**Theoretical Thinking on the Reconstruction of Media Convergence Content**

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【Abstract】 With the increasing development of technology and communication means, the convergence of media is a mainstream trend. However, the integration of technology and form does not mean that the content can also be integrated. The Internet, new media platforms and traditional media are all anxious about the production of "content". The content reconstruction of media convergence is not to repair the past content production model, but to make full use of new communication technologies such as "two microblogs and one terminal (Douyin)", short videos, H5, artificial intelligence, VR, etc., to adapt to, match, serve and improve the needs of new media as the starting point and consideration to reconstruct content, explore the methods and rules of content reconstruction and strive to make it a high-quality content that meets the characteristics of modern audiences and is widely accepted and recognized by the market.

【Key words】media convergence, content innovation, content reengineering

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Media convergence enters the content reconstruction stage

Since 2014, the "first year of media convergence development", the focus of my country's media convergence has been to reconstruct traditional media with the idea of ​​Internet+. Its main achievements are that "two microblogs and one terminal" have become standard, "central kitchens" and "integrated media centers" have been generally established, and media professionals have begun to use new communication technologies such as H5, VR, and short videos to reconstruct news narratives. In short, the achievements of media convergence in the past five years have mainly focused on "technological integration", that is, equipping traditional media with new communication technologies and new applications. In terms of technology, my country's media convergence has made phased progress, and the technical configuration of traditional media has undergone tremendous changes.

According to the view of technological determinism, the media itself is the truly meaningful message. Only with certain media can humans engage in communication and other social activities that are compatible with it, and only then can they bring about social change. Understanding the meaning of this sentence from the perspective of media convergence, its main point is that only by recreating content based on new communication technology can social change be brought about. In the printing era, the acceleration of information collection and publication brought changes to newspaper layouts and the writing style of contributors. [1] Then, in the Internet era, the same is true. Changes in the way information is produced and received will also bring about changes in production habits and content style.

Of course, no matter how communication technology changes the content style, the positioning of media organizations as content producers will not change. As General Secretary Xi Jinping said, "For news media, content innovation, form innovation, and means innovation are all important, but content innovation is fundamental." In the era of traditional media, the media relied on content to attract audiences, and then relied on the audience's attention resources to attract advertisements, thus forming a "secondary sale" profit model. Similarly, after the transformation of traditional media to new media, high-quality content is still needed as the support point of media value, to gather users with content, form communities, strengthen mainstream public opinion, and then realize commercial value.

From the perspective of content producers, my country's media convergence is entering a new stage: after mastering new communication technologies, how to create a new set of professional content production standards suitable for digital technologies? This is precisely the difficulty and bottleneck in the current development of media convergence. At the same time, from the perspective of Internet companies, as the Internet enters the second half, professional and sophisticated content is becoming increasingly scarce, and consumer Internet needs high-quality content to achieve the goal of forming communities and stabilizing traffic. This brings opportunities and challenges to the integration of traditional media into new media. The opportunity lies in the "content shortage" encountered by Internet platforms, and the challenge lies in the competition between media and self-media at different levels on the platform, which requires higher quality content.

Two types of "content anxiety"

Currently, both Internet companies and traditional media are suffering from "content anxiety": for Internet companies, as the Internet's demographic dividend gradually disappears and the market tends to be saturated, "content is king" has almost become the only means to acquire existing users; for traditional media, traditional information production and presentation methods have not been well received in the Internet's communication environment. How to transfer the past content production advantages to the Internet has become the primary issue of media convergence.

Content anxiety on Internet platforms. Today, leading Internet companies such as Tencent, NetEase, and Alibaba have generally realized that the platform traffic dividend is fading, and it is becoming increasingly difficult to cultivate the consumer Internet market. Therefore, Internet companies have begun to explore industrial Internet on the one hand and provide Internet services to corporate users; on the other hand, they have also been working hard in the field of consumer Internet to change the previous rough development model. After all, the pie of consumer Internet is huge: in 2017, there were 772 million Internet users (including 753 million mobile users), and the annual online retail sales reached 7175.1 billion yuan, [2] equivalent to the combined GDP of Beijing, Shenzhen, and Guangzhou in 2017.

