Transformation of Editorial Capabilities and Postprint Submission in the Digital Publishing Era

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Abstract

Objective To investigate the characteristics of editorial role transformation and the key directions, challenges, and implementation pathways for capability enhancement in the digital publishing environment. **Methods** This study analyzes the four-dimensional transformation of editorial roles, core domains of capability enhancement, and practical dilemmas, proposing systematic strategies and implementation recommendations. **Results** Editors are evolving into digital content creators, multimedia resource integrators, user experience designers, and market explorers; editorial capability enhancement focuses on market insight, multimedia content production, user interaction, and innovative thinking; editors face systematic challenges including the construction of composite knowledge systems, digital technology integration, establishment of user-oriented thinking, and cultivation of innovative practical abilities. **Conclusion** Editors should construct interdisciplinary knowledge networks, establish a "user-content" dual-center thinking framework, build a scientific evaluation and monitoring system for editorial capabilities, and explore capability expansion through AI collaboration and a global perspective.

Full Text

Transformation and Enhancement of Editorial Capabilities in the Digital Publishing Era

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Abstract

[**Objective**] This study investigates the characteristics of editorial role transformation in digital publishing environments, identifying key directions, challenges, and implementation pathways for capability enhancement. [**Methods**] Through analysis of the four-dimensional transformation of editorial roles, core competency domains, and practical dilemmas, systematic strategies and implementation recommendations are proposed. [**Results**] Editors are evolving into digital content creators, multimedia resource integrators, user experience designers, and market developers. Capability enhancement focuses on market insight, multimedia content production, user engagement, and innovative thinking. Systemic challenges include constructing compound knowledge systems, integrating digital technologies, establishing user-oriented mindsets, and cultivating innovative practical abilities. [**Conclusion**] Editors should build interdisciplinary knowledge networks, establish a dual-centered "user-content" mindset, construct scientific evaluation and monitoring systems for editorial capabilities, and explore capability expansion through AI collaboration and a global perspective.

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The digital wave has profoundly transformed the ecosystem of traditional publishing, presenting unprecedented challenges and opportunities for editors as the core force in content production. With the rise of new publishing forms such as e-books, online literature, and digital journals, the roles and competency requirements for editors have undergone significant transformation. Editors are no longer merely text processors but must become digital content creators, multimedia resource integrators, and user experience designers. This paper explores the characteristics of editorial capability transformation and enhancement pathways in the digital era, offering important theoretical value and practical significance for promoting editorial professional development and facilitating the transformation and upgrading of the publishing industry.

1. Transformation of Editorial Roles in Digital Publishing Environments

The digital era has reshaped the publishing ecosystem, with editorial roles undergoing four key transformations: from print to digital publishing, requiring mastery of digital workflows and copyright knowledge; from content to multimedia, requiring integration of graphic, audio, and video resources; from linear to

interactive, requiring attention to user experience; and from passive to active, requiring insight into market and reader needs.

1.1 From Print Publishing Editor to Digital Publishing Editor

First, the advent of the digital era has profoundly transformed the publishing landscape, making the shift from traditional print to digital publishing inevitable. Digital publishing offers significant advantages in dissemination speed, coverage scope, and cost efficiency, imposing new demands on editorial functions. Editors must understand the differences between digital and traditional print publishing workflows and familiarize themselves with production standards for various digital publications including e-books, online literature, and digital journals [1]. Second, digital copyright protection and digital marketing have become essential components of the editorial knowledge system. Third, in terms of professional skills, editors must proficiently utilize digital tools such as e-book production and typesetting software to enhance editorial efficiency and quality. Finally, to meet diverse reader needs, editors must also master interaction design principles and user experience guidelines, designing interactive functions and interfaces for publications to enhance the interactivity and experiential quality of digital publications. This role transformation requires editors to shift from traditional text processing to identities as digital content creators and experience designers.

1.2 From Content Editor to Multimedia Editor

Digital publications have transcended the limitations of text and images, incorporating diverse media elements including graphics, audio, and video. The editorial role has transformed from a single content processor to an integrator and creator of multimedia resources [2]. At the professional skill level, editors must master image processing software for basic retouching, color adjustment, and layout; audio editing techniques for handling recordings, soundtracks, and sound effects; and video editing software for clipping, special effects, and output. Regarding media material integration, editors must possess strong media planning capabilities and aesthetic awareness, selecting appropriate media material combinations based on publication themes and audience characteristics to achieve optimal content expression [3]. Simultaneously, editors must closely monitor developments in new media technologies, continuously learning emerging media formats and presentation techniques to adapt to technological iterations and enhance multimedia editing capabilities and innovation levels.

