

A Study on the Survival and Development of Traditional Media in the New Era: Postprint

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Abstract

[Purpose] To conduct an in-depth analysis of the survival status of traditional media against the backdrop of the new era, and to accurately explore pathways for its sustainable development. [Method] Through a systematic review of traditional media types and their developmental trajectories, this study examines the challenges they face in content production, dissemination channels, audience engagement, business models, and related dimensions. [Result] The analysis reveals that while traditional media confront issues including audience attrition, declining advertising revenues, and technological lag, they can leverage their inherent strengths in content quality, credibility, and brand influence to identify viable survival and development strategies through deep integration with new media, content innovation, and enhanced user experiences. [Conclusion] By continuing to fulfill their vital roles in public opinion guidance and cultural inheritance, traditional media can rejuvenate themselves with renewed vitality and dynamism, thereby contributing to the sustained development of the media industry.

Full Text

Survival and Development of Traditional Media in the New Era

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Abstract

[Objective] This paper aims to thoroughly analyze the current survival status of traditional media in the new era and identify sustainable development pathways. [Method] By examining the types and evolution of traditional media, this study explores the dilemmas faced in content production, distribution

channels, audience engagement, and business models. **[Result]** While traditional media suffer from audience loss, declining advertising revenue, and lagging technological updates, they can leverage their strengths in content quality, credibility, and brand influence to find survival and development opportunities through deep integration with new media, content innovation, and enhanced user experience. **[Conclusion]** By continuing to play important roles in public opinion guidance and cultural inheritance, traditional media can rejuvenate themselves and contribute to the sustainable development of the media industry.

Keywords: new era; traditional media; county-level converged media; deep integration; brand influence

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1. Definition and Classification of Traditional Media

Traditional media refers to media forms that existed long before the emergence of new media and have played important roles in information dissemination. The main categories include newspapers, magazines, radio, and television.

Newspapers primarily use text and images, distributed through printing. They cover news, commentary, and special topics across politics, economy, culture, entertainment, and society. With periodic issuance (daily, weekly, etc.), newspapers possess strong capabilities for in-depth reporting and regional targeting.

Magazines generally target specific audience groups with more specialized and in-depth content, featuring sophisticated layout design and relatively longer publication cycles. Their readership is relatively fixed and loyal, though the audience scope is narrower due to their specialized nature and periodicity.

Radio uses sound as its medium, transmitting information via radio waves or wire transmission. It offers wide coverage and convenient reception (requiring only simple equipment like radios) with strong immediacy, making it particularly suitable for mobile listening scenarios. Radio's reach is extensive, unrestricted by geography or education level, and especially suitable for remote areas or elderly populations.

Television integrates images, sound, and text to deliver vivid and intuitive content. For instance, CCTV's *News Broadcast* serves as a national authoritative

news program bearing the important mission of policy release and public opinion guidance, while cultural programs like *Chinese Poetry Conference* present traditional culture in popular forms through audio-visual language innovation, strengthening cultural communication effects.

2. Advantages and Value of Traditional Media

2.1 Professionalism in Content Production Traditional media possess professional editorial teams. Journalists and editors have undergone systematic training, demonstrating keen news sense and solid writing and editing capabilities. They have extensive experience in discovering news clues, verifying information authenticity, and conducting in-depth reporting. For example, when facing complex political, economic, or social issues, professional journalists can conduct comprehensive, multi-angle analysis on-site. Professional editors carefully polish content to ensure rigorous logic and standardized language, presenting high-quality content to audiences. This professionalism guarantees the authority of traditional media content and constitutes its core value.

2.2 Depth and Breadth of Content Quality Traditional media emphasize depth and breadth in content creation. Unlike fragmented information on new media platforms, traditional media have sufficient space and time for detailed reporting. Magazines particularly excel in this regard. Professional publications like *Science* and *Nature* invite experts to write long-form analytical articles on scientific achievements or academic topics, elaborating on research background, process, significance, and future prospects, enabling readers to gain deep insights into cutting-edge developments. Similarly, newspaper special reports and television in-depth interview programs can dissect events or topics, uncover underlying causes and impacts, and provide comprehensive perspectives that satisfy audience demand for substantive content.

