

The Dilemma and Transformation Paths of Traditional Media in the Age of Smart Media

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Abstract: The development of the Internet has brought about new changes in the media environment, including changes in user perceptions, innovations in communication channels and changes in content formats. The prosperous development of the Internet and the increasing length of use means that people's access to information has changed, which has brought a lot of impact on traditional media. This study finds through analysis that in the era of intelligent media, traditional media then face the problems of audience loss, lower advertising revenue, lower motivation of practitioners, and lagging institutional management concepts. To address this, this paper proposes that firstly, we should re-establish connection with audiences, including producing or compiling content of interest to audiences, choosing the media most frequently used by audiences to publish information, and selecting effective information distribution methods. Secondly, we should diversify income and promote the transformation of industrial chain, including developing new media products, enriching industrial types, and realizing media capital operation. Thirdly, we should also strengthen skills training of practitioners in new Internet technologies and Internet content marketing methods to help the transformation and development of traditional media.

1. Introduction

With the progress of the times and the development of technology, people's access to information has also changed greatly. The prosperous development of the Internet and the increasing length of use means that people's access to information has changed. This change also indicates that more and more people are shifting their media habits from traditional media to new media, which has brought a lot of impact to traditional media. Therefore, at a time when the media is changing, it is especially important to map out the changes in the media environment brought about by the development of the Internet, discover the dilemmas faced by traditional media and seek solutions.

2. New Changes of Media Environment Brought by Internet Development

The popularity of the Internet has led to a consensus among the academia and the industry that the development of the Internet has entered the "second half". The so-called "second half" of Internet development actually means that the high popularity of the Internet makes it difficult for the number of Internet users to grow significantly, that is, the disappearance of the "demographic dividend" [1]. Therefore, in terms of industry, the practice of competing for users and the number of users will not be able to adapt to today's Internet environment, like the previous crude, swarming competition. Today's Internet development is a new stage of development with higher specialization, more intensive intellectual input, and more critical innovation paradigm. At the same time, emerging technologies such as big data, VR, and artificial intelligence have injected new forces and provided new spaces for Internet development and are changing today's Internet landscape all the time. Therefore, in this context, the Internet environment has also undergone many new changes, which are analyzed below in terms of users, channels and content of Internet usage.

2.1 Analysis from the aspect of users

First, users become the meta point of Internet development. Different from the concept of the target audience of traditional media, for the Internet, every Internet user is a user and has the characteristics of active choice. They have become the meta point of the development of the Internet. They not only have independent network needs, but also connect with each other to form a social network and become the active disseminators, receivers and users of Internet information. Second, from the number of users seized to the time of user seized. With the disappearance of the "demographic dividend" of the Internet, Internet products begin to focus on the use time of users.

2.2 Analysis from the aspect of channels

First, the golden age of traditional media has become a thing of the past. Looking back at the history of media development, in the process of different media iterations, compared with print media, which extended people's vision, and broadcast media, which extended people's hearing, TV media, though extending people's vision and hearing, still cannot meet people's immediate and immersive information needs. The golden age of traditional media in information dissemination has become a thing of the past. Secondly, cell phones have become the most important channel for people to connect to society today. Today, as traditional media is declining, mobile media, with its portability, intelligence and convenience, has gradually become the main way for people to get information today.

2.3 Analysis from the aspect of content

First, emotional content iterates rational content. In traditional media and portals, most of the publicly released content is edited and processed by news professionals, so the content is more rational and serious. In the current new media environment, whether it is a media public pass or social media information released by individuals, there is more emotional content, showing a trend of iterating rational content. Second, dynamic content iterates static content. The so-called static content refers to the content form based on pictures and text, while dynamic content refers to the content form based on video. In recent years, with the popularity of smart phones and technological advances, short videos have emerged and shown good development, with the trend of dynamic content iterating over static content.

3. The Dilemma Faced by Traditional Media

The main dilemmas faced by traditional media now are as follows.

3.1 Audience loss

From the current situation of traditional media today, audience loss should be the root cause of the difficulties they face. The main reason for the audience loss of traditional media is the change of public access to information. Most of the traditional media can only follow this change by relying on their online business. However, based on the popularity of mobile media and the increase in the length of Internet usage, audiences have less time to access traditional media and traditional media have lost a large number of audiences.

