

Innovative Paths for University International Communication from the Perspective of Integrated Media: Postprint

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Abstract

[Objective] Media convergence communication represents a prominent trend in the current era of vigorous development of Internet and new media technologies. In the converged media environment, how Chinese universities can optimize overseas publicity work through innovative pathways, construct scientific, efficient, and sustainable development strategies to enhance their international reputation and influence, and attract high-quality global student sources and academic resources constitutes a significant topic for universities' overseas publicity efforts.

[Methods] By collecting literature and analyzing the characteristics of converged media communication and the overseas publicity situation of universities, this paper systematically reviews the current status, features, and main problems of domestic universities' overseas publicity work in the converged media era.

[Results] In the converged media era, universities' overseas publicity must fully utilize big data and artificial intelligence technologies to conduct precise audience analysis and content optimization. Based on full consideration of converged media communication characteristics, fostering a favorable online community atmosphere can significantly enhance universities' international reputation and communication influence.

[Conclusion] This paper proposes innovative pathways for universities' overseas publicity work from the perspectives of constructing a converged media publicity system, community and interactive operations, and cultural integration and soft power communication, providing references for universities' international development and overseas publicity initiatives.

Full Text

Exploring Innovative Paths for Overseas Publicity Work in Universities from the Perspective of Integrated Media

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Abstract

[Objective] Media convergence represents a major trend in communication driven by the vigorous development of Internet and new media technologies. In this integrated media environment, a critical challenge for Chinese universities is how to optimize overseas publicity work through innovative pathways and develop scientific, efficient, and sustainable strategies to enhance international visibility and influence while attracting high-quality global students and academic resources. **[Method]** By collecting literature and analyzing the characteristics of integrated media communication and the current state of university overseas publicity, this paper systematically examines the status quo, features, and main challenges of domestic universities' overseas publicity efforts in the integrated media era. **[Results]** In the integrated media era, universities must fully leverage big data and artificial intelligence technologies for precise audience analysis and content optimization. By capitalizing on the unique characteristics of integrated media communication and fostering a positive online community atmosphere, universities can significantly enhance their international visibility and communication influence. **[Conclusion]** This paper proposes innovative pathways for university overseas publicity from three perspectives: constructing an integrated media publicity system, community and interactive operation, and cultural integration with soft power dissemination, providing references for the international development and overseas publicity work of Chinese universities.

Keywords: Digital-Intelligence Era; Integrated Media; Overseas Publicity; Innovative Paths; University Management

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Universities serve as the primary institutions for cultivating China's high-level talent and constitute an important component of the nation's strategic scientific and technological capabilities, bearing the dual missions of talent cultivation and scientific innovation. As globalization accelerates and competition in international higher education intensifies, a university's visibility and influence on the international stage have become key indicators of its comprehensive strength. Traditional overseas publicity methods can no longer meet the demands of today's complex and evolving international communication landscape. With the

rapid development of information technology, integrated media—an approach that combines the advantages of traditional and emerging media—has attracted widespread attention and application. By merging different media platforms, integrated media enables multi-channel information dissemination and precise audience reach, offering new opportunities for university overseas publicity work. Therefore, exploring innovative paths for university overseas publicity from the perspective of integrated media holds significant practical and academic value for building the overseas brand of Chinese universities.

1.1 Multi-Channel Efficient Dissemination

Integrated media breaks down barriers between traditional and emerging media, effectively consolidating print media, television, radio, online media, social media, and other channels to achieve multi-channel information dissemination and cover broader audiences. This integration not only enables information to transcend different media boundaries and reach wider audiences but also makes communication more flexible and efficient. Compared with the one-way communication model of traditional media, integrated media places greater emphasis on audience interaction. Through social media and mobile platforms, audiences can provide instant feedback, comments, and shares. This two-way communication mechanism not only enhances dissemination effectiveness but also significantly improves audience engagement and participation, thereby boosting communication efficiency and influence.