2.3 Credibility Advantage Traditional media have long adhered to the “three reviews and three proofreads” system, ensuring information authenticity, accuracy, and objectivity through rigorous processes from initial material screening by journalists to content review by editors and final approval by management. This has established a perception of “authority, rigor, and reliability” among audiences.

2.4 Brand Influence Advantage Many traditional media have developed powerful brands through years of development, occupying unique positions in audience minds. *Readers* magazine, founded in 1981, has consistently ranked among China’s top journals in circulation with its humanistic care positioning. Its brand has spawned book publishing and cultural activities, creating strong industrial chain value. Hunan Satellite TV has shaped a youthful, entertainment-oriented brand image through flagship programs. Brand influence not only attracts audiences but also secures advantages in the advertising market. Advertisers prefer to place ads on well-known traditional media brands because

their audiences demonstrate high loyalty and consumption capacity, delivering better marketing results.

2.5 Value in Cultural Inheritance and Social Cohesion Traditional media play crucial roles in cultural inheritance. Literary works, historical stories, and folk culture in newspapers and magazines; classical music and traditional opera on radio; and cultural programs on television all carry rich cultural connotations, passing down national and regional culture from generation to generation. For example, China Media Group's *China in Classics* revitalizes traditional texts like *Book of History* and *Tiangong Kaiwu* through dramatic interpretation, while the Spring Festival Gala, as a cultural feast shared by global Chinese, strengthens national sentiment through television broadcasting. By disseminating culturally valuable content, traditional media shape shared social values and cultural memory, promoting social harmony and stability.

3. Challenges Facing Traditional Media in the New Era

3.1 Impact of New Media Speed and Immediacy: New media, relying on the internet, enables extremely rapid information dissemination with near-instantaneous publishing and transmission. Users on social platforms like Weibo and WeChat can release information immediately when events occur, while traditional media must undergo processes of interviewing, editing, and reviewing, making it difficult to keep pace with event development and placing them at a clear disadvantage in timeliness.

Global Reach: Leveraging the global connectivity of the internet, new media's dissemination scope covers virtually all networked areas worldwide. For example, TikTok's user base spans the globe, whereas traditional media's reach is often limited by geography and distribution channels. A local newspaper's distribution is primarily confined to its local or surrounding areas, making it difficult to achieve global influence.

Interactivity and User Participation: New media provides rich interactive channels. Platforms like Douyin and Kuaishou support "watch-and-comment" and "one-click forwarding" features, where users are both information receivers and creators. During the 2024 "National Anti-Fraud" short video campaign, users actively created educational videos, forming a nationwide participation wave. Traditional media mostly adopt one-way communication with limited audience feedback channels and insufficient interactivity.

3.2 Audience Loss and Changing Consumption Habits Audience Loss: With new media popularization, increasing numbers of people access information through mobile terminals, leading to significant declines in traditional media audiences. Newspaper circulation has continued to drop in recent years, while television ratings and radio listening rates have declined, accelerating audience migration to new media platforms.

Changing Habits: Contemporary audiences increasingly prefer fragmented, personalized, and instantaneous information acquisition. They habitually browse brief, concise content on mobile devices during fragmented time periods. Traditional media's content presentation methods are often relatively fixed—such as long-form newspaper reports and fixed television programming—making it difficult to adapt to these new consumption patterns.

3.3 Severe Talent Drain Traditional media face serious talent loss, with experienced journalists and editors leaving for emerging online video platforms where they can obtain higher salaries and broader development opportunities. New employees at traditional media may require lengthy cultivation to reach the level of seasoned journalists and editors. Simultaneously, technical and management talents are also leaving, which weakens traditional media's capacity in advertising marketing and strategic planning, making it more difficult to formulate reasonable development strategies to respond to market changes and competitive pressures.

3.4 Declining Advertising Revenue Advertiser Preference Shift: New media, with advantages in precise targeting and big data analytics, can deliver advertisements to target audiences more accurately, winning advertiser favor. Advertisers increasingly allocate budgets to online platforms and social media. CTR data shows that China's online advertising market is projected to reach 12 trillion yuan in 2024, while traditional media's advertising market share is being diverted.

Difficulties in Effectiveness Measurement: Traditional media advertising effectiveness relies on sampling surveys and ratings statistics, which suffer from poor timeliness and inability to track user behavior. Unlike new media, they cannot measure advertising effectiveness through real-time data like click-through rates, conversion rates, and user retention. This reduces advertiser confidence in traditional media, further accelerating advertising revenue decline.

