
AI translation • View original & related papers at
chinaxiv.org/items/chinaxiv-202310.02839

How American Media “Converges” in the Post-Print Era

Authors: Zhao Yingshu

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

Abstract

In the United States, all media outlets—including newspapers, radio stations, television, magazines, and websites—place significant emphasis on timeliness and newsworthiness in media convergence development. Nearly every media organization emphasizes that content is king; prioritizes multi-channel, multi-platform news dissemination; focuses on cultivating all-media talent; devotes intensive effort to meticulous in-depth reporting; and spares no effort in building all-media centers.

Full Text

Preamble

Research • Integration and Development: How American Media “Converges”

Abstract: In the United States, media organizations across all platforms—newspapers, radio, television, magazines, and websites—emphasize timeliness and newsworthiness in their convergence strategies. Nearly every outlet adheres to the principle that content is king; they prioritize multi-channel and multi-platform distribution, cultivate omnimedia talent, dedicate resources to meticulous in-depth reporting, and vigorously build omnimedia centers.

Keywords: content; channels; talent; depth; omnimedia center

CLC Number: G206

Document Code: A

Article ID: 1671-0134(2017)05-056-02

DOI: 10.19483/j.cnki.11-4653/n.2017.05.014

By Zhao Yingshu

With the rapid development of the internet and the emergence of new media, an increasing number of users now habitually obtain news and information online, through microblogs, or via WeChat. These platforms increasingly emphasize social interaction, transforming from unidirectional information channels into interactive platforms where every user can contribute content.

In the context of globalized communication, media convergence has become an irreversible worldwide trend. Some foreign traditional media have launched convergence initiatives centered on online video, social media, and mobile internet terminals, initially establishing linkages and integrations across three communication channels: traditional broadcast networks, internet networks, and telecommunications networks. This has created new spaces and directions for the future development of traditional media.

During a visit to American media outlets with a Chinese press delegation, it became evident that U.S. media organizations—whether newspapers, radio, television, magazines, or websites—all emphasize timeliness and newsworthiness in their convergence efforts. Nearly every media organization insists that content is king; they focus heavily on multi-channel, multi-platform news distribution; they prioritize the cultivation of omnimedia talent; they commit to meticulous in-depth reporting; and they spare no effort in building omnimedia centers.

1. Creating Authentic, Real-Time, and Relevant Content

A digital producer at CNN shared with the delegation the importance of creating immersive experiences that make readers feel present at the news scene.

At *USA Today*, traditional and new media complement each other in a mutually reinforcing convergence. Traditional media editing can seamlessly incorporate new media presentation methods such as charts and comics, while traditional media content requires rapid dissemination through new media channels. The operational model of *USA Today's* omnimedia center involves a planning meeting every morning at 8:30 to assign topics, clearly delineating which content is for social media, which for the website, and which for print. Stories destined for social media and online platforms must be brief, frequent, and fast, published online at the earliest opportunity.

The 2 p.m. meeting finalizes the print edition's content. The same team from the morning session reports on story status, with the front-page editor selecting articles first to ensure top-story quality. The criteria for front-page selection prioritize newsworthiness and substance—whatever interests readers and addresses their concerns becomes the headline.

4. Meticulous In-Depth Reporting

During a visit to National Public Radio (NPR), its commitment to in-depth reporting proved deeply impressive. According to a senior editor from the investigative unit, journalists capable of conducting investigative reporting represent

the elite of the entire editorial team. Across the extensive NPR organization, only four investigative reporters exist, but the unit comprises nine people—the remaining five provide support services, assisting the four reporters with research and logistics. Each investigative reporter completes 2-3 projects annually, with each project generating multiple stories in a series. These series are first promoted on social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter and online through images and audio clips to attract broader audiences.

Investigative reporters explained that producing quality investigative reports requires accumulating substantial knowledge. When firsthand materials and data prove unavailable, journalists must obtain them through indirect means and persistently interview additional parties involved.

According to statistics, over 60% of NPR's listeners have college educations, and 75% belong to middle-to-upper income households. By providing in-depth, thorough, and impartial news coverage, NPR maintains a mainstream position in American broadcasting.

5. Building Omnimedia Centers

The operational model of *USA Today's* omnimedia center involves a planning meeting every morning at 8:30 to assign topics, clearly delineating which content is for social media, which for the website, and which for print. Stories destined for social media and online platforms must be brief, frequent, and fast, published online at the earliest opportunity.

The author is affiliated with the Convergence Media Center of Science and Technology Daily.

[The following appears to be a separate article or continuation]

Netflix's market deployment of *House of Cards* was entirely OTT—broadcasting directly online, bypassing television stations entirely. Like a basketball lob pass, it eliminated intermediaries, skipping television stations for direct online distribution. This poses a terrifying prospect for traditional television and may represent a future trend. Therefore, for traditional television to survive, content being king is the only viable strategy.

Returning to the convergence development of city stations, media convergence represents not only a top-down strategic deployment but also a bottom-up developmental necessity. It constitutes the general trend for traditional media to transform into new mainstream media in content production, program excellence, and survival. For example, following the overall construction of its new building and continuous investment in recent years, Changzhou Broadcasting and Television Station has actively improved its organizational structure, operational mechanisms, technical equipment, and industrial expansion. Its omnimedia command platform construction and upcoming full-channel high-definition

transformation place it at the forefront nationwide. Other new technologies such as drones, 4K ultra-high-definition, and mobile live streaming have also been applied. Therefore, the technical equipment for media convergence is adequate. The current key to improving convergence communication quality lies in the rapid transformation of content and product production concepts. Otherwise, without quality content, despite systems built and equipment purchased, these resources cannot be effectively utilized because traditional content production may not require such tools.

Without focusing on content, communication cannot flourish. As news professionals, the principle of content being king should drive us to go deeper into the grassroots to truly understand public needs. We should plan and produce content with warmth and quality, disseminating products that are “down-to-earth,” “dew-covered,” and “steaming hot”—content that the public loves to hear, watch, and share. We should enable audiences to become immersed in, emotionally connected with, and deeply moved by excellent works, transforming each outstanding piece and quality program into a media convergence platform that achieves optimal communication effects, just as *In the Name of the People* did.

In fact, *In the Name of the People* did not involve massive investment or production. On the contrary, much of it consisted of indoor dialogue scenes, and the filming technology was far from high-tech. All stakeholders—from screen-writing to filming, broadcasting, and online interaction across micro-platforms—were originally separate but ultimately coalesced. The reason all parties united around this subject was its relevance to the social reality of the central government’s high-pressure anti-corruption campaign.

Therefore, the urgent task remains to focus on creating quality content products, accelerating the “supply-side” reform of content products to drive improvements in convergence communication quality. In content gathering and editing, we should integrate resources across various media, pooling information sources from party and government affairs, people’s livelihood hotspots, cultural leisure, and lifestyle services. We should produce content products that meet audience needs and concerns. We must dig deep vertically and connect horizontally, transforming from single content provision to comprehensive information services. A simple news item or routine meeting can be presented three-dimensionally, showing its front and back stories, all aspects, and online-offline dimensions, enabling interactive planning of major stories at the same time. Such content products will certainly be well-received by audiences.

Regarding the protagonists and actors in *In the Name of the People*—such as Li Dakang and Qi Tongwei—their past and present, career development, and family life were deeply mined and comprehensively presented online in a crisscrossing manner, guiding audience attention to the show and sparking wave after wave of viewership enthusiasm.

The author is affiliated with Changzhou Broadcasting and Television Station.

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

Source: ChinaXiv — Machine translation. Verify with original.