How to cultivate the mature and saturated consumer Internet sector? Tencent’s approach is to “use content to permeate the consumer Internet”, that is, to provide users with more personalized and attractive content in the consumer Internet sector. At the same time, Tencent has also made its content platform social to enhance the interactivity and timeliness of users’ access to content. [3] Under this development concept, in addition to maintaining the original WeChat, QQ, Tencent Video, Weishi and other platforms, Tencent also laid out Penguin Account in 2016 and used Penguin Account as a content library, making it a drainage intermediary to guide users to Internet consumption. Tencent has high hopes for the content production of Penguin Account and has invested 5 billion yuan as a content creation fund to attract more outstanding content creators to join.

Tencent's approach is quite representative in the Internet industry. Content guides consumption, which has become a consensus in the Internet industry. In the past two years, Internet platforms have increased their weight in the content field. In 2017, NetEase News formulated the product strategy of "leading content consumption upgrade" and changed its brand logo from "having attitude" to "each with attitude". This indicates that NetEase News is transforming into a diversified pan-information content platform, intending to provide users with personalized recommendations through measures such as segmenting interest category content, supporting diversified content forms, and enriching the knowledge of youth cultural interest circles. [4] In addition to upgrading the original platforms, major Internet companies have also taken the initiative to deploy new media platforms to support original content. For example, NetEase launched NetEase, Baidu launched Baijiahao, Alibaba Entertainment launched Dayuhao, Yidian Zixun launched Yidianhao, and so on. Including Toutiao, which once claimed that "we don't produce news, we are the carriers of news", it has also deployed "Toutiaohao" in the hope of increasing user stickiness by cultivating KOLs (Key Opinion Leaders) and Internet celebrities. Moreover, these Internet companies have invested heavily in the above-mentioned platforms to support and protect original content.

It can be seen that using high-quality content to drive the consumer Internet forward is the consensus of Internet companies entering the second half. Under this consensus, major platforms pay more and more attention to high-quality content producers.

Traditional media are anxious about content. Traditional media, which rely on content production, are also anxious about content. This anxiety lies in the fact that the production process and expression methods that were once applicable to radio, television, newspapers and magazines are no longer effective for Internet users. For example, gentle newspaper headlines are often changed into popular or even vulgar headlines in the context of the Internet, and then become "explosive". How to take the lead again in the Internet content market is a difficult problem that many traditional media need to solve in their transformation and upgrading.

At present, although most of my country's traditional media have new media dissemination forms such as "two microblogs and one terminal", many media have not been able to create content that is compatible with it in news production, which puts them at a disadvantage in the content competition on the Internet. The main reason for this disadvantage is that the editors and reporters of traditional media lack experience in Internet operations and often cannot accurately grasp the focus of users; or the topics they choose focus on issues that users generally care about, but because the language expression lacks "Internet sense", it is ignored on the Internet.

In short, on the one hand, there is a content shortage on Internet platforms, and on the other hand, traditional media are looking for new outlets for their content. The current media convergence should also revolve around the word "content".

The path to content reengineering

The integration strategy of "Two Microblogs and One App": Taking new lessons and making up for old ones. "Two Microblogs and One App" has the largest number of user groups. Weibo and WeChat have more than 400 million and more than 1 billion users respectively. They are the most popular social media in China and the most suitable new media for spreading news information. As for news clients, although the download volume and reading rate of clients created by mainstream traditional media such as The Paper, CCTV News, and People's Daily are not as good as the information clients of Internet companies such as Toutiao, Tencent News, and Phoenix News, their market rankings are also relatively high, and they belong to the second camp of news and information platforms.

