most valuable assets are its algorithms and data." Toutiao's greatest characteristic is the personalization and customization of content—every user sees different Toutiao content. Based on backend data analysis of each user's search path and interest preferences, Toutiao recommends different content to different users according to their preferences. If certain information receives high like rates in a particular user group, it will be pushed to other groups with similar interests. Therefore, Toutiao has won widespread user praise and numerous advertising clients.

Datafication and customization are inevitable standard features of future media products. However, it must also be acknowledged that these data resources are currently mainly held by internet platform operators and telecommunications operators such as Baidu, Tencent, Alibaba, and China Mobile. Database resources and user information are core resources for media as main content producers and cannot rely on other platforms. Media should learn to build their own databases and user information databases. This is key to establishing connections with users in the media convergence era and constitutes media's core competitiveness. In the past, traditional media's market cliff-like decline was not due to losing positions or channels but because the other end of traditional channels could not find audiences. New media provides new channels and platforms that can establish stronger and closer connections with audiences. Data mining, computation, and analysis based on big data technology enable traditional media to find audiences again, identify audience needs, and thus regain the market. Data marketing based on audience needs, interest preferences, and user experience can design marketing and improve services for each user's needs, even enabling one-to-one user relationship management. Therefore, it will inevitably establish more complete service chains and value chains.

5.6 Seeking New Growth Points Through "News + Service" Strategy

Implementing the "news + service" strategy using new media technology, actively combining big data analysis with traditional industries to create new media service spaces can both provide value-added services for users and create new profit models for media convergence to seek new growth points. For example, Hebei Radio Station's "Jitong" client is committed to cultivating a professional technical team, integrating technical and media information advantages to provide innovative services for users. Since drivers are the radio station's main target audience, traffic information constitutes one of the station's main content advantages. On this basis, Hebei Radio Station's "Jitong" client combines content advantages with technical strength. Based on Baidu Maps' road condition 爆料 system, users can conveniently mark road information at their current location on the map through real-time geolocation, transmitting it to more audiences to help them avoid congested roads in a timely manner. Currently, based on the original labels of smooth, slow, congested, and accident, backend staff have successively developed personalized icons for construction, no left turn, water accumulation, ice, and scenic spots. Through intelligent voice broadcasting of road conditions ahead, comprehensive mobile life services are provided on a single map, bringing more listenership and advertising clients to Hebei Radio Station.

The radio and television network industry can also achieve triple-screen integration of television, computer, and mobile phone through smart TVs to fully occupy the living room, creating a super-large-screen viewing experience for users. At the same time, it can provide users with news + various value-added services through clients, such as various film and television programs, e-commerce services, and life services like water, electricity, and gas bill payments, charging advertising fees, e-commerce sales commissions, copyright fees, television program landing fees, and other service fees to innovate TV's media convergence profit model.

This approach of building characteristic services based on media convergence and its own advantages will surely become a new profit point for future media. For example, *Xiaoxiang Morning News* regards community economy as a focus for future development. Its editor-in-chief, Guo Gubin, stated that the Xiaoxiang Morning News 96360 community life service platform is based in Hunan, integrating online resources from newspapers, websites, WeChat, and APPs, and offline through community service stores and community service teams upgraded from distribution teams to provide residents with "nanny-style" comprehensive services including logistics distribution, housekeeping services, registration, and ticket booking. Revenue from these services has become an important component of the newspaper's income. Another example is Zhejiang Daily Group's acquisition of Bianfeng and Haofang gaming platforms, which gave it a large user base and strengthened the group's database. On this basis, the group enhanced its service capabilities, such as building internet-based livelihood service platforms for medical registration, water, electricity, and gas bill payments, e-commerce, and express delivery inquiry. Through city portal channels, it provides users with local life information and local services for food, accommodation, and transportation. Through personalized customization channels, it pushes local important news, activity notifications, and personalized services based on users' city location and reading preferences. This can win more users and advertising clients.

5.7 News Crowdfunding Models Emerging from Websites and Self-Media

News crowdfunding is also a potential profit model for the future. News crowdfunding refers to raising funds for journalism. The specific approach is: first, journalists or self-media individuals propose a news reporting plan through an online platform; then, audiences donate funds to support reporting plans they approve of; within a set time frame, if these journalists can obtain the expected amount of funds, they can use the money to execute the reporting plan. In 2008, the U.S. news crowdfunding website "Spot.us" became a pioneer of crowdfunding models in the news field. After successful crowdfunding, it would sell reports, news clues, or factual materials to news organizations, with the money returned to the project's donors.

In November 2013, "Zhongchou Network" launched the "News Crowdfunding" platform, considered China's first news crowdfunding website. China's current news crowdfunding models are mainly initiated by some influential self-media and self-media individuals, focusing mainly on investigative reports in fields of common interest and appeal to donors. As audiences' enthusiasm for participation in dissemination continues to increase, their willingness to provide reporting funds for topics of interest or favored media or journalists is also growing stronger. The original intention of news crowdfunding is not profit-oriented; its common purpose lies in public interest and influence. Precisely because of this, its investigative reports often have news value and can be favored by other media, thus achieving copyright transactions.

Moreover, traditional mainstream media have also begun to venture into news crowdfunding through media convergence channels. For example, in February 2015, Guangdong Radio and Television Station's Pearl River Economic Radio's radio finance program *Fengyun Zaihui* successfully attracted 1,410 paying users in just 13 days through crowdfunding, raising 888,976 yuan for the program's annual production costs, creating a precedent for successful radio program crowdfunding in China. It is evident that news crowdfunding could become a new approach to innovating profit models for media convergence reporting, worthy of further exploration and research.

Undeniably, China's media convergence development currently faces both challenges and opportunities. There is no experience to draw upon for media convergence paths—media professionals can only continuously innovate and explore. This road has difficulties and risks. In promoting media convergence, how to ensure the preservation and appreciation of state-owned assets? Once a new technology is applied and transformed into a mature business model, will it replace other existing technologies or models? Many issues need consideration, and many problems need resolution. However, this path conforms to news communication laws and media industry development laws and is the only way to strengthen and expand China's media industry. Therefore, China's media convergence innovation must forge ahead despite difficulties.

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