3.2 Decrease in advertising revenue

The most direct consequence of audience loss is the decrease in advertising revenue of traditional media. In recent years, the advertising volume of traditional media has fallen year after year, while the advertising volume of Internet has grown fast. As we all know, although traditional media in China are public institutions, they are managed by enterprises. Most of them need to operate independently and be self-financing. Advertising revenue is the main economic income of traditional media. The decline in advertising revenue has put the traditional media in a difficult situation in their operation. This predicament makes it difficult for traditional media to sustain their daily expenses on the one hand, and makes it difficult for them to invest in developing new products to attract audiences and increase revenue on the other. Traditional media are caught in a vicious circle.

3.3 Lower economic income for practitioners

As the economic income of traditional media decreases, it further leads to the economic income of traditional media practitioners. The lower income of traditional media practitioners directly affects their work status. First, it makes employees less motivated to work. Second, the economic pressure forces many employees to be unable to work wholeheartedly. Third, whether central or local traditional media, there is a large number of brain drain phenomenon.

3.4 The lag of system management concept

At some level, an organization's management philosophy is the basis for its survival and development. However, for the existing traditional media, their original set of operation and management model has become a definite situation. Except for the transformation of individual media, most of them are still continuing the old model. It is difficult to fundamentally reverse the entire media management structure, resource allocation and talent possession. Therefore, for traditional media, to achieve a real transformation from the inside out, there must be a set of advanced system management concepts to match.

4. The Transformation Paths of Traditional Media

As traditional media are facing various difficulties, the author think we can try the transformation of traditional media from the following paths.

4.1 Reconnect with the audience

The following methods can be tried to reconnect with audiences in the face of audience loss.

4.1.1 Produce or compile content of interest to the audience

In the Internet era, audiences are more proactive and can selectively watch the contents they are interested in. Facing this drawback, since traditional media do not yet have big data resources, they can figure out the information demand characteristics of audiences through audience surveys. On the one hand, it is necessary to further subdivide the audience categories and grasp the preferences of each subdivided category of audience. On the other hand, relying on the traditional media platform, the information in the region is a greater advantage, and the information in the region that the audience is interested in can also be aggregated and released to achieve the purpose of attracting the audience.

4.1.2 Select the medium most frequently used by the audience to distribute information

If traditional media do not do channel integration and change, it means that even the best quality content cannot reach a large number of people. At the same time, the low ratings or reach of the program will also lead to lower advertising revenue, making the input and output of quality content disproportionate. Therefore, in the selection of media channels, one is to choose according to the media contact habits of the target audience, and the other is to have the vision of future media development and accurately grasp the trend of media development.

4.1.3 Choose an effective way to distribute information

For traditional media, there are various options for their information distribution. First, it can rely on the original media to implement point-to-point dissemination. Second, it can disseminate by establishing its own Internet information platform, such as developing its own APP products. Third, it can use other information platforms to disseminate information. In this process, traditional media can design different distribution methods for different forms of content distribution.

4.2 Diversify revenue and promote industry chain transformation

The emergence of a new form of media will inevitably also bring new ways of accessing information and new industries. In this case, traditional media can rely on their political resources and social trust to try to increase other incomes or to transform their industrial chains. Among these transformation attempts, the main ones are developing new media products, enriching industrial types,

and conducting capital operations.

4.2.1 Develop new media products

To some extent, developing new media products is an inevitable choice to cater to the audience channel shift. However, it does not mean that product development is completed even if the content of traditional media is moved to the Internet. In fact, the focus is on the formation of products with Internet characteristics and precise positioning. For example, according to the characteristics of different groups can design their own characteristics of Internet products, the product style and content production to match each other to meet the needs of different users.