Such a huge user base, coupled with increasingly professional and mature self-media content, has made the "two microblogs and one terminal" a "touchstone" for testing content quality. In the "two microblogs and one terminal", not only are various news media accounts competing on the same platform, but self-media accounts are also taking the initiative in setting the agenda through content production. Therefore, whether a piece of content has the power to spread can be determined by publishing it on the "two microblogs and one terminal".

So, how can traditional media continue to refine their products with the help of “two microblogs and one terminal”? The author believes that on the one hand, they need to learn new lessons, and on the other hand, they also need to “make up for the lessons”.

The so-called "new course" is to innovate the concept of news production based on the functional characteristics of "two microblogs and one terminal". Because "two microblogs and one terminal" are Internet products, news editors must use Internet thinking to think about content production. Specifically, first, in the presentation of news, we should focus on simplicity and clarity, and be good at "spiritual massage". For example, when a complex new policy is introduced, the interpretation of newspapers is often cumbersome, and even the policy is directly published in full pages or consecutive pages, while new media often produce interpretations that are "understood in one picture" or "understood in one minute". In the Internet era, people's reading time is more fragmented, and there is no time for deep thinking, so they are more eager for information that can make their brains more comfortable. Second, seek the "common denominator of human nature" in topic selection - content that is too "cold" cannot resonate, and content that is too vulgar cannot induce forwarding - only news that can resonate with different groups of people can achieve the best communication effect. Third, we must maintain a 24-hour online news sense. Information dissemination in the new media era is faster, and news content can no longer be left for "see you on Monday". Maintaining a 24-hour online news sense means that news editors must pay attention to new media platforms such as "two microblogs and one terminal" 24 hours a day, pay attention to hot topics, discover clues, and publish news at any time. Whether there is a 24-hour duty system is an important indicator to observe whether a media has truly transformed.

The so-called "make-up lessons" is to break the inertia developed in the era of traditional media. In the past, some media relied on the monopoly of channels to fish in troubled waters in content production. In terms of topic selection, this type of media does not cover many hot and difficult social issues, and pays limited attention to phenomena that affect social trends; when interviewing, they often rely on telephone, email, QQ, and WeChat interviews, are lazy to arrive at the scene, and even assign their own tasks to correspondents to complete; in terms of reporting methods and language, they are lifeless and formulaic, and read like chewing wax; some reporters and editors have become "second-hand" Internet information, accustomed to collating online content and then editing it into newspaper pages; and so on. Such inferior content has been defeated in the face of the massive information in the new media era. Therefore, the so-called "make-up lessons" is to make up for the lessons of traditional media, find the topics that the masses care about, return to the news scene, conduct in-depth investigations at the front line, and improve writing skills based on the characteristics of Internet communication.

"New lessons" and "make-up lessons" should not only be applied to the operation of "two microblogs and one terminal". As Internet companies widely deploy content incubation platforms, traditional media should also actively embrace multi-channel distribution. After entering platforms such as Penguin, Toutiao, and NetEase, traditional media should also integrate Internet thinking and professional news production concepts into content production.

Short video integration strategy: specialization and refinement. When "two microblogs and one terminal" became the standard of media integration, the short video field was also booming. The number of users and user stickiness of leading short video platforms such as Douyin and Kuaishou are catching up with Weibo and WeChat. The industry proposed the term "two microblogs and one Douyin" based on the number of active users on each platform. The "2017-2018 China Short Video Industry Trend and User Behavior Research Report" released by iMedia Consulting shows that the scale of short video users in my country exceeded 240 million in 2017. It should be said that in the field of content competition, short videos have become a new growth point. Moreover, with the advent of the 5G era and the speed increase and fee reduction of Chinese mobile communication companies, the picture quality problems and traffic fee problems that once troubled users will be largely solved. It can be expected that short videos will usher in a larger-scale growth in the 5G era.

Since users are gathering on short video platforms, the media’s reach will naturally extend to short video platforms. Learning to express news in the form of short videos has naturally become the only way for traditional media to recreate content. So, in the face of the trend of short videos, how should traditional media achieve content recreation?