3.5 Technological Update Pressure Emerging Technologies: New-era technology evolves rapidly, with artificial intelligence (AI), virtual reality (VR), blockchain, and other technologies widely applied in new media. AI writing tools can generate news briefs in 10 seconds, and VR live streaming enables immersive sports experiences. These technologies provide powerful momentum for new media innovation. Traditional media that fail to adopt new technologies promptly risk having monotonous content forms and weakened dissemination effects.

Lag in Technology Application: Traditional media often lag in technology application due to funding and talent constraints, as well as systemic and institutional factors. While some traditional media institutions are still in the initial stages of applying big data analytics and AI-assisted editing, new media

enterprises can complete product iterations within months by leveraging cloud computing and open-source technologies.

4. Remaining Advantages and Opportunities

4.1 Persistent Brand Advantages Credibility and Authority: Traditional media’s long-established brand image and credibility grant them high authority and trustworthiness in audience minds, helping them stand out in competition. Well-known newspapers and television stations enjoy strong reputations, and their information is often considered reliable and authoritative.

Brand Influence: In an era of information explosion, traditional media can provide more credible and in-depth news reporting and special analysis through professional editorial teams and rigorous review processes. Even under new media impact, audiences continue supporting traditional media to some extent based on brand trust and preference, providing a foundation for development. *Southern Weekly* strengthens intellectual group identity through brand activities like “Annual Tribute” and “New Year Address,” while its brand derivatives including offline forums and book publishing have achieved diversified value monetization.

4.2 Strong Content Production Capabilities In-Depth Reporting and Professional Interpretation: Traditional media possess professional editorial teams with rich experience and high expertise in news interviewing, writing, editing, and production. They can conduct in-depth reporting and professional interpretation of major events and social hotspots, uncovering truths and providing valuable content. This capability represents a key differentiator from new media. *The Beijing News* investigative team spent six months tracing the “Buried Body on Campus” case, conducting exclusive interviews and evidence analysis to reconstruct the full story, with the report exceeding 500 million views online, demonstrating traditional media’s advantage in depth reporting.

Content Quality Control: Traditional media maintain strict quality control mechanisms throughout the production process, from topic selection and research to editing and final publication, ensuring accuracy, objectivity, and high quality. CCTV’s *Touching China* program undergoes seven rounds of review from candidate selection to story reporting, ensuring every character story is authentic and moving, establishing a benchmark for positive energy promotion.

4.3 Great Resource Integration Potential Human Resources: Traditional media have accumulated extensive human resources through long-term development, including good relationships with government departments, business circles, and cultural sectors. These connections facilitate exclusive news sources and cooperative projects.

Information Resources: As information collectors, organizers, and disseminators, traditional media have amassed massive information resources over the

years. These resources can be further integrated and mined to support new businesses like data journalism.

Technical Resources: Despite lagging in new technology application, traditional media have accumulated certain technical resources. For example, Linyi Converged Media Center combines original anchor studio appearances with AI synthesis technology to launch intelligent AI anchors, reducing labor costs while improving content production efficiency.

4.4 Policy Support and Guidance Media Convergence Policy: In September 2020, the General Office of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council issued the *Opinions on Accelerating the In-Depth Development of Media Convergence*, requiring all regions and departments to implement it according to actual conditions.

Cultural Industry Policy: The government attaches great importance to cultural industry development and has introduced numerous related policies. As an important component of the cultural industry, traditional media can also benefit from these policies when conducting cultural activities and publishing books.

5. Survival and Development Strategies for Traditional Media

5.1 Content Convergence Traditional media can integrate high-quality content resources with new media platforms. For example, *People's Daily* launched the “People’s Daily Account” platform to aggregate and fragment quality content for distribution. CCTV’s short video program *Anchor Talks News* transforms serious news into lively short videos, achieving cross-circle dissemination.

5.2 Channel Convergence Traditional media should expand distribution channels beyond original issuance and broadcasting channels. They can cooperate with new media platforms through social media and live streaming. For instance, radio stations can partner with online audio platforms like Himalaya to expand listener reach. Hunan Broadcasting System created the “Mango Ecosystem” matrix, synchronizing TV programs across Mango TV, Douyin, and Weibo for cross-screen dissemination. Shanghai United Media Group’s *The Paper* expanded user coverage by entering platforms like Toutiao and WeChat Official Accounts.