1.3 From Linear Editor to Interactive Editor

In digital environments, publications are no longer unidirectional information carriers but have become platforms for interactive communication with readers. Editorial work has shifted from traditional linear editing to interactive editing modes, with focus expanding from content itself to user experience and interaction design [4]. In interactive function design, editors must consider how

to design publication interfaces that align with reader usage habits and operational logic, creating reasonable navigation systems, search functions, and feedback mechanisms to enhance user convenience. For user experience optimization, editors must think from the reader' s perspective, focusing on reading habits, needs, and feelings, and enhancing reader experience and satisfaction through optimized interface design, layout, fonts, and color elements [5]. At the technical application level, editors must explore the potential application of emerging technologies such as virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) in publications, creating more immersive and interactive reading experiences that expand publication dimensions and interactive spaces.

1.4 From Passive Processor to Active Creator

The digital era' s information explosion has made reader needs increasingly personalized and diversified, transforming the editorial role from passive content processor to active content planner and market developer [6]. In market insight, editors must proactively monitor market dynamics and reader demand changes, using market research and data analysis to understand hot topics, reader preferences, and competitive landscapes, providing precise direction for publication planning. For reader engagement, editors must actively connect with readers through social media and online platforms, understanding feedback, participating in online discussions, and timely adjusting publishing strategies to enhance reader loyalty and satisfaction. Regarding professional development, editors must continuously learn frontier knowledge and skills, monitor industry development trends, enhance planning capabilities and innovative awareness, and proactively adapt to changing reader needs in digital environments to plan more creative and competitive publishing products that lead digital publishing innovation.

2. Obstacles to Editorial Capability Enhancement in the Digital Publishing Era

Current editorial capability enhancement faces four major obstacles: compound knowledge system construction constrained by disciplinary barriers and severe knowledge fragmentation; conflicts in integrating digital technology with professional expertise and steep learning curves; user-oriented thinking hindered by traditional conceptual inertia and lack of scientific research methods; and innovative thinking cultivation constrained by environmental limitations and insufficient cross-boundary integration.

2.1 Challenges in Constructing Compound Knowledge Systems

The digital environment imposes unprecedented diversified requirements on editorial knowledge structures, yet compound knowledge system construction faces structural obstacles. Traditional editorial training systems are rooted in language literature and editing/publishing fields, creating deep disconnects with

interdisciplinary knowledge required in the digital era such as computer science, multimedia design, data analysis, and user experience [7]. The rigidity of disciplinary cognitive boundaries and knowledge transmission mechanisms hinders systematic absorption and integration of emerging domain knowledge. The extremely short iteration cycle of digital technology creates sharp contradictions with the long-term nature of editorial professional knowledge construction, leaving editors with traditional backgrounds lacking cognitive framework reconstruction and rapid learning capabilities [8]. Knowledge acquisition is characterized by fragmentation and superficiality, with digital-related knowledge often remaining at the tool operation level without theoretical support or systematic connections, making it difficult to form complete knowledge networks. This ultimately results in insufficient understanding depth, limited application scenarios, and constrained adaptability and innovation potential for editors in digital transformation.

2.2 Integration Challenges Between Digital Technology and Publishing Expertise

The integration process between digital technology and traditional publishing expertise presents structural contradictions and deep-level conflicts. A cognitive gap exists between technological tool rationality and editorial humanistic value orientation, manifesting as some editors either excessively pursuing technical forms while neglecting content essence, or stubbornly adhering to traditional editorial concepts and resisting digital technology application, making organic unity difficult to achieve [9]. The learning curve for digital tools is exponentially steep, with high complexity in e-book typesetting systems, multimedia resource processing platforms, and interactive design tools, posing dual challenges of cognitive reconstruction and skill transformation for professional editors. Technology iteration cycles and capability cultivation cycles are severely misaligned —just as editorial groups complete competency construction for one technology, they face replacement by new generations, creating an inescapable "chase-fall behind-chase again" dilemma. The technical support ecosystem is deficient, with publishing institutions generally lacking specialized technical training systems, learning resource libraries, and technical consultation teams, resulting in inefficient digital skill cultivation and difficulty forming systematic capability structures, ultimately hindering organizational digital transformation processes.

2.3 Challenges in Establishing User-Oriented Thinking

The construction of user-oriented thinking in digital environments faces deep challenges of cognitive paradigm transformation. The long-established content-centered paradigm has solidified into editorial groups' thinking habits and value systems, manifesting as habitual planning and editing from text normativity and content completeness perspectives with insufficient attention to user experience and interaction needs [10]. User research methodology systems are lacking, with editorial groups missing systematic user research methods and technical tools

such as user persona construction, user journey analysis, and user experience testing, resulting in user understanding remaining at the level of experiential intuition and subjective assumptions without scientific precision [11]. User data literacy and analytical capabilities lag behind, with editors lacking professional cognition of user behavior data collection standards, processing methods, analytical frameworks, and application pathways, making it difficult to achieve transformation from massive data to valuable insights and unable to provide data support for personalized design and precise services of digital publishing products, ultimately limiting full user value exploitation and realization.

