**Research on the innovative development of media convergence in my country in the era of smart media**

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[Abstract] In the new era, various intelligent media have quickly gained recognition from the audience with their own unique advantages, forcing traditional media to merge with them; at the same time, intelligent media are also actively integrating content with traditional media. Intelligent technology accelerates the integration and innovation among various media. "How to integrate" has become the only way for my country's media innovation and development in the future. my country's media integration thinking is limited to news content and has not penetrated into entertainment content such as film and television dramas and variety shows. Media integration is currently in the stage of news expression integration and has not yet reached the "integration continuum". To promote the development of media integration, we need to pay attention to the evolution of the audience, make it easy for the audience to obtain quality content, and establish a dimension for evaluating the communication effect of integrated media.

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On August 18, 2014, the fourth meeting of the Central Leading Group for Comprehensively Deepening Reform reviewed and approved the "Guiding Opinions on Promoting the Integration of Traditional and New Media". More than four years have passed, but China's media integration has still not found the best development path. Most traditional media still regard emerging media as only incremental growth, but their influence has been significantly impacted by emerging media, and a large number of audiences have been lost. In this context, how should my country's traditional media integrate with various emerging media efficiently, reasonably and scientifically? How to generate the media aggregation resonance effect?

What is media convergence?

Exploratory research on media convergence continues to emerge, and no clear ideas have yet been formed, but two trends can be observed.

First, traditional media have already crossed over PC Internet channels and chosen to enter smartphone mobile media, but the current media integration ideas are often limited to news content, and have not delved into entertainment content such as film and television dramas and variety shows. Specifically, the content originally published through newspapers, radio and television carriers is now presented in mobile APP application software, WeChat public accounts and other content, and is integrated into various emerging media through the path of "content finding channels", and even extended to "content + e-commerce" media.

Second, various social media on smartphones, such as Tencent, iQiyi, Youku, Bilibili, and Toutiao, have proactively launched news, variety shows, film and television dramas and other content from traditional media, acquiring content resources from traditional media through the path of "content finding audiences", and becoming precise push-type media of "e-commerce + content".

Obviously, media convergence is by no means a simple “overall transformation” of traditional media to new media, nor is it a crude replacement and subversion of traditional media by mobile Internet media. Rather, it is a path of integration in which the two need each other and move in the same direction. Media convergence is an inevitable process for media development at this stage. [1]

However, the current situation is that "news convergence" is a kind of media convergence strategy behavior of traditional media, which expands to the emerging media space through internal self-construction, so that the cooperation within the same media organization itself far exceeds the cooperation of the media with external emerging media. Some so-called new media projects are incubated by traditional media itself, and their substantive thinking and content dissemination forms are not innovative. After the formation of this "media convergence matrix", the original internal coordination rules were disrupted, and the problem of difficulty in coordination between departments such as content production and delivery quickly emerged. As a result, it is difficult to coordinate human, financial and other resources between departments, and even "gestural integration" occurs, that is, simply moving the original traditional media news content to emerging media channels; although most news practitioners feel the necessity of media convergence, their traditional news thinking and Internet thinking have not yet reached an effective dialogue, lacking the skills to actually operate new media, and in their actions, they can't help but follow the traditional media management methods, and it is difficult to get rid of path dependence in their attitudes. To a certain extent, even news convergence is difficult to achieve.

In order for "news integration" to keep up with changes and continue to maintain and expand its influence in a rapidly changing media ecological environment, it must first be clear about its own brand advantages of authority and credibility, and break through the traditional media's rigid "self-centered" business thinking. Only then can it integrate and open up with the Internet's "decentralized" thinking and demonstrate its own "news professionalism" spirit.

The integration of traditional media is not limited to "news integration", but focuses on the "social +" feature of mobile Internet that disseminates information anytime and anywhere. It needs to achieve full integration of film and television entertainment, variety shows and other content, cooperate with operators to obtain new communication channels, and use the influence of third-party platforms to obtain media user resources, and even expand industrial IP, combine with related media industries, and integrate media content production, online communication and offline entity operations. It is a three-dimensional and comprehensive media integration of integrated innovation and guiding services.