4.2.2 Enrich industrial types

Besides making information and news, there are also many traditional media that promote the transformation of industrial chain by enriching their own types of industries. For example, the newspaper group is used as the basis for the construction of sports industry, health industry, tourism industry, financial industry, etc. Take Hunan TV as an example, it has formed a relatively complete industrial chain with TV program production, distribution and sales, and post-airing content development as the main industrial line. There is also a profit model with advertising revenue as the mainstay and content distribution and sales and extended industries as auxiliary. Its industrial value chain involves many fields such as publishing, film and television program production, audio-visual products, new media, and artist agency [2].

4.2.3 Conduct media capital operations

Media capital operation refers to the operation and management of media capital through the optimal allocation and restructuring of media resources for the purpose of capital appreciation [3]. For China's media, media capital operation can be done through media listing and capital injection to complete the industrial restructuring of media.

4.3 Strengthen the skills training of practitioners

With the advent of the all-media era, traditional media's editorial skills gradually fail to meet the needs of the all-media era. Therefore, comprehensive quality and new media technology training can be provided to the employees of traditional media. This can be done from the following two aspects.

4.3.1 New Technologies of the Internet

After the emergence of the Internet, especially in recent years, the development of technology has led to some changes in the presentation of Internet information. The first is the application of big data, which has emerged as a new form of news, data journalism. Data journalism requires production staff to have the ability to capture data, data analysis and data visualization, and has certain requirements on their logical thinking ability and problem analysis ability. The second is the production and dissemination of VR news. Although VR news is still in its infancy in China, the immersive sense of "immersion" it brings is very suitable for live news, and is the direction of future development. The third is the human-computer collaborative news writing. The development of artificial intelligence and the use of computer learning technology make it possible for robots to write. However, robots can only generate more patterned content and are not good at expressing angles and attitudes, while the human-computer collaborative news writing can form a complementary approach and improve efficiency.

4.3.2 Internet content marketing approach

In the Internet, whether it is information production, information dissemination, or information acquisition, there is a big difference with the traditional media. On the one hand, Internet products aggregate different people through different contents, forming the effect of "birds of a feather flock together", and then realize profits by turning user resources into economic resources. On the other hand, with the progress of technology, content marketing is also gradually developing towards the direction of diversification, immediacy and interactivity.

4.4 Change management and operation concepts

The transformation of traditional media boils down to the change of management and operation concepts. Only this transformation can fundamentally solve the problem of traditional media transformation.

4.4.1 Shift to Internet thinking

In the wave of the Internet, the transformation and development of traditional media must have Internet thinking. The Internet thinking is the thinking represented by "users are the king". That is, all content production, placement and distribution should be centered on users. Therefore, the most important change of Internet thinking is the change of thinking from audience to users. In traditional media, the audience is the receiver of information, passive, anonymous and loose. In the Internet, users are the acquirer of information, have the right to decide which way to use to get what kind of news. They are active, semi-anonymous, and are sticky.

4.4.2 Promoting the institutional reform

In the existing traditional media, the organizational structure is often divided into different functions according to the type of media. Although they are all within a large media group, TV stations, radio, newspapers and new media are completely separate, and the sharing of resources among them is very limited. This makes a wasteful situation of resources on the one hand, and makes it difficult to form a synergy on the other. The Internet system should be organized according to the content, respectively, the production of content, that is, a media group unified use of a content collection and editing department. Content distribution, where content is distributed by the content acquisition department to various different media channels. Channel integration, where program editors integrate different content according to the characteristics of the media and program content in different media formats. User reach, where users are exposed to the information.

Through the above analysis, it can be seen that the transformation of traditional media requires not only a long-term and developmental vision, but also the cooperation of the whole situation, especially the inclination and support of policies. For many traditional media, the transformation is urgent. Nevertheless, the media should also "tailor" according to their own situation. Only in this way can traditional media ensure a smooth transition and smooth transformation.

5. Conclusion

To sum up, although traditional media are facing great difficulties in the era of intelligent media, there are still paths of change to follow. The transformation to new media can be achieved by reconnecting with audiences, diversifying income, promoting the transformation of the industry chain, strengthening the skills training of practitioners, and changing the management and operation concepts.

This study has many shortcomings and is limited by the research limitations and the lack of case studies on the practice of traditional media transformation paths. Therefore, it cannot address the specific paths and obstacles in the implementation process, which are to be explored in depth with continued attention in the future.

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