

New Approaches to Television News Development in the Context of Media Convergence: Postprint

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Date: 2023-10-08T00:00:00+00:00

Abstract

Against the backdrop of media convergence, traditional media formats have experienced significant disruption, with television news particularly positioned at a critical juncture for survival. Drawing upon the author's extensive professional experience in television media, grounded in substantial practical work, and referencing numerous relevant scholarly sources, this study explores new development strategies for television news within the context of media convergence, aiming to enhance its market competitiveness and public opinion guidance capabilities, thereby enabling television news to better serve society and the public.

Full Text

New Development Ideas for Television News in the Context of Media Convergence

Abstract: In the context of media convergence, traditional media forms have suffered significant impacts, with television news particularly facing existential challenges. Drawing upon years of experience in television media work, extensive practice, and reference to numerous relevant books and materials, this paper examines new development ideas for television news against the backdrop of large-scale media convergence. The aim is to enhance the market competitiveness and public opinion guidance capabilities of television news, enabling it to better serve society and the public.

Keywords: media convergence context; television news; development; new ideas

CLC Number: G222

Document Code: A

Article ID: 1671-0134(2017)04-047-02
DOI: 10.19483/j.cnki.11-4653/n.2017.04.003

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The development of internet technology has ushered in the information age, gradually transforming the traditional media landscape typified by television, radio, newspapers, and magazines. The current media environment is characterized by the transformation and development of traditional media alongside the mutual integration and evolution of emerging media forms. The internet, as the most representative feature of the information age, has become the primary channel through which people access news, information, and entertainment. These new media forms are continuously fragmenting the audience base of traditional television news. This paper discusses new development ideas for television news under media convergence from the following perspectives.

1. The Connotation of Media Convergence

The term “media convergence” was first proposed by Pool in the United States, originally referring to the trend of various media forms evolving toward multi-functional integration. The concept can be understood in both broad and narrow senses. In the narrow sense, media convergence refers to the merging of different media forms to create qualitatively new media formats, such as electronic newspapers and news applications. In the broad sense, media convergence encompasses all media and their related elements. This includes not only the integration of specific media forms but also the convergence of media functions, communication methods, and organizational structures. Essentially, media convergence represents a new operational model for information transmission channels within a diversified technological landscape. In other words, traditional media forms like television, newspapers, and radio leverage the products of the information age—such as the internet, smart terminals, and mobile devices—to innovate their communication formats and present diverse information products to audiences through different media platforms. In summary, media convergence is the developmental trend of media in the information age, fundamentally representing the organic integration of traditional and new media forms in terms of content, technology, and business models driven by the rapid development of the internet.

2. New Development Ideas for Television News under Media Convergence

In response to the current social landscape of media convergence, television news organizations in numerous Chinese cities and regions are actively exploring new approaches. Many local television news units have achieved considerable success and accumulated valuable experience in their attempts to integrate television news with new media. Based on extensive observation, investigation, and research conducted over recent years, this section discusses new development ideas

for television news in the context of media convergence.

2.1 Upholding News Functions and Strengthening In-Depth Reporting

Although new media forms enable rapid news dissemination, annual media surveys in recent years reveal that these dazzling new media formats have not fundamentally transformed news production itself. The reason lies in the fact that newsgathering and production still require highly professional personnel and substantial financial and material resources. Therefore, despite innovations in communication formats and carriers, the market barriers to information production remain unbroken, and information production itself maintains its monopolistic position. More often than not, high-quality news reporting still relies on experienced professional journalists.

From this analysis, we can see that for television media to maintain its position and ability to guide public opinion in an increasingly competitive market, it must adhere to the fundamental principle of “news information content service.” Simultaneously, it should leverage the advantages of new media—such as speed, efficiency, and large audience reach—to conduct professional follow-up reporting on news events. This involves integrating and refining news points from multiple directions and angles, processing news materials meticulously, and cultivating depth in news reporting to attract greater audience attention.

Taking Henan Television Station, a provincial-level media organization that this author has long observed, as an example: Before the arrival of the information age, Henan Television was the mainstream media through which people across the province obtained news and information. However, in today’s era where new media prevails and everyone can be a journalist, Henan Television’s audience has been gradually diverted. According to ratings surveys conducted over the past five years, Henan Television’s news programs have experienced a sharp decline in viewership, with the remaining audience primarily consisting of middle-aged, elderly, and female viewers. The fundamental reason for this shift is the advent of the information age and the impact of various new media forms.