"Media convergence" was first considered to be a process in which various media tend to be multifunctional and integrated, and the boundaries between different media continue to blur. Professor Icher of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology believes that electronic technology is the main reason for convergence. With the development of media convergence, Professor Gordon of the United States has sorted out five types of converged media, namely news expression convergence, information collection convergence, strategic convergence, structural convergence, and ownership convergence.

Obviously, my country’s current media convergence is in the stage of media integration, blurring of media boundaries and integration of news expression, and has not yet reached the “integration continuum”.

The communication school focuses on the historical evolution of media forms. The “global village” is actually a communication discovery of media convergence. It is a philosophical speculation on media convergence based on the theories of communication scholars such as Innis, McLuhan, Meyrowitz, and Levenson. The technology school believes that the convergence of science and technology leads to media convergence, which in turn breaks the boundaries between media. The economics school believes that media convergence is the result of market economic laws, which ultimately leads to mergers and acquisitions between media. Cultural scholar Jenkins summarizes the above media convergence as technological convergence, social or institutional convergence, economic convergence, cultural convergence, and global convergence. In addition to the communication school, technology school, and cultural school, there are also economics school, management school, and social school in foreign countries that study media convergence. They have different disciplinary entry points and different viewpoints. [2]

The essence of media convergence is the integration of different media characteristics and functions under the trend of technological development, as well as the integration of global media, which leads to the integration of resources among various media interest groups, including the integration of economic and cultural resources.

That is to say, technology and market are the driving force of media convergence and the demand for internal innovation of the media, but they are inseparable from the promotion of media audiences. It can be said that the audience is the convergence point of media convergence, especially the young audience group, which determines the future of media convergence.

The current construction of integrated media in my country can be divided into two types: one is that traditional media add new media departments or launch new media projects. This is because traditional media are driven by government administrative power and are forced to integrate with new media. It is also necessary for media survival. The second is the active penetration of technology platform companies such as Tencent and Alibaba into the production and release of news, variety shows, animation, film and television dramas and other content of traditional media. This is driven by capital resources, technological strength, and market expansion, and they are constantly building media that can be accessed anytime and anywhere for the audience.

In the future, technologies such as artificial intelligence, computing push, and big data will give rise to various new types of media, which will determine the direction of media development to a certain extent, and can interpret the media landscape and public opinion ecology. From the trend of technological development, we can identify what the converged media should integrate and where it should integrate.

Pay attention to audience evolution

Although the concept of audience will always be the core object of communication research, its connotation and extension have evolved. It has become an active content disseminator and recreator, subverting the original concept of "receiver" which is negative and passive compared to the communicator. With the convenience provided by technology, the audience can self-acquire, self-select, self-judge, and self-integrate various types of information from different media channels, and even easily become a "content producer", constantly blurring the "transmission-reception" process, thereby changing the pattern of media convergence and communication.

Specifically, in the global information data flow, the audience is constantly self-updating, self-creating and evolving in the intelligent evolution of media technology. At this time, the audience's "anti-spiral" phenomenon, that is, expressing opinions more actively and participating more fully, has completely overturned the "spiral of silence" phenomenon in traditional media; the audience does not seem to need "gatekeepers" like traditional media, and is more self-censoring, and even "de-centralizing the information of traditional media elites." Even if an information "cocoon effect" is formed, they are happy to do so, and they only pay attention to the information that interests them.