5.3 Technology Convergence Traditional media should actively adopt new media technologies such as big data, AI, and cloud computing to enhance competitiveness. For example, CCTV employed XR virtual technology in the 2024 Spring Festival Gala, enabling interaction between performers and virtual scenes. Xinhua News Agency developed “AI Synthetic Anchors” to improve dissemination efficiency. Traditional media can also use big data analytics to understand user preferences and achieve precise content push.

5.4 Optimizing Service Quality Traditional media must focus on audience service, ensuring timely and accurate delivery to newspaper and magazine subscribers and improving signal quality and broadcast stability for radio and television audiences. User feedback mechanisms should be established to timely understand and address user suggestions.

5.5 Enhancing Interactivity Interactivity with users should be enhanced through new media platforms. For example, Dragon TV's *Go Fighting* initiated topic discussions and voting on Weibo during broadcast. Radio stations can launch real-time interactive segments like “Listener Song Requests” and “Hotline Connections” to attract fan attention and discussion, improving user stickiness.

5.6 Diversified Operations Traditional media should not rely solely on advertising revenue but expand diversified operations. They can engage in cultural industry-related businesses, such as publishing groups venturing into film production and cultural product development, or television stations organizing offline concerts and theme park operations. Shandong Radio and Television created the “Qilu Cultural Industry Park,” integrating film and television shooting, education and training, and tourism experiences.

5.7 Strengthening Cooperation and Alliances Traditional media should enhance cooperation to jointly address challenges. Lanling County Converged Media Center joined the Jiangsu-Shandong-Henan-Anhui-Hebei County-level Broadcasting Alliance for joint coverage of regional major events. Traditional media can also cooperate with new media enterprises, such as Henan Satellite TV partnering with Kuaishou to launch the *Tang Palace Night Banquet* series, achieving traffic sharing between traditional culture and short video platforms.

5.8 Talent Cultivation and Recruitment **Professional Talent Development:** Traditional media should strengthen professional talent cultivation through internal training and external programs to improve skills in news interviewing, writing, editing, and production.

Cross-Disciplinary Talent Recruitment: Traditional media need to recruit cross-disciplinary talents, such as AI engineers and short video operation experts, to bring new concepts and technologies.

Establishing Talent Incentive Mechanisms: Innovation reward funds should be established to recognize outstanding content creators and technology innovators. Project-based management should be implemented to allow employees to grow through practical experience and stimulate innovation vitality.

6. Case Studies of Traditional Media Development Across Different Sectors

6.1 Newspaper Media: Digital Transformation of *The New York Times* *The New York Times* has built a “subscription + advertising” dual-driven model, protecting quality content through a paywall strategy while using AI technology to optimize news recommendation algorithms and launch personalized news briefings. Its data visualization team’s *US Election Real-Time Map* presents election data through dynamic charts.

6.2 Broadcast Media: New Media Expansion of BBC BBC created the “BBC Sounds” audio platform, integrating radio programs and podcast resources for personalized recommendations, and cooperated with streaming platforms like Spotify for content distribution. Its VR radio drama *Interstellar* attracted young listeners through immersive sound design and won international broadcasting awards.

6.3 Television Media: Converged Development of Hunan Satellite TV Hunan Satellite TV built the “Mango Ecosystem,” forming a diversified business matrix spanning television, online video, e-commerce, and cultural tourism. The program *Sisters Who Make Waves* adopted a “watch-and-buy” model, enabling viewers to purchase celebrity products while watching. The offline “Mango Town” cultural tourism project achieved cross-border extension of media brand value.

7. Conclusion

In the new era, traditional media transformation faces both severe challenges and tremendous opportunities. By fully recognizing their strengths and weaknesses, and actively adopting strategies including content innovation, technology convergence, business model transformation, and talent cultivation and recruitment, traditional media can achieve survival and development amid the new media wave. They can continue playing important roles in information dissemination and cultural inheritance. Traditional media must continuously strengthen core content competitiveness, fulfill public opinion guidance and cultural inheritance functions, reshape industry status in the digital wave, and contribute to building an all-media communication system and promoting cultural prosperity.

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

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