Nevertheless, Henan Television has not retreated in the face of these challenges. Instead, it has actively explored the integration of television news with new media. Building upon its strengths in news production and adopting fresh perspectives to examine various news events, the station has innovated its news presentation formats based on a thorough understanding of audience preferences and its responsibility to guide public values. By conducting a series of in-depth reports on issues of public concern and refining high-profile news events, the station has achieved comprehensive, multi-angle coverage through various media forms—including television, news applications, newspapers, electronic newspapers, live streaming, the internet, Weibo, and WeChat. Audience feedback indicates that Henan Television’s convergence initiatives have been highly successful.

2.2 Enhancing Live Broadcasting Capacity and Strengthening TV News Influence

New media possesses advantages such as speed, efficiency, strong interactivity, diverse presentation forms, and audience autonomy—qualities that traditional media lacks. Therefore, in the current information age, television news media must actively learn from new media to maintain its competitive position and continue fulfilling its role in guiding public opinion. In terms of news release and dissemination, television should yield to new media and fully utilize its advantages to achieve rapid and comprehensive coverage. However, regarding the on-site authenticity and timeliness of live news events, television media holds a unique and irreplaceable position.

Specifically, during live broadcasts of high-news-value events, on-site reporting should fully capitalize on timeliness by synchronizing with the latest developments of the news event. This approach offers several benefits: television media can authentically document the original state of news events, maximizing the preservation of their original appearance, and it can obtain spokesperson status for the entire news event as the first witness. This positions television media at the forefront of the news event's occurrence and development, enabling it to master mainstream discourse power, maximize the correction of negative or one-sided public opinion tendencies related to the event, and eliminate the gap between dual public opinion arenas.

For instance, during the 2016–2017 CCTV Spring Festival Gala, CCTV's comprehensive channel collaborated with sports, children's, news, and movie channels, as well as CCTV's online platform, to simultaneously broadcast the gala program. The broadcast incorporated nationwide audience interaction, representing a model of all-media live broadcasting. Consequently, the 2016–2017 CCTV Spring Festival Gala achieved unprecedented ratings. Similar all-media convergence live broadcasting initiatives have been attempted and explored by many local television stations, yielding relatively ideal results. Therefore, it can be said that in today's media convergence context, television media must fully leverage its distinctive characteristics, tap into the potential of established media, and actively explore the normalization of live broadcasting. Simultaneously, television news media should face the trend of media convergence squarely, enhance deep cooperation with various media forms, and strengthen audience interaction and communication to increase the expressiveness and influence of news live broadcasting and better win audience favor.

2.3 Grasping Media Convergence Trends and Building a Convergent Journalism Framework

With the emergence of new media, all traditional media have been actively exploring pathways for integration and development with new media. In recent years, the television news industry has proposed a relatively new concept—convergent journalism. Overall, convergent journalism involves placing various

types of news events and multimedia news formats on a unified information platform for collection, compilation, and publication. This approach combines and complements different multimedia forms, fully leveraging their respective strengths to conduct effective and comprehensive information dissemination targeted at audiences. Based on the connotation of convergent journalism and combined with relevant journalism theories and characteristics of the new media era, foreign experts have categorized convergent journalism into several forms: cloning, co-opetition, interactive promotion, content sharing, and full convergence.

Examining the current progress of television news integration with multimedia in most Chinese cities and regions, although many areas have achieved significant results, there remains a long journey to reach the ideal state of true convergence. Therefore, this paper recommends that television news organizations actively exploring new and old media integration should adopt a planned, step-by-step, collective, and multi-measure approach to promote comprehensive integration between television news media and new media. During implementation, the ultimate convergence goals can be divided into short-term and long-term timeframes. In the short term, it is necessary to accelerate the establishment of multimedia news centers, adjust the organizational structure of television news, update program formats, and actively improve technical means to achieve comprehensive, multi-angle, and three-dimensional television news convergence goals.

3. Conclusion

In summary, the arrival of the information age has impacted the development of all industries, particularly the media sector. Various types of new media forms continuously challenge and transform the contemporary media landscape, with television media—once the mainstream position in traditional media—facing enormous challenges and development pressure. Therefore, in the current media context, television news organizations must actively explore, combine the characteristics of television news with the advantages of new media, and pursue positive integration to create convergent journalism that is rich in form, efficient in dissemination, and broad in audience reach.

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

Source: ChinaXiv — Machine translation. Verify with original.