As McGuire predicted, the "audience" of the future will disintegrate chaotically and create new worlds and new media, transforming into search roles, dialogue roles, and transmitter-receiver roles. At the same time, enabled and activated by digital technology, converged media will continue to give birth to multifaceted media audiences in the process of interaction and evolution of various interfaces. Media audiences will increasingly break away from traditional mass media, break free from the constraints of specific channels and specific time periods of traditional media, and enter a social network where they can feel each other's existence and influence each other, forming different virtual and real groups with certain functions, constantly switching between the real world and the media world, and constantly integrating their respective audience psychological realities. [3]

The era of "media customer value" has already taken shape, and audiences' media consumption creates new media. Audiences are constantly evolving, and their relationship with the media is constantly being reshaped. Audiences' choice of media, their media experience and participation directly lead to changes in media content production and business models, which will give rise to business profit models that are different from the past and create new spaces for public opinion dissemination. Therefore, the direction of audience evolution and flow, to a certain extent, constitutes the most effective entry point for how to integrate media. [4]

Traditional media must accept the reality of audience evolution, strictly follow the speed and time of audience migration, and adjust and plan the allocation of media resources, content production and dissemination strategies in accordance with the audience's media contact habits and consumption habits. The focus of media convergence is not on how many WeChat accounts and mobile APP applications are opened, or how to expand the matrix of one's own media, but on how many people use these accounts and applications, whether the content is forwarded by the audience, and whether it forms a ripple effect of media Internet dissemination.

To improve the communication effect of integrated media, we need to pay attention to the audience, be willing to spend energy to study the audience, especially to study the specific audience of the media from a community perspective, study their media usage behavior, and be willing to spend money, resources, and thoughts on the audience. Traditional media lack this gene, but integrated media needs to have this.

The key is to have easily accessible valuable content

Only content that is easily accessible, recognized and accepted by the audience can be effectively disseminated, which is the only criterion for judging the results of media integration. The "central kitchen" model of my country's media integration construction also needs to consider whether it has only improved production capacity but not the efficiency of dissemination.

Let's study the media convergence case of The Guardian in the UK. The newspaper tried various "technology +" reporting methods, completed the strategic transformation of the four major technology platforms of the all-media, including the open comment platform, data platform, technology platform, and news platform, and jumped from the ninth place in the UK media ranking to the first place. While giving the editors and reporters a lot of room for innovation, the newspaper pays special attention to the audience. Professional editors determine the news topics, and then let the audience upload videos, audios, pictures, texts and other content by " [submission](http://special.rmlt.com.cn/190517-3/index.shtml) " according to the topics of interest, so as to attract the audience to participate in news production or provide news materials, enhance interaction with the audience and improve the audience's media experience.

The Guardian has launched a customized video channel on Facebook’s technology platform, which is designed to help audiences understand seemingly profound and “high-end” news content such as science, current affairs, and global focus in a simple and interesting way. In order to attract young audiences, The Guardian has cooperated with Snapchat, a video platform that mainly targets young users, to select video content from the editorial library that is suitable for Snapchat’s dissemination of online hot spots and news hot spots. It has also increased the loading speed of videos to meet users’ habit of not waiting for videos to load. At the same time, it has designed functions such as self-play and self-search to facilitate netizens to obtain information by themselves, guide netizens to continue using the channel, and record netizens’ operation behaviors. [5]

The various types of media in traditional media have relatively clear positioning since their birth, and they are relatively clear about "who is the audience?" and "who to spread to?" This depends to a certain extent on the "push" behavior of the media, which is the media looking for the audience. In the era of intelligent media, the use of computational push methods does not provide the audience with the "one-to-many" and "centralized" content of traditional media, but buffet-style content, that is, content that is selected based on the calculation and judgment of the audience's interests and can be obtained by the audience themselves.

In the era of traditional media, high-quality content is the only guarantee for gaining audiences. In the era of converged media, to a certain extent, audiences look for media content. Therefore, it is particularly important for converged media to provide high-quality and interactive self-service content, especially those that can be easily obtained by the audience. As the information selection formula "Information selection probability = guarantee of reward ÷ degree of effort" indicates, in terms of content dissemination, converged media needs to first consider the media user experience and fully consider the audience's main role and the reaction force of cognitive energy.

