

## Exploring Print Media After Media Convergence through “The Paper”

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### Abstract

Under the impetus of digital technology and network communication, media convergence has become a general trend, establishing “converged media” and “converged journalism” as international frontier topics in the field of journalism and communication. As a pioneer in the transformation from traditional print media to new media, The Paper’s development is motivated by its alignment with the broader new media landscape. Based on the Uses and Gratifications Theory, this article analyzes its innovations and explorations on new media platforms and finds that The Paper has, to a certain extent, satisfied audience needs across three dimensions: environmental surveillance, self-confirmation, and interpersonal communication.

### Full Text

## Media Convergence and the Transformation of “The Paper”

### 1.1.3 Media Product Convergence

The continuous advancement of computer technology, network technology, and digital technology has driven the progressive integration of various media products and services. Television, film, music, games, and other forms of media content are strengthening their interconnectivity and interchangeability through unified technical support systems. Different media industries provide distinct forms of media products and services, forming unique value chains in the process of information circulation. The leap forward in digital media enables diverse media products to reach audiences simultaneously through the same channel.

### 1.1.4 Media Enterprise Convergence

Media enterprise convergence is primarily manifested in the formation of major media corporations and groups. Large media conglomerates own different

types of communication media, enabling them to implement cross-promotion of content and sharing of resources. For example, Guangzhou Daily Newspaper Group, China's earliest media group, is also the newspaper group with the largest layout scale and strongest economic performance. Another manifestation of media enterprise convergence involves enterprises originally serving specific target audiences overlapping with media enterprises in business operations through integrated technologies and methods. The most typical examples are mobile network and internet operators extending their original businesses to assume certain media roles, providing information services to the public like traditional media enterprises.

### **“The Paper” and Media Convergence**

Professor Pool from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology first proposed the concept of media convergence, which originally referred to the trend of multi-functional integration across various media. Media convergence describes the combination, cohesion, and integration of communication media and their associated elements. In essence, it merges the editorial operations of newspapers, radio, television, and online platforms to achieve resource sharing and centralized processing, producing more diverse information products while disseminating them through different media platforms. Media convergence encompasses not only the integration of communication channels but also includes the integration of media products, media markets, and media ownership structures.

#### **1.1.1 Media Technology Convergence**

In terms of content, media convergence was initially reflected in the establishment of electronic publications by major newspapers and magazines—representing the integration of print media and online media. Subsequently, with the continuous advancement of digital technology, the popularization of the Internet, and the growing number of netizens, television and radio also joined the ranks of media convergence, manifesting as the integration of broadcast and television media with online media.

#### **1.1.2 Media Platform Convergence**

Media platform convergence is closely related to media technology convergence. The former represents a technical-level mutual integration, wherein the entire media industry system operates on the same technological foundation and shares communication methods and content. Currently, traditional media have yet to produce typical successful cases in their internet transformation process. “The Paper,” as a vanguard of Shanghai Newspaper Group's transformation, is critical to achieving breakthroughs in new media business.

## The Launch and Strategic Positioning of “The Paper”

On July 22, 2014, “The Paper” was fully launched as the first major achievement of Shanghai Newspaper Group’s reform. Even before its launch, “The Paper” had already attracted widespread attention within the media industry and become a hot topic in both academic and professional circles. “The Paper” is an internet platform focusing on current affairs and in-depth analysis, launched by Shanghai Newspaper Group as part of its new media reform initiative. After more than six months of preparation, “The Paper” officially introduced its news website, WAP pages, mobile app, WeChat public account, Weibo public account, and other platforms, forming a comprehensive new media matrix in an effort to build China’s premier current affairs media brand.

With the continuous development of new media, traditional media’s market share has been shrinking, economic revenues have declined significantly, and survival pressures have intensified. How to explore new development paths amidst these challenges has become a central concern for major traditional media organizations. Shanghai Newspaper Group invested nearly 400 million yuan to develop “The Paper,” with the project primarily managed by Oriental Morning Post. The print version of Oriental Morning Post was reduced, with two-thirds of its team transitioning to new media while employing traditional newspaper editing, planning, and reporting methods for news production. “The Paper” operates across multiple media platforms, with differentiated content for its web version, mobile client, and WeChat public account. Technical staff design the most convenient content display platforms for each terminal to facilitate reader engagement and interaction.