1.2 Targeted Effective Dissemination

Integrated media integrates text, images, audio, video, and other formats to present information in more three-dimensional and vivid ways. This multimedia fusion both satisfies diverse audience needs and significantly improves information appeal and dissemination effectiveness. Leveraging big data and artificial intelligence, integrated media can provide personalized and precise content recommendations based on audience interests, behavioral patterns, and geographic location. This targeted approach not only helps improve information reach and effectiveness but also makes communication more focused and purposeful.

1.3 Cross-Platform, Cross-Terminal Dissemination

Integrated media achieves cross-platform and cross-terminal content collaboration and dissemination. Whether on PCs, mobile phones, tablets, or smart TVs, information can seamlessly transition across different terminals, ensuring audiences receive information anytime and anywhere. Furthermore, integrated media enables full-process integration in content production and distribution. Through unified content management systems, news reports and information can be rapidly produced, edited, and published, forming an efficient content production chain that makes information dissemination more effective and orderly. Relying on advanced data analytics, integrated media conducts real-time

monitoring and evaluation of dissemination effects and audience behavior to optimize content and communication strategies. This data-driven decision-making mechanism not only enhances the scientific rigor and accuracy of business decisions but also makes communication strategies more targeted and flexible. In summary, integrated media achieves efficient, effective, and targeted information dissemination through multi-channel, cross-platform, and cross-terminal approaches, greatly improving communication efficiency and effectiveness. These characteristics have secured integrated media's important position in the current information communication environment, continuously driving transformation and development in the media industry.

2. Current Development Status of Integrated Media

In recent years, integrated media has developed rapidly worldwide, becoming a significant trend in information communication. With advances in Internet technology, mobile communication technology, and big data analytics, integrated media has demonstrated substantial influence not only in news dissemination but also in social interaction, political communication, entertainment, and culture.

2.1 Integrated Media as an Important Information Channel and Method

First, integrated media has become a crucial information source by enabling multi-channel and cross-platform dissemination. Unlike traditional media, integrated media integrates not only print media, television, and radio but also websites, social media, and mobile applications, allowing information to transcend different media boundaries for seamless dissemination. A 2016 Pew Research Center report indicated that U.S. news media increasingly rely on digital platforms for audience interaction and information dissemination, with at least half of American adults obtaining news content from social media, making digital platforms an important channel for news distribution [1]. Second, integrated media significantly enhances real-time communication and interactivity. Through social media and mobile applications, audiences can access the latest information instantly and participate in discussions and feedback, strengthening engagement and participation. Nielsen's 2018 Internet Consumer Survey Report noted that real-time interaction and user-generated content (UGC) have become important means for media to attract audiences, as people are no longer merely information recipients but also participants and disseminators [2]. Additionally, integrated media has made notable progress in multimedia fusion and personalized content recommendation. By combining text, images, audio, and video, integrated media presents information more three-dimensionally and vividly to meet diverse audience needs. Meanwhile, leveraging big data and AI algorithms, integrated media can deliver personalized and precise content recommendations based on audience interests, behaviors, and geographic location. Adobe's 2019 Digital Trends Report indicated that multimedia fusion and

personalized recommendations significantly improve user stickiness and engagement [3]. Finally, integrated media demonstrates an integrated trend in global cross-platform collaboration and content production distribution. From PCs and mobile phones to tablets and smart TVs, information can seamlessly transition across terminals, ensuring audiences receive information anytime, anywhere. Integrated media achieves full-process integration in content production and distribution, enabling rapid production, editing, and publication of news reports through unified content management systems to form efficient content production chains. Simultaneously, integrated media uses data analytics technology to conduct real-time monitoring and evaluation of dissemination effects and audience behavior, thereby optimizing communication strategies. In summary, the global development of integrated media features multi-channel communication, real-time interaction, multimedia fusion, personalized recommendation, and integrated collaboration. As technology continues to advance and applications deepen, integrated media will continue to play an important role in information communication.