Converged media needs to consider the reasons (stimulus points) why the audience chooses media information, so as to improve the converged media service model and build an innovative public opinion platform, instead of being like the current IPTV, where the set-top box takes a long time to start up and contains mandatory advertisements, challenging the audience's patience. Converged media needs to consider the reasons why the audience is influenced by the comments of others, so as to continuously innovate content and interactive models and establish effective feedback evaluation standards, because personal experience is what the audience likes to spread again. Converged media must also take into account the participation of individual audiences, such as the role of the audience's personal experience in their judgment of media content, and the impact of this on the audience's retransmission and creation of content, so as to design content that the audience will actively share.

In the era of converged media, if we blindly satisfy the media needs of the audience, fragmented opinions will be born, violating the principles of the media, deviating from its pursuit of truth and professionalism of unified consciousness, and falling into the focus on interests and commercial profits. Therefore, how to avoid the negative effects of smart media and social media in converged media communication is also a difficult point.

In a nutshell, with the emergence of new models such as so-called citizen journalism and knowledge payment, the information dissemination of integrated media has transformed into an extremely cost-effective information industry under the evolution of the audience, leading to the formation of information data oligopoly and dealing a heavy blow to the traditional news dissemination industry.

Technology media (or information-based communication) platform companies seize the market by the scale of content dissemination, rather than the quality of information, so it is inevitable that there will be a mix of good and bad. China's media convergence needs to position high-quality content based on China's reality and the increasingly globalized and digitalized thinking logic of the audience.

Dimensions of effect evaluation of media convergence in my country

Community culture services are integrated based on people. In the era of integrated media, the wormhole effect of socialized Internet makes it possible for all audiences to express themselves and attract social attention through weak connections through the social structure. Pay attention to various online communities, integrate and gather fragmented and one-sided views of various communities on the basis of community culture based on people, speak objectively, impartially and comprehensively with professional standards, and advocate the new development concept of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era with stories that move the community. Only in this way can the professional spirit of the media be inherited. The WeChat public account platform of People's Daily is a good example.

Specifically, my country's integrated media needs to establish an authoritative integrated emerging media communication platform. In this process, the needs and preferences of the audience, how to meet these needs and preferences, the most suitable content products and services, the input factors for providing these content products and services, and the key assets and core capabilities for using these input factors are all issues that cannot be avoided in construction.

The communication between the content of the converged media and the audience is an interface communication, especially in intelligent interfaces such as VR, AR, and AI, the relationship between the communicator and the receiver is constantly changing and reshaped. Therefore, for the converged media to be integrated, the first thing is to change the mindset and clear the original mental model of traditional media. At the same time, it is also necessary to keep in line with the audience's mindset and always ensure a detailed analysis of the basic elements of the space, environment, real-time status, life inertia, social atmosphere, etc. of the audience's use of the media scene at the same thinking frequency, so as to guide effectively and achieve the effect of the convergence of the media.

The integration of "artificial + intelligent" for process control. Artificial intelligence algorithms distribute news and other information flows to a certain extent in sync with the audience's media needs, conduct audience positioning, understand audience preferences, and conduct taste tests. However, there are quite a few bugs in machine recognition, and there are personalized biases that are difficult to avoid. Therefore, the recommendation and filtering information mechanism needs to be used skillfully. In the process of information dissemination, artificial and machine intelligence should be combined to achieve dynamic control in the process. This is a good strategy in media convergence.

Moreover, machine algorithms are also based on the choices of the editor's artificial brain. The content production, integration, and release of integrated media cannot be separated from the design of programs by skilled information gatekeepers to filter out vulgar information and false news, thereby helping the audience to filter information from all sides. Improving the information identification ability of integrated media gatekeepers and strengthening the media literacy of practitioners of information aggregation platforms are the guarantee of talent resources for the healthy development of the integrated media era.