2.4 Challenges in Cultivating Innovative Thinking and Practical Abilities

As core competencies for editors in the digital era, innovative thinking and practical abilities face institutional and structural obstacles in their cultivation systems. Publishing organizational innovation ecosystem construction is insufficient, with traditional publishing institutions' management models, evaluation systems, and incentive mechanisms still oriented toward standardization and stability, lacking institutional support and fault tolerance for innovative behavior, resulting in insufficient editorial innovation motivation and low willingness to experiment. Professional cognitive patterns are significantly 固化, with editors long immersed in specific knowledge structures and workflows forming thinking set patterns and methodological dependencies, severely constraining cognitive boundaries and creative space and making it difficult to break existing frameworks for cross-domain innovative achievements [12]. Cross-boundary exchange platforms and mechanisms are lacking, with barriers between publishing and related industries such as technology, design, and marketing preventing editors from accessing diverse innovative thinking and methodologies, limiting innovation vision. Innovation practice transformation channels are blocked, with editors lacking experimental venues, technical support, and resource allocation to transform creative concepts into feasible products. Innovative ideas cannot form mature solutions through rapid prototype verification and iterative optimization, ultimately leading to extended innovation cycles, diminished innovation vitality, and reduced competitive response capability in digital environments.

3. Implementation Strategies for Editorial Capability Enhancement in the Digital Publishing Era

To address these challenges, editorial capability enhancement requires four major strategies: constructing compound knowledge systems through modular interdisciplinary learning; integrating digital technology and professional expertise under the principle of "technology empowerment with content as king"; establishing user-oriented thinking to form a "user-content" dual-centered model; and cultivating innovation capabilities through building innovation practice platforms and collaborative networks.

3.1 Constructing Compound Knowledge Systems

Compound knowledge system construction is the foundational guarantee for editors to adapt to digital publishing environments. For knowledge expansion strategies, editors should adopt systematic learning combined with knowledge mapping, organically integrating internet technology, data analysis, and user experience design with traditional publishing expertise [13]. Interdisciplinary knowledge acquisition can be achieved through modular learning approaches, such as specialized training in digital editing tools like "Heima Proofreading," to enhance technical application capabilities. Both deep learning and breadth expansion are essential—while consolidating professional foundations in language, text, and editing skills, editors should monitor frontier theories and technological developments in digital publishing to form interconnected knowledge networks. Knowledge integration platform construction is also crucial, with publishing institutions building internal knowledge management systems to enable experience sharing and mutual learning among editors [14]. Personal knowledge management methods such as mind mapping and knowledge notes can help editors construct personal knowledge systems, achieve systematic integration of fragmented knowledge, and enhance the structuralization and sustainable updating capabilities of compound knowledge.

3.2 Integrating Digital Technology and Publishing Expertise

The integration of digital technology and publishing expertise is the core element for editors to adapt to digital transformation. Implementation pathways should adopt the integration principle of "technology empowerment with content as king" to avoid separation or overemphasis on either aspect [15]. First, digital tool application strategies emphasize practice-oriented learning, where editors master technical tools such as e-book production and multimedia editing through participation in real projects, engaging in practice activities that combine technology and content creation like "learning AR editors" and "3D model production." Second, establishing technology-content collaborative innovation mechanisms is crucial, with publishing institutions forming cross-departmental project teams where editors, designers, and technicians jointly participate in digital publishing product development to achieve co-evolution of professional capabilities and technical applications [16]. For example, the "Digital Integrated Publishing Reader" project launched by People' s Medical Publishing House successfully integrated traditional book content with VR technology through deep collaboration between editors and technicians, creating immersive reading experiences. Finally, a stepped technical capability cultivation system should be established, from basic digital literacy to professional technical application and then to innovative technology integration, forming a clearly tiered capability development path that ensures editors can systematically enhance technical application capabilities while maintaining balance with professional judgment and content creativity.

3.3 Establishing User-Oriented Mindsets

Establishing user-oriented mindsets is a key transformation for editors adapting to digital environments. For mindset reconstruction, editors must shift from traditional content-centered thinking to a "user-content" dual-centered approach, placing user needs and content quality on equally important footing. Mastering user research methods is fundamental—editors should learn user interviews, user journey maps, empathy maps, and other user research tools to enhance deep understanding of user needs [17]. Establishing data-driven decision-making mechanisms is also a critical pathway, with publishing institutions building user data collection and analysis platforms that enable editors to extract valuable insights from user behavior data to guide topic planning and content creation through basic data analysis methods. User feedback loop management serves as a safeguard mechanism, where editors establish normalized channels for collecting user feedback such as reader communities and comment analysis to obtain user opinions promptly, forming a cyclic improvement mechanism of "planning-production-feedback-optimization" to ensure publishing products continuously meet evolving user needs.