2.2 Integrated Media Enhances Information Dissemination Effect

Integrated media relies on advanced data analysis technology to conduct real-time monitoring and evaluation of dissemination effects and audience behavior, thereby optimizing content and communication strategies. This data-driven decision-making mechanism not only enhances the scientific rigor and accuracy of business decisions but also makes communication strategies more targeted and flexible. In summary, integrated media achieves efficient, effective, and targeted information dissemination through multi-channel, cross-platform, and cross-terminal approaches, greatly improving communication efficiency and effectiveness. These characteristics have secured integrated media's important position in the current information communication environment, continuously driving transformation and development in the media industry.

3. Current Status of University Overseas Publicity Platforms

3.1 English Websites

Domestic universities began overseas publicity work relatively early, with English-language official websites being the first platforms developed for overseas audiences. These websites provide authoritative information on academic research, admissions, campus environment, and other aspects for international students and scholars. Gu Yiqing and Yi Yonggang found through research that 97.8% of universities selected for the “Double First-Class” initiative have launched English websites [4], while Xu Wenjuan et al. noted that most non-“Double First-Class” universities have also established English websites focusing primarily on talent cultivation, scientific research, and campus environment [5]. For domestic universities, English websites offer clear structure, simple

operation, and quick updates, making them a primary carrier for overseas communication. However, these websites also suffer from problems such as monotonous content quality, poor translation quality, and weak interactivity, failing to meet the diverse information acquisition needs of the information age.

Currently, Chinese universities generally have English official websites that can simply and flexibly transmit school information and announcements to overseas scholars and international student groups, facilitating information retrieval. However, domestic universities' official English websites still suffer from poor expression, weak interactivity, untimely content updates, and monotonous formats, which hinder publicity efforts and university brand building.

3.2 Social Media

The development of information communication technology and the daily penetration of social media have prompted domestic universities to attach importance to new communication methods. In 2008, Fudan University took the lead in opening an account on the U.S. social media platform "Facebook" (now renamed "Meta"), marking one of the earliest innovative attempts in overseas integrated media construction by Chinese universities. Subsequently, Peking University, Tsinghua University, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, Nanjing University, and other domestic institutions also created social media accounts on "Facebook," beginning attempts at integrated media operation for overseas publicity work.

For domestic universities, conducting publicity construction on overseas media platforms helps showcase school image, expand international influence, realize the learning, communication, dissemination, and interactive functions of university network platforms, build an international university brand, and centrally reflect the comprehensive strength and unique characteristics of universities with strong social identification features. By the end of 2023, 141 Chinese universities had opened accounts on overseas social media platforms, with these accounts showing significant improvements in follower numbers, views, and plays. The published content has also become more distinctive and highlights, with considerable progress in operational thinking and content generation.

4. Necessity of University Overseas Integrated Media Construction

4.1 Data-Driven Targeted Dissemination

Data-driven approaches represent an important feature of Chinese universities' integrated media construction. Through big data analysis, universities can precisely identify potential international students and partner institutions. According to the China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC), China had 1.092 billion Internet users by December 2023, forming a massive data foundation [6]. Utilizing this data, universities can develop more scientific publicity

strategies and achieve efficient resource allocation.

4.2 Innovative and Diverse Content

Content innovation and diversification constitute another significant characteristic. Universities attract international audiences by creating high-quality content in various forms, such as online lectures, virtual campus tours, academic seminars, and interviews with international students, while also leveraging traditional Chinese culture to attract overseas audiences. For example, Shanghai Jiao Tong University's English official website regularly publishes exquisite hand-drawn illustrations during traditional Chinese festivals and solar terms, "empowering" its content with traditional Chinese culture. This approach attracts overseas audience attention while introducing traditional Chinese culture, campus landscapes, and student life, receiving positive feedback.

