

Study on Communication Development of University Journals in the Context of Media Convergence

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Abstract: Digital media has gradually approximated to maturity after years of development. Meanwhile, the world has embarked on an era of media convergence, leading to a reform of media convergence and development in academic journals. Among such journals, university journals which show teaching and scientific research achievements, boost disciplinary construction and make academic communication count in conventional media communication. Whereas, university journals are confronted with such problems as highlighting institutional structure challenge, lack of communication channels and unsatisfactory communication effects in the wake of multimedia convergence. Therefore, university journals are advised to accelerate institutional reform, enhance training on editors, improve publicity and marketing strategies, reform multimedia convergence and boost communication to accommodate development of the new era.

1. Introduction

Nowadays, quick development of media convergence and digital publication have facilitated and liberalized communication and circulation of all kinds of information. And new media has gradually become a fundamental approach of social information communication. In contrast, university journals as a primary type of conventional media for communicating teaching and scientific research achievements slowly handle contributions and lack the due energy geared to development of the new era due to such effects as institutional framework. Besides, their content is too simple to show good communication effects. Therefore, it is necessary to study how university journals increase its communication channels, give better play to their own academic communication effects and boost their academic influence in the era of media convergence and digital publication.

2. Current Communication of University Journals in the Context of Media Convergence

2.1 Institutional and structural problems restrain development of university journals

Since China unveiled its economic reform (reform and opening-up), Chinese authorities at all levels and universities and colleges have increased support to academic studies. University journals mainly used for showing teaching and scientific research success of all such universities and colleges play a crucial role in academic communication. However, university journals are mostly affiliated to all such universities and colleges, particularly public ones, which depend on fiscal appropriation and do not have to participate in market competition or consider circulation, profiting and other issues. As a result, university journals form a rigid system and conventional orientation and give no consideration to communication channels and effects with effort, many of which are complacent about "standing still" in the editorial work. Such a rigid system curbs communication and development of university journals.

2.2 Communication is relegated little by little

Statistics show that university journals account for 1/5 of total journals in China and dominate in academic communication.^[1] However, the dominant status of paper media in communication is sustaining a great impact while Internet-based communication is arising out of nowhere and gradually standing out in the wake of digital publication and application of new media in the era of

media convergence. Nowadays when digital media boom, many university journals still hold firm to convention and give away the right of digital communication to such databases as CNKI, Wanfang and VIP instead of transforming their own communication, as a result of which, they lose their own leading position in communication. What is worse, university journals will find it hard to survive and develop in the information era if making no powerful improvement.

2.3 Communication channels are dull and communication effects are unsatisfactory

University journals have a high status among academic journals and play a crucial part in communication of academic and scientific research achievements. However, university journals have had restrictions in development for a long time, such as lack of communication channels among which paper media communication predominates while Internet-based communication is negligible and unsatisfactory communication effects. Their primary range of exchange is restricted to editorial offices of university journals and libraries on campus and contributors and hardly scaled up. In addition, though editorial offices of university journals have their own websites, most of such websites are characteristic of few functions and simple and outmoded content among others. Furthermore, university journals give access to large databases. In recent years, many university journals have been accessible to such databases as CNKI, Wanfang Database, VIP Database and Dragonsource Database. Such databases have facilitated academic communication in development but such a database-based communication model has shrunk influence of university journals^[2]. Because such databases merely disclose individual articles of university journals (readers are less concerned with documentary sources when they download and read such articles) and fail to well present purposes, objectives, features, cover design among others of university journals.

3. Development Tendency of University Journals in the Context of Media Convergence

3.1 Update and movement in the mode of communication

As digital publication grows and advances, many university journals have built their own journal websites for handling contribution, examination and query among other work; whereas, such websites are mostly short of academic exchange and far from fulfilling needs of readers in the context of efficient and convenient information communication in the new era. Thus, editorial offices of university journals ought to change and update their mode of communication, meet requirements in the new era, and bring forth a new media form of such journals. For instance, *Journal of Beijing City University* creates its own WeChat group of contributors, which is a positive attempt. In addition, such journals may employ all the other forms of new media in their communication and publication to augment effects in more channels.

3.2 Movement in the edit mode

The movement in the mode of communication of university journals is bound to usher in many needs for different media of communication. Therefore, university journals should improve their former edit mode focused on paper media, accommodate needs for WeChat, Weibo, QQ and other APPs and readers' reading habits and requirements with a purpose, and extend their processing and edit mode from paper media to all kinds of media.

3.3 Integration of published content and new media

Though the rise of emerging media increase journals' communication channels and modes, broaden their range of communication and improve their communication efficiency, the key to communication lies in content of such journals. Hence, university journals in publication and distribution are advised to take advantage of the convenience of media convergence, understand readers' needs from a variety of channels, draw more good contributions and improve their quality instead of lowering requirements for their quality to attract more readers. If their content is too poor to attract readers, they will get nothing no matter how much they input in media convergence and development.

4. Measures of University Journals for Accommodating Media Convergence and Development

4.1 Accelerating institutional reform and promoting editors's awareness of service initiative

The conventional edit and publication is time-consuming. Though many university journals give a clarity to contributors that they will not receive their contributions and must not contribute to other journals until they fail to receive a letter of acceptance 3 months later, contributors get no reply from editorial offices of such journals and have no idea of progress of their contributions in such a long spell of 3 months and in the end, those rejected are ignorant of what makes them rejected. Over time, contributors will keep away from such journals and no longer contribute to such journals. As a matter of fact, such journals lose their group of potential contributors. Therefore, editors should be aware of the daunting challenge facing university journals, promote their own awareness of service initiative, take a friendly attitude towards contributors and readers of their journals and feed back information in time.

4.2 Enhancing brand competitiveness of university journals

As the saying goes, "Good wine needs no bush", which is a philosophy prevailing in the times of planned economy^[3]. However, it seems outmoded nowadays when digital media boom. In the wake of digital publication and multimedia development, a miscellaneous assortment of information is overwhelming and eye-catching but only those with characteristics can stand out. Thus, university journals are advised to create their own features and enhance their own brand competitiveness. Besides, they must make effort in publication and communication to increase their popularity by ads, academic exchange and so on. They can get much better communication effects than expected if segmenting market to niches with a purpose and giving greater publicity to appropriate contributor group and reader group.

4.3 Integrating resources, expanding convergence with other media and adhering to the path of multimedia convergence

Paper media communication is a conventional communication channel of university journals, which has a single mode of communication to be confronted with increasingly daunting challenge in the era of digital publication and media convergence. Hence, editorial offices of university journals are advised to change their ideas, increase communication channels of journals, and explore for a communication path suitable for sustainable development of university journals by strength of media convergence.

4.4 Intensifying digital training on editors and implementing digital communication of university journals

University journals have a time-consuming process of receiving, editing and publishing contributions, which confines their development. In order to improve communication efficiency of journals, digital communication for multimedia convergence and development is considered to a pretty effective communication path that can heighten both communication speed and efficiency of journals compared with manual contribution examination, edit, publication and rejection. Therefore, editors of university journals are supposed to keep abreast with the times, grasp technologies and skills pertaining to multimedia convergence and give play to strengths of multimedia to enhance communication of journals.

"Set no limit". University journals are advised to accept the challenge in the new media era by new posture and outlook, increase and develop their communication channels, improve their communication quality and effects and enhance their influence.

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