3.4 Cultivating Innovative Thinking and Practical Abilities

Cultivating innovative thinking and practical abilities requires building systematic cultivation mechanisms that create favorable conditions for enhancing editorial innovation capabilities. Innovation environment creation is the foundational condition—publishing institutions should establish an organizational culture and incentive mechanism that encourages innovation, providing space and resource support for editorial innovation attempts. For instance, Time Publishing and Media Co., Ltd. established an "Innovation Lab" that allows editors to dedicate fixed weekly time to exploring innovation projects, from which multiple successful digital products have been incubated. Learning innovation methodologies is the core pathway—editors should master innovation tools and methods such as brainstorming, design thinking, and SCAMPER to enhance creative generation and problem-solving capabilities. Cross-boundary learning and integration are sources of innovation—editors can expand innovation vision and thinking by participating in cross-domain exchange activities and collaborations in fields such as game design, film and television production, and new media operations [18]. Building innovation practice platforms is also indispensable, with publishing institutions establishing innovation project incubation mechanisms that provide editors with small-scale, rapid-trial innovation experimental venues to reduce innovation risks and improve innovation efficiency.

4. Evaluation and Monitoring System for Editorial Capabilities in the Digital Publishing Era

In digital publishing environments, editorial capability evaluation and monitoring systems are key guarantee mechanisms for driving capability transformation.

Constructing scientific, multidimensional, and quantifiable evaluation index systems, establishing dynamic monitoring and feedback mechanisms, and forming closed-loop linkages among evaluation results, training systems, and incentive mechanisms provide directional guidance and continuous momentum for editorial capability transformation, ensuring overall editorial team quality advances in sync with digital development demands.

4.1 Construction of Editorial Capability Evaluation Index Systems

Establishing scientific and comprehensive editorial capability evaluation index systems is the foundational tool for quantifying capability enhancement. Evaluation dimensions should cover digital technology application capability, content innovation capability, user insight capability, and project management capability. Technology application capability evaluation can assess digital tool mastery, multimedia content production quality, and technical problem-solving efficiency. Content innovation capability evaluation can examine content planning originality, presentation form diversity, and reading experience design. User insight capability evaluation should focus on user needs analysis accuracy, user feedback collection completeness, and user data application effectiveness. Project management capability evaluation includes digital publishing project completion quality, schedule control, and team collaboration. Through establishing multidimensional and quantifiable evaluation index systems, clear direction and objective basis are provided for editorial capability enhancement.

4.2 Monitoring and Feedback Mechanisms for Capability Enhancement

Capability enhancement is a continuous process requiring scientific monitoring and feedback mechanisms. Process monitoring can combine periodic evaluation with real-time tracking, using diverse methods such as regular skill assessments, project practice evaluations, and peer reviews to comprehensively grasp editorial capability enhancement status. Feedback mechanisms should construct a closed-loop system of "evaluation-feedback-improvement," timely delivering evaluation results to individual editors and teams to formulate targeted improvement plans for weak areas. Simultaneously, establishing evaluation systems combining horizontal and vertical comparisons—focusing both on gaps between editors and industry benchmarks and on individual capability improvement progress—forms an evaluation mechanism emphasizing both motivation and guidance to continuously drive editorial capability enhancement in digital directions.

4.3 Application of Evaluation Results and Incentive Mechanisms

Scientific application of capability evaluation results is the key link in promoting continuous editorial capability enhancement. For talent development, personalized training plans can be formulated based on evaluation results to target weak capabilities. For position setting, talent allocation can be optimized based on evaluation results, establishing specialized positions such as digital content

planning, multimedia production, and user operations to form reasonable division of labor and collaboration mechanisms. For incentive mechanisms, digital capability evaluation results should be linked to performance assessment, career development, and compensation, establishing capability-oriented incentive systems that encourage editors to proactively adapt to digital transformation and continuously improve comprehensive capabilities. Through multidimensional application of evaluation results, endogenous motivation for capability enhancement is formed, driving overall editorial team quality transformation and upgrading in digital directions.

The digital era has placed new demands on publishing editorial capabilities, with editorial roles undergoing multidimensional transformation from print to digital, content to multimedia, linear to interactive, and passive to active. Editorial capability enhancement must focus on market insight, multimedia content production, user interaction, and innovative thinking, while overcoming challenges including knowledge structure disconnects, steep technology learning curves, user mindset transformation difficulties, and lack of innovation platforms. By constructing interdisciplinary knowledge systems, establishing user-oriented mindsets, and cultivating innovative practical abilities, editors will better adapt to digital transformation and drive innovation and development in the publishing industry.

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