At present, short video platforms face the following content dilemmas: more entertainment, less information; more UGC, less PGC; more traffic, less quality. [5] It is precisely these dilemmas that can provide traditional media with an opportunity to occupy the content front. First, the content production team of traditional media has the right to interview news and has more opportunities to enter the news scene, which provides exclusive resources for the production of information short videos. In this regard, the "We" video, which focuses on information content under the Beijing News, often ranks at the top of the Miaopai hot list. Second, traditional television media have high-quality content production teams and can provide professional and high-quality content. From the "big screen" of the TV end to the "small screen" of the mobile end, although the platform has changed, the aesthetics of the picture has not changed much. For example, the exquisite pictures in the self-media "Yi Tiao" video are consistent with the traditional TV pictures, and the main change is the logic of the narrative. The advantages of television media in shooting and production techniques enable it to have the potential to produce high-quality short videos. Therefore, specialization and quality should be the preferred strategy for traditional media after entering the short video platform.

H5 integration strategy: fun and playability. H5 (5th generation HTML) was born in 2014. It is not only powerful, it can provide pictures, text, music, animation, audio and video, geographic information, two-way communication and other functions on the page, but also has strong compatibility, and can be compatible with PC and mobile terminals of different systems. Content produced with H5 can be easily transplanted to various media platforms, which has largely broken the technical barriers to dissemination. Therefore, H5 was sought after by the news industry as soon as it came out. After several years of development, many Internet companies have mastered the application of H5 and can use H5 forms such as games, tests, composites, and situations to spread high-quality content that is fun and playable. However, it is regrettable that most traditional media only use H5 to produce simple, "pictures and text + music" content. These display pages are like transplanting the advertising special edition in newspapers into H5.

The reason for the above gap is that traditional media editors have not fully mastered H5 technology and can only use some simple H5 production software and minimalist, templated programs. The existence of technical bottlenecks has resulted in insufficient innovation in H5 content. In fact, this is understandable for traditional media. After all, the lack of technical talent is the biggest talent shortcoming in the process of integration of traditional media into new media. For example, when NetEase makes an H5 page, it needs the following personnel configurations: planners, illustrators, animators, and front-end developers. In the talent structure of traditional media, at most only planners and illustrators can be guaranteed, and talents in animation and front-end are very scarce.

So, how to break the bottleneck when the talent structure is unreasonable? The author believes that we should make full use of interview resources to replace technical resources and reach cooperation with Internet companies. For example, on November 8, 2018, the People's Daily WeChat official account pushed a poetry puzzle game "Zi Yue Shi Yun" jointly produced by the People's Daily client and Tencent Functional Games to promote Chinese traditional culture. For this small game, the People's Daily mobilized a strong support team: the content interpretation was led by Fudan University Professor Luo Yuming, the doctoral team of the Chinese Department of Fudan University, the art design team came from the Central Academy of Fine Arts, and Tencent Functional Games provided technical support for this.

Artificial intelligence integration strategy: junior workers and good partners. If we define artificial intelligence as a system that can solve problems independently and effectively [6], then artificial intelligence has been fully embedded in the industry chain in the field of news communication. First, in terms of information collection and organization, artificial intelligence has fully exerted its data mining and analysis capabilities, providing conditions for journalists to find, clean, and mine massive files and discover news clues, thereby expanding the reporting space of news. Second, in terms of information editing, robot writing is no longer new. For example, in the field of meteorological reporting, robot writing has been used quite extensively. Robot writing liberates journalists from extensive news production and saves time for journalists to "deepen content processing." In the field of content distribution, borrowing Lawrence Lessig's words, the regulatory mechanism of code regulates cyberspace. [7] Then, after the algorithm regulates the content distribution mechanism, the physical body of the "gatekeeper" in the newsroom is largely replaced by virtual code. The algorithm forms a set of intelligent recommendation strategies through article model construction and user model construction. It not only has the ability to gate, but also has the function of "agenda setting" to some extent.