Peking University's Facebook account, for instance, publishes very rich content that can be mainly categorized into academic achievements, campus life, news communications, academic exchanges, campus scenery, greetings, international cooperation, admissions publicity, and faculty/student interviews, basically covering all aspects of daily study and life at Peking University. Among these, academic achievements, campus life, news communications, and academic exchanges are the most concentrated themes, accounting for over 60% of total posts. Additionally, Peking University's Facebook account has many highlights in its content operation strategy. For example, targeting overseas student groups, it features numerous international student speech competitions, personal showcases, and experience interviews in multiple languages including English, Korean, and Japanese, introducing international students' learning and living situations at Peking University and showcasing their academic achievements. To transmit traditional Chinese culture, the content also includes substantial material on traditional architecture, food, and textual history, generally published in easily understandable and shareable image and video formats, receiving positive feedback and interaction, successfully transmitting Peking University's campus culture and domestic university life to more overseas groups.

4.3 Community and Interaction in Content Dissemination

Community represents one of social media's characteristics, and a good community interaction atmosphere can significantly increase brand identification and loyalty. Many domestic universities fully consider and utilize community characteristics to enhance publicity effectiveness in their overseas publicity work. For example, when publishing content, Peking University's Facebook account adds university culture-specific "topic" tags (also called "hashtags," which use the # symbol to categorize similar topics; clicking on them displays all content with the same topic, typically used for content classification and display). For instance, #Peikingers generally displays campus life, culture, and food at Peking University, while #PKU generally shows news communications, awards, and alumni information. This approach not only facilitates users in finding similar

content but also concisely showcases Peking University's cultural characteristics, improving publicity efficiency.

4.4 Dissemination Influence Needs Improvement

Chinese universities' early overseas publicity work primarily relied on English official websites, with social media accounts mainly on "Facebook," still lagging behind domestic publicity efforts with relatively limited influence. Many universities have not attached sufficient importance to overseas social platform construction, focusing more on update frequency during account management while paying less attention to the interactive, immediate, and diverse operational requirements of social media. This has resulted in generally poor performance in attention, activity, and interactive communication. The 2020 Report on Chinese Universities' Overseas Online Communication Capacity Construction noted that among universities with Facebook accounts, aside from top-tier universities with high follower counts, all others suffer from low update frequency, poor content quality, low interactivity, and poor user experience [7].

In summary, Chinese universities demonstrate characteristics of data-driven targeted dissemination, content innovation and diversification, and community interaction and engagement in overseas integrated media construction, but also face problems such as insufficient operational investment, low update frequency, and poor interactivity. In the future, with further technological development and deepening globalization, Chinese universities' overseas integrated media construction will become more diverse and efficient, providing strong support for enhancing international visibility and competitiveness.

5. Innovative Paths for University Overseas Publicity Work in the Integrated Media Era

5.1 Constructing a Multi-Level, Multi-Dimensional Integrated Media Publicity System

One innovative path for university overseas publicity in the integrated media era is constructing a multi-level, multi-dimensional publicity network to maximize publicity effectiveness. Specifically, by utilizing rich multimedia content (such as images, videos, and audio) and implementing cross-platform collaboration, universities can enhance publicity effectiveness and elevate their international influence and appeal. For example, Peking University's Facebook account publishes very rich content that can be mainly categorized into academic achievements, campus life, news communications, academic exchanges, campus scenery, greetings, international cooperation, admissions publicity, and faculty/student interviews, basically covering all aspects of daily study and life at Peking University. Among these, academic achievements, campus life, news communications, and academic exchanges are the most concentrated themes, accounting for over 60% of total posts. Additionally, Peking University's Facebook account has many highlights in its content operation strategy. For example,

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In summary, by leveraging rich multimedia content display, implementing cross-platform collaboration, encouraging interaction and user-generated content, and efficiently constructing a multi-level, multi-dimensional integrated media publicity network, universities can comprehensively improve overseas publicity effectiveness and enhance international influence and competitiveness.