## Media Convergence’s Impact on News Production

Media convergence is exerting an increasingly profound influence on society. Current affairs news, which bears the mission of political propaganda and public opinion guidance, must find a suitable development path within this converged media environment. “The Paper” serves as a vanguard for current affairs news transformation, presenting itself with a completely new appearance that has attracted widespread social attention. Confronted with evolving economic growth models, shifts in communication power, changes in social communication structures, and various new policies and forces, current affairs news must establish proper competitive awareness in the new media market, monitor industry changes, and create productized and industrialized current affairs journalism. “The Paper” has invested substantial financial and human resources, clarifying its market orientation from the outset and leveraging its advantages in talent, brand, and capital to restructure news production and user relationships, thereby establishing a foundation for survival and innovation.

### **Changes in News Sources**

Traditional media primarily obtained news sources through journalists' connections with government agencies, enterprises, and social organizations, or through letters from readers. However, the emergence of new media has provided people with an unprecedented sense of participation in news creation. In the era of media convergence, media organizations can obtain information leads through various social software platforms such as WeChat and Weibo, then conduct interviews and reports on specific stories. "Grassroots journalists" at major emergency sites have repeatedly produced globally sensational news effects. For instance, when the tsunami struck Southeast Asia in early 2005, the websites of BBC and CNN established special columns to publish news reports from ordinary citizens at the disaster site. In 2006, when the London subway bombing occurred, the first on-site news photos came from ordinary people rather than professional journalists. Emerging media is transforming the way people communicate news, and the subject status of audiences is constantly evolving. "The Paper" effectively utilizes the characteristic of integrated communicator-audience roles in the new media environment for interface design, expanding its communication reach and attracting audiences through features such as news questioning and news sharing.

### **Changes in Communication Technology**

Emerging media disseminates content through the internet and mobile networks, fundamentally differing from traditional media in carrier capabilities. This provides a broader platform for news communication, enabling not only professional journalists but also grassroots journalists to rapidly publish news content to their preferred platforms. As technology continues to develop, the convergence functions of emerging media are constantly strengthening, and the means of news publication and sharing are becoming increasingly diversified. Multimedia methods have been applied to news communication, allowing people to obtain audio-visual news content through web pages and mobile terminals. "The Paper" conducts daily news communication through updates and maintenance of its own client terminal, while also providing real-time broadcasting of recent events through WeChat and Weibo public accounts, enabling followers to obtain information immediately. Although media convergence has brought changes in news communication methods that better satisfy audience information needs, it inevitably increases the difficulty of news content integration and processing. Media organizations must accurately position content direction, select optimal dissemination methods, and constantly monitor audience feedback during the communication process to continuously improve and innovate.

### **Changes in Organizational Structure**

In the era of media convergence, cooperation between traditional media and new media has transformed the original organizational structure of news media, inevitably driving changes in media workflow. "The Paper" is composed

of the original team from Oriental Morning Post, with more than 80 new employees introduced, following traditional news gathering and editing methods while disseminating content through more sources and sharing channels. Mass media have shifted from independent operation to cooperative operation, reducing investment in manpower, equipment, and capital, thereby lowering news production costs. For traditional media, cooperation with emerging media can help protect market share, as people pay attention to traditional media through emerging channels. However, in centralized and converged media groups, different media can achieve resource reorganization through production process design and control, utilize the medium differences of various media types, achieve resource sharing while producing different products in news communication, transform competition into cooperation, and ultimately jointly expand regional markets while establishing monopoly positions.

## Conclusion

The emergence of new media has broken down barriers between major media platforms, providing a foundation and platform for resource integration between traditional and new media. Audiences can obtain concise and summarized latest information from emerging media according to their preferences, after which major newspapers and television stations provide in-depth reports on news background, processes, and developments for interested audiences. With the maturation of electronic network technology and the development of wireless communication technology, we can predict the emergence of ultra-thin mobile flat panel displays, through which people will eventually freely convert text, sound, and images on a single terminal, truly possessing a “Daily Me” as envisioned by Nicholas Negroponte.

## References

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

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