

The Development of Television Programs Under the Trend of Media Convergence: Postprint

Authors: Xue Mei

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

Abstract

In the process of media convergence, big data is undoubtedly a crucial driving force for the business model upgrading of traditional media. This article systematically reviews the reconstruction and transformation of television programs under the media convergence trend from three dimensions: industrial upgrading, content cooperation, and program production, and explores future development directions.

Full Text

The Development of TV Programs Under the Trend of Media Convergence

Abstract: In the process of media convergence, big data is undoubtedly an important driving force for the upgrading of traditional media's business formats. This article examines the reconstruction and transformation of TV programs under the trend of media convergence from three perspectives: industrial upgrading, content cooperation, and program production, and explores future development directions.

Keywords: media convergence; big data; multi-screen era; leveraging network feedback

Chinese Library Classification: G224

Document Code: A

Article ID: 1671-0134(2017)12-059-02

DOI: 10.19483/j.cnki.11-4653/n.2017.01.009

Author: Xue Mei

The concept of "Media Convergence" was first proposed by Professor Pool from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, originally referring to the trend of

various media forms presenting multi-functional integration. This imagination of media convergence largely focused on merging traditional media such as television and newspapers [1]. In today's Internet era, this definition has been expanded to "strategic, operational, and cultural alliances between printed, audio, video, and interactive digital media organizations" [2], emphasizing cooperation and alliances between different media.

The high stickiness and interactivity of Internet users precisely compensate for the "weak link" between traditional television media and audiences, providing network big data for researching user attributes and discovering user needs. This advantage offers television media a clear approach: extracting audience information from interactive data on social media platforms, including audience characteristics, interests, and needs; establishing artificial data models based on open topics; then extracting core data through technology; conducting high-relevance analysis of keywords; and mining personalized needs of audiences at different levels, thereby providing prior guidance and market forecasting for television products, transforming content production from "static" to "dynamic."

Under the aggregating power of the Internet, the entire media industry and social resources are undergoing restructuring, presenting a completely different appearance from traditional society. In this new architecture, competition is no longer the theme between traditional and new media; rather, open cooperation and integrated connectivity are the most valuable output methods and logic [3].

Before the production of the film version of "Dad, Where Are We Going?", the Xinhua News Agency's New Media Center collaborated with the DataTang Creative Analysis Studio to extract 455,000 original Weibo posts about "Dad, Where Are We Going?" from Sina Weibo, and conducted data analysis on 367,000 independent original authors (removing suspected bot accounts), over 13 million user Weibo posts, and nearly 100 million relationships. The data revealed that female "Dad fans" accounted for 80% of the audience, and viewers had very high expectations for the "original cast" of fathers and children (which became key to box office success), with greater attention paid to genuine emotional moments between fathers and sons. It was this big data assessment that enabled a film defined by industry insiders as "not strictly a movie in the traditional sense" to create a box office miracle, breaking through 600 million RMB in just 12 days [6].

1. Using Big Data to Promote Industrial Upgrading

With the arrival of the mobile Internet era, "big data" has become a global topic, characterized by massive data scale, rapid data flow, dynamic data systems, and diverse data types [4], which will bring disruptive changes to the business world. In my view, the significance of big data for traditional television media is mainly reflected in two aspects: first, the big data-ization of the rating system; second, the big data integration of the television industry chain.

In the multi-screen era, television program ratings are no longer limited to data

received by set-top boxes. Multiple transmissions on second and third screens independent of television are also effective reflections of television coverage capabilities, and the attention television programs receive on social networks is gradually becoming a “mirror” of ratings—that is, “I promote, therefore I watch.” There are already precedents abroad for using social network data as a measurement of ratings. Nielsen acquired the emerging research institution “Social Guide,” which analyzes social data in television programs, at the end of 2012, and later cooperated with social media giant “Twitter” to launch a television rating report based on Weibo content. The report showed that during prime time in the evening, 40% of posts on Weibo were related to television programs [5].

Beyond direct application in rating evaluation, more meaningful transformation of big data is reflected in the reconstruction of television program production models and processes, and even the entire television industry chain.

2. Content Addition: Leveraging Network Feedback

From a macro perspective, in recent years, many television media and video websites have begun experimenting with joint production, integrating television media’s content production capabilities and brand endorsement with video websites’ user base and dissemination breadth to achieve an unprecedented advantageous addition.

The cooperation between Southeast Satellite TV and Tudou.com in 2007 can be regarded as a pioneer in network-television integration. The first television blog program jointly launched by both parties, “Podcast Storm,” not only became an independent unit of Southeast Satellite TV’s “Entertainment Update” but also established an interactive zone on Tudou.com, encouraging viewers and netizens to interact with the program and share viewpoints.

The earliest case of traditional media using Internet content feedback can be traced back to 2005 with Phoenix Satellite TV’s “Net World.” This program collected and organized information resources from websites and forums worldwide daily, encompassing text, video, Mp3, and even Flash animations. With a concise format consisting essentially of only a host and web pages, the host broadcasted processed and integrated network information, providing viewers with multi-channel massive information while demonstrating diverse social viewpoints. This model demonstrated new methods for news broadcasting that primarily relied on field reporting by journalists, and offered new ideas for television production: utilizing and integrating network resources for information reprocessing and repurposing.