5.2 Community Operation and Interaction Mechanisms

Effective interaction with overseas audiences is key to enhancing university brand loyalty and gaining positive word-of-mouth. Universities can establish and improve interaction mechanisms through various channels, such as opening official accounts on social media platforms, regularly publishing campus news, academic achievements, and student stories, and actively interacting with audiences through replying to comments, liking, and sharing. Regularly hosting interactive activities such as online Q&A sessions, themed discussions, and cultural exchanges can also increase audience engagement and identification. Additionally, establishing dedicated interaction platforms for overseas alumni ensures close connections and communication between alumni and their alma mater, as positive alumni word-of-mouth constitutes an important asset for brand building.

Creating and maintaining a good online community atmosphere is a crucial part of university brand building. Universities can publish diverse information through official social media and proprietary platforms, covering academic achievements, campus activities, student organizations, cultural life, and other aspects to showcase campus diversity and vitality. By publishing exciting multimedia content such as videos, images, and audio, universities can enhance audience visual and auditory experiences. Furthermore, online themed activities, competitions, and reward mechanisms can attract more user participation, increasing community activity and cohesion. Actively encouraging user-generated content (UGC), such as sharing their learning experiences and campus life photos, can further enhance community authenticity and intimacy.

Through online and offline combined promotional activities, establishing effective interaction mechanisms with overseas audiences, and creating a positive online community atmosphere, universities can significantly enhance their interna-

tional influence and brand reputation, achieving innovation and breakthroughs in overseas publicity work.

5.3 Cultural Integration and University Soft Power Dissemination

In the integrated media era, university overseas publicity aims not only to attract international students and scholars but more importantly to promote Chinese culture, enhance cultural identification, and elevate university soft power through educational exchange and international cooperation, effectively telling China's story.

Integrated media technology provides universities with more innovative opportunities for educational exchange and international cooperation. Universities can utilize online platforms to promote online exchange programs, remote joint research projects, and international online classrooms. Through these initiatives, universities can not only expand the international influence of educational resources but also reduce the costs and barriers of international exchange. Specifically, universities can collaborate with renowned overseas universities to offer joint courses, invite internationally renowned professors to teach via video conferencing, or organize multi-disciplinary international remote academic seminars and workshops. Additionally, campus life, academic activities, and traditional cultural festivals can be showcased through live streaming and recorded broadcasts, enabling potential international students and partners to more comprehensively understand and recognize the university.

Furthermore, cultivating cultural identification is key to enhancing international students' sense of belonging to China and their university. Integrated media technology enables universities to provide more personalized content for international students based on their cultural backgrounds and interests. Through personalized recommendation algorithms, overseas students can access Chinese cultural content related to their cultural background or interests, such as historical biographies, literary works, and film and television dramas. Universities can also create cross-cultural exchange communities through social media platforms, building platforms for interaction between international and Chinese students to promote cultural exchange and interaction, thereby enhancing their identification with Chinese culture.

Through these pathways, universities can not only promote Chinese culture globally and enhance cultural identification but also expand educational exchange and international cooperation, elevate the soft power of Chinese universities, and establish a positive international image.

Domestic universities have already begun constructing integrated media platforms. Strengthening the top-level design and construction of universities' overseas communication, mastering the laws and techniques of international communication, adapting to the overseas new media environment, creating efficient and convenient new media integrated platforms, comprehensively enhancing the international communication effectiveness of domestic universities, disseminat-

ing China' s voice and wisdom, and attracting young talents worldwide will become the long-term important tasks of Chinese universities' overseas integrated media platform construction. Only by emphasizing the construction of overseas integrated media platforms, strengthening the top-level design of university overseas communication, and enhancing team building, content construction, and operational strategy development for integrated media platforms can Chinese universities' image be disseminated to broader audiences to receive positive feedback, thereby enhancing the international image and influence of Chinese universities.

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

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