

---

AI translation · View original & related papers at  
[chinaxiv.org/items/chinaxiv-202310.02855](https://chinaxiv.org/items/chinaxiv-202310.02855)

---

## Building a Regional Benchmark for Media Convergence Development — Exclusive Interview with Cover Media’s Post-Print Edition

**Authors:** Diao Yigang

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

### Abstract

“We face the same difficulties and challenges as all print media across the country,” Li Peng stated candidly. “In recent years, the continuous loss of readers and subscribers has weakened newspaper influence, subsequently affecting both ‘two types of effectiveness’ [economic and social benefits]. As mainstream media, our mission and responsibility are to disseminate mainstream voices and collect public sentiment. Building Cover Media aims to enhance media’s dissemination power, influence, credi...

### Full Text

#### Preamble: Building a Regional Benchmark for Media Convergence in the All-Media Era—An Exclusive Interview with Cover Media

**By Diao Yigang, Journalist of this Publication**

On May 4, 2016—half a year after Cover Media’s establishment had caused a sensation in the industry—the beta version of its core new media product “Cover News,” codenamed “Youth,” was launched. Originating from China’s first metropolitan newspaper, *West China Metropolis Daily*, this news app has built and fortified a regional highland for media convergence in less than a year, distinguished by its pioneering innovative genes and the prominent label of “technology-driven + original content.” While capturing the commanding heights of ideological and public opinion, promoting mainstream values, disseminating positive energy, and documenting urban development, Cover Media has been practicing the central government’s requirements for media convergence development. With fruitful convergence achievements, it has delivered a “spicy

and fresh” Sichuan-flavored experience to netizens across the province and the nation, especially young “digital natives.”

On February 19, 2017—the first anniversary of General Secretary Xi Jinping’s important “2·19” speech—*China Media Technology* magazine interviewed Li Peng, Deputy Editor-in-Chief of Sichuan Daily Newspaper Group and Chairman of Cover Media. Through this interview, we witnessed the unique journey of China’s first metropolitan newspaper in advancing the integration of old and new media.

“We face the same difficulties and challenges as all print media across the country,” Li Peng stated candidly. “In recent years, the continuous loss of readers and subscribers has weakened newspaper influence, subsequently affecting both ‘two types of effectiveness’ [economic and social benefits]. As mainstream media, our mission and responsibility are to disseminate mainstream voices and collect public sentiment. Building Cover Media aims to enhance media’s dissemination power, influence, credibility, and guidance.”

Cover Media does not shy away from the difficulties facing traditional media, instead approaching its responsibilities with a strong sense of duty and mission. In Cover Media’s office area, what impressed our journalist most were the eye-catching corporate culture slogans such as “Reconnect with the World.”

## 1. Reconnecting with the World

“Artifacts flourish in China’s prosperity; rivers and mountains are majestic in Western Shu.” Chengdu, renowned for its tagline “Once you come, you never want to leave,” is a city where cultural vitality flows through its veins, much like the teahouses that line its streets and alleys. Chengdu has never been a city lacking in news. The glory of *West China Metropolis Daily*, which began in the 1990s, and its pioneering metropolitan newspaper innovations have become indelible memories of an era for this city’s residents.

In May 2016, Chengdu was selected for the “National Central City” list issued by the National Development and Reform Commission and the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development, bringing this ancient city to a crossroads of leapfrog development. Two decades after bidding farewell to the glory of the print era, how can Chengdu’s media professionals today break through the geographical barriers of “difficult roads to Shu,” start anew after numerous battles, and build urban strength and regional influence commensurate with a national central city?

On October 28, 2015, Cover Media was established. According to official statements, its purpose was to use the “Belt and Road” and Yangtze River Economic Belt as strategic layout spaces, with intelligent push, professional production, and user aggregation as content characteristics. Focusing on young users and relying on advanced technology, it highlights media that emphasizes “differentiated choices for young users and personalized expression of interests,” making

positive energy, youthful vitality, and personalization distinctive product symbols.

Our journalist observed that in just over a year, Cover Media had gained support from various authorities at all levels, including the Publicity Department of the CPC Central Committee, the Cyberspace Administration of China, and the Publicity Department of the Sichuan Provincial Party Committee. One month after the beta version of Cover News 1.0 launched, on June 14, the Cyberspace Administration of China issued it a Class I Internet News Information Service License, making it one of only a handful of domestic apps to hold this qualification.

How does Cover Media, as a new media organization born from traditional media, possess such technical genes and atmosphere? “We chose the path of building our own technical team and independent research and development. Currently, the entire technical team comprises 80 to 90 people, including algorithm technology, machine writing, voice technology, and other departments,” Li Peng explained.

It is precisely this independent R&D capability that enabled Cover Media to rapidly develop “Cover Account,” a self-media product targeting post-80s, post-90s, and even post-00s generations. This product incorporates regional self-media information into Cover News’s content strategy, enriching reporting resources through self-media, deeply linking users through joint operations of PGC and UGC content, with a foothold in Southwest China and influence radiating nationwide.

When discussing why such emphasis is placed on technology, Li Peng said: “Content, product, technology, and capital constitute the four main business lines of Cover Media. The underlying philosophy of this structure is ‘user-centered.’ Being ‘user-centered’ is mainly reflected in how we find users, how we serve them, and how we ensure they have a pleasant experience using Cover Media. We strive to enable users to gain something through our services, ultimately retaining these users within Cover Media. The different descriptions of ‘audience’ versus ‘user’ reflect Cover Media’s distinct understanding and connotation of service.”

## 2. “Four-Pronged Strategy”: Content, Product, Technology, and Capital

Through conversations with Cover Media employees, our journalist learned that from its inception, Cover Media established a strategy of “benchmarking against first-tier standards, technology-driven, and content-based network building.” In addition to the core product Cover News APP, it has also laid out a series of key products and business segments including Cover Account, Cover Public Opinion, Cover Think Tank, Cover Data, and Cover Video.

How does Cover Media advance these business segments simultaneously to se-

cure a place in the fierce Internet competition? “Our strategy is to create distinctive products and prioritize product innovation as the institution’s primary task. In terms of specific tactics, we advance simultaneously along four dimensions—content, product, technology, and capital—forming a four-pronged strategy. First, in content, whether traditional or new media, we must leverage original content advantages to exert authoritative influence and voice in mobile Internet dissemination. In product development, we aim to create distinctive products and treat product innovation as a pursuit, using product innovation to exert Cover Media’s influence, increase user stickiness, and attract user attention.”

Strolling through the quiet, clean, fully open office area, our journalist felt as if in an Internet company, seeing data prototype system display walls such as “Data Sky Eye” and “Public Opinion Map.” Many employees frequently mentioned technical terms like “robot writing,” “user profiling,” and “artificial intelligence.” On Cover Media’s timeline corridor...

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

*Source: ChinaXiv — Machine translation. Verify with original.*