Media convergence with industrial integration as the breakthrough point. The development of media industry integration is a long-term and dynamic process that requires reasonable and scientific development. my country's media convergence also has a process from technology integration to business integration and then to industrial integration.

After the networking and digitization of information products, the various media products and services provided by the media industry to the audience no longer have the scarcity and exclusivity of the industry. Other industries can fully provide alternative information content products. The emergence of these alternative products and services has led to the disappearance and weakening of the core advantages of the media industry. In other words, digital and network technologies continue to promote the integration of the media industry with other industries, breaking the monopoly of the media market and leading to the collapse of the core advantages of the media industry. [6] The unlimited replication and widespread dissemination of digital products have reduced the scarcity of media products, thereby weakening the profits of the media industry. This has forced the media industry to expand its original business scope and allocate it to a larger market scope, prompting mergers and acquisitions and reorganizations with related industries to achieve industrial integration. [7]

Different types of media industries have different paths for integrated development, and must find corresponding development paths corresponding to the different stages of their industry life cycle. However, they all require updating the production model of the media industry and improving its production technology level; improving the management level of the media industry to make its management more scientific; and at the same time, accelerating the upgrading of media industry products through the application of new technologies to realize the intelligence and high-end development of the media industry.

At the national level, we need to improve the integration mechanism of the media industry, support the construction of service platforms for the media industry and the information industry, provide special support funds and policy incentives, solve the funding problems in the process of integration and development, and coordinate the interests of all parties. For example, from the perspective of government regulation, we can integrate traditional media such as radio, film and television with new media such as mobile Internet horizontally, realize multi-channel release of different products with the same content, and achieve economies of scale.

Integration of media industry and cultural industry. The media industry is undoubtedly the core of the cultural industry, but my country's media industry has not played its due role in the development of the cultural industry. For a long time, my country's media industry has relied on advertising as its main source of income. In fact, expanding other sources of income for cultural industries besides advertising is also a proposition that needs special consideration when media integration is in progress.

In the past, traditional media were basically limited to two businesses: information and entertainment. However, in the era of smart media, it is necessary to extend industry boundaries and combine online content with offline industries. There is a lot of room for expansion in cultural fields such as sports, fashion, education, food, and tourism.

Under the integration thinking, the resources between the media industry and other cultural industries need to be more mutually exchanged. Only when cultural production factors build a free-flowing cooperation platform between cultural industries, have relatively unified technology and management standards, and form industrial clusters, can resources be reasonably allocated, thereby reducing production and transaction costs, improving the integration efficiency of the media industry and other cultural industries, and realizing product integration, business integration and market integration between the media industry and other cultural industries.

In the era of intelligent media represented by big data, cloud computing, and artificial intelligence, various intelligent technologies are reshaping traditional audio-visual business processes. In the evolution of audience media usage habits, they are constantly promoting the integration of media technology, business, and services, and accelerating innovation in various aspects of media audio-visual selection, content production, content dissemination, content marketing, and communication effect evaluation. Media convergence is a historical necessity. Driven by the evolution of intelligent technology and audiences, it is a process of grasping intelligent technology, grasping audiences, and integrating technology, audiences, and media creativity. [8] This transforms the audience's media consumption process into a high-quality digital experience. At the same time, the future of integrated media will not only make the audience indulge in media consumption and entertainment in the virtual media world, but will also be deeply rooted in the real society and form a real industry.

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Notes

[1] Spread the Words: “On the county-level integrated media center, 22 media experts offer practical advice!”, Network Communication Magazine, 2018.

[2] Su Pei, “Guiding the Healthy Development of Integrated Media: An Interview with Tong Qingyan, Director of the Media Literacy Research Center of Shanghai Jiao Tong University”, Social Sciences in China, 2018.

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[4] Xu Lijun: “CTR General Manager Xu Lijun: Chinese TV needs real reform!”, Radio and Television Expert, 2018; Xu Lijun: “A list of core issues in China’s media convergence”, Dewai No. 5, 2018.

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