At present, the media at the forefront have already made efforts in artificial intelligence. For example, Baidu, Kuaishou, iFlytek, Fanwen Technology, Rongzhilian and the New Media Center of People's Daily jointly developed the "People's Daily Creative Brain", which provides content and topic support for media creation through intelligent writing, intelligent media engine, voice transcription, data cube, video search and other methods. Similar to this is the Arc Publishing content management system of The Washington Post, which provides support for media in improving journalists' workflow and optimizing digital advertising distribution.

As artificial intelligence increasingly replaces the work of reporters and editors, where should journalists go? The author believes that artificial intelligence systems should be regarded as junior workers in content production and as a good partner to improve production efficiency. For example, Sogou recently cooperated with Xinhua News Agency to develop a fully simulated intelligent virtual host - "AI virtual anchor". For journalists, by inputting text into the artificial intelligence system, the virtual anchor can broadcast the text content with the same voice, mouth shape and expression as a real person. This allows some journalists with strong writing skills and poor oral broadcasting skills (such as non-standard Mandarin) to present content in the form of sound and picture. Therefore, in the process of recreating content, traditional media should make full use of artificial intelligence to liberate productivity and allow human resources to invest more in "high-end" content production. In the future, the working ability of journalists will largely depend on their tacit understanding with artificial intelligence.

VR integration strategy: find the right type and selling point. As virtual reality (VR) technology is increasingly used, the media industry also began to use VR to report news between 2014 and 2015. In 2015, CCTV, ABC, Facebook, and The New York Times all used VR to show news scenes. The biggest feature of VR is that the image seen by the user changes with the viewpoint, giving people a sense of "being there". At present, many radio and television media are gearing up to explore the VR field. For example, Xinjiang Radio and Television, Zhejiang Radio and Television, Jilin Radio and Television, Hubei Radio and Television, Shandong Radio and Television and other radio and television groups have made arrangements in VR.

So, how should VR technology be used to recreate content? The author believes that when VR is used in content production, the production team can immerse users in the simulated news scene through a long period of collection and production, making the news narrative more contagious. At the same time, precisely because VR has the characteristics of strong immersion and high production costs, creators need to have a unique vision in topic selection. For example, some information content will cause a waste of resources if produced with VR; if the incident is too tragic at the scene, it is easy to cause panic if reported with VR. How to choose the content that best matches VR technology is a difficult problem facing VR news.

In this regard, among the many VR products developed by Shandong Radio and Television, there is a series of products specially created for party building propaganda and education, "Red Memory", which has achieved good communication and promotion effects. The production team of "Red Memory" collected 360-degree panoramic data from 428 patriotic education demonstration bases across the country, and used immersive content presentation to allow participants to travel through the arduous and war-torn years of the past. This project takes party building as its selling point and makes full use of rich red resources to produce 260 VR red documentaries. At present, this VR party building learning system has been used in some party organizations. The revelation that "Red Memory" gives us is that finding the right expression type and selling point is an important factor in VR content production. Otherwise, VR will become "chicken ribs".

in conclusion

There are barriers to journalism, one is the technical barrier, and the other is the content barrier. In the process of transformation from traditional media to new media, the technical barrier can be lowered by cooperating with Internet companies, while the content barrier is more invisible and needs to be eliminated by recreating the content. This kind of reconstruction is not about striving for excellence in print style and television language, but about producing content products that meet the characteristics of new media based on new communication technology. If traditional media do not realize the disruptive nature of technology and blindly patch up the original content production model, it will be difficult for them to gain a foothold in the future news market. Therefore, whether in the fields of "two microblogs and one terminal", or H5, VR, short videos, and artificial intelligence, only media that learn to tell stories with new technologies can transform the desire for high-quality content in the Internet era into their own social and economic benefits.

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Notes

[1] Marshall McLuhan, Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man, Beijing: Yilin Press, 2011, p. 235.

[2] National Bureau of Statistics of the People’s Republic of China, “Statistical Communiqué on the National Economic and Social Development of the People’s Republic of China in 2017”, China Statistics, No. 3, 2018, pp. 7-20.

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