Dragon TV’s social service program “Four Great Helpers” further embodies the deep replenishment of Internet content to television programs. In its early broadcast period, bizarre real stories such as “the stingiest childhood friend” and “the laziest girlfriend” immediately triggered intense discussions among viewers and netizens. Most of these magical “troubles” displayed in the program came

from popular live posts on network communities such as Zhihu, Douban, and Tianya. The program team's most important preliminary work was searching for the most popular posts with the most likes on these platforms and contacting the parties involved through social media. The netizen comments behind these popular posts were also effectively integrated to provide references for program content structure and discussion ideas. Such content cooperation not only provides endless material for television programs but also expands the network influence of television programs by leveraging netizen attention rates, attracting more network groups back to television screens.

3. Winning Through Planning: Strengthening Traditional Media Advantages

While leveraging network platforms for media convergence, television program planning should strengthen the advantages and characteristics of traditional media, distinguishing itself from network self-produced programs and demonstrating the core values of television media.

3.1 Leveraging the Authority and Professionalism of Traditional Media

The Internet has accelerated the speed of information dissemination but also spawned a large amount of redundant information. Taking news programs as an example, when the network becomes the most immediate source of news, it may lead to convergence in news sources across various columns, resulting in similarities in news content, footage, and even style.

On the other hand, due to the program import boom brought about by capital operations and the pan-entertainment trend in the network dissemination era, most programs are keen on shallow content, vulgarization, and excessive entertainment. Under network revelry, television programs that can truly fulfill the media's function as a social watchdog and transmit mainstream values and humanistic care will possess more core competitiveness and sustainability. For example, CCTV's reality show "Amazing Challenge" demonstrates the living conditions of special industries through "extreme work," triggering public care for practitioners in special occupations; through "environmental protection battles," it simulates the greenhouse effects caused by human activities, allowing viewers to experience the urgency of environmental protection. Such programs, which convey values and trigger intense debate and reflection, attract viewers to watch in the first place. Programs with such topicality and live presence not only retain television audiences through unique content but also ferment through video websites and social media dissemination, creating good synergistic effects with television media and achieving better content integration.

3.2 Strengthening Large Screen Advantages to Attract Viewers to Television

The arrival of the multi-screen era means that television content extends across broader platforms, but at the same time, this extension also fragments some audiences. As McLuhan stated, “Television is the simultaneous extension of human hearing and vision” [7]. Compared with computers, tablets, and mobile clients, television media has natural advantages in audio-visual effect presentation. By enhancing audio-visual effects, it can attract viewers to stay in front of television screens to a greater extent. “Goddess’s New Outfit” was the first domestic program to integrate naked-eye 3D and holographic projection technology into television programs from the perspective of enhancing viewer audio-visual experience. In front of television screens, viewers can enjoy stunning three-dimensional stage effects without wearing professional glasses. Such audio-visual feasts cannot be achieved by other terminals and therefore strengthen the unique advantages of television programs.

In addition to enhancing audio-visual effects, increasing program topicality and live presence to create a “communal viewing” effect is also an advantage that television programs can distinguish from other media terminals. Network media has natural advantages in interaction, with bullet comments, comments, and Weibo hot topics providing audiences with ample space to express and discuss viewpoints. However, due to its flexible playback time, it creates randomness in communication and commentary and weak links between audiences. Television programs with live presence can bring family and friends together to watch programs in the same space or time and exchange impressions instantly, bringing a more enjoyable viewing experience. For example, competition programs such as “I Am a Singer” and “The Voice of China,” or the currently popular “Ode to Joy,” the former locks viewers to the screen due to its strong live presence and suspense, while the latter attracts viewers to watch in the first place due to the values displayed in the drama that trigger intense debate and reflection.

4. Conclusion

As Xu Lijun, General Manager of CSM (China Audience Rating Research), stated, in the multi-screen era, media convergence is the addition of the Internet and traditional media moving toward each other [8], not the subtraction of the Internet replacing traditional media or traditional media suppressing the Internet. Facing the general trend of media convergence, how to excavate each other’s advantages, use them for one’s own benefit, and achieve integration that maximizes mutual benefits is an urgent issue for television media to consider.

While leveraging network platforms for media convergence, all aspects of television program planning, production, and broadcasting must maintain an “Internet mindset” at all times, compensating for the shortcomings of traditional one-way communication and “weak links” with audiences, actively using new media to expand program influence and enhance interaction with audiences,

using big data to reconstruct industry chains and program planning processes, expanding program width and resilience through derivative programs, and promoting deep integration between traditional and new media.

- [1] Meng Jian. Media Convergence: Cohesion and Creation of a New Mediated Society [J]. International Press, 2006(7).
- [2] Definition by Andrew Nachison, Director of the Media Center at the American Press Institute, cited from Chen Haowen. Re-discussing “Media Convergence”. People’s Daily Online.
- [3] Yu Guoming. Building a “New Barrel”: The Key to Media Convergence and Transformation [J]. TV Research, 2015(2).
- [4] Huang Yaohua. Analysis of Television Media Transformation Path in the Big Data Era [J]. Southern Television Journal, 2013(6).
- [5] Hailiang Network. How Does Big Data Subvert the Traditional Television Industry? Industry Trends.
- [6] Lü Chunyan, Li Rong, Wang Zhiqiang. Big Data: The Starting Point for the Television Industry to Use Motion to Control Motion. People’s Daily Online.
- [7] Marshall McLuhan. Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man [M]. The Commercial Press, 2000.
- [8] Xu Lijun. Media Convergence: CTR’s Views and Methods. BIRTV Director’s Forum & BIRTV Media Convergence Summit Speech.

Author Affiliation: CCTV Finance Channel

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

Source: ChinaXiv — Machine translation. Verify with original.