

美國報業數字化： 現實與幻影

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摘要

美國報業普遍受到「紙媒將死」論調影響，相信數字化轉型是唯一出路。但這場大規模的數字化實驗已進行了20多年，正處於應該審視過去、展望未來的時刻。本文首先綜述有關美國報紙多平台閱讀率的實證研究。這些研究解釋了美國報紙為何至今未能通過數字產品獲取足夠的廣告與訂閱收益。若將網絡市場中其他競爭者的實力也納入考量，結論是：對於絕大多數美國報紙而言，所謂的全數字未來只是不切實際的幻影。此一結論引發了有關報紙產業前景的激烈論戰。在這場論戰中，不少媒介觀察家和數字擁護者對相關研究發現報以激憤而情緒化的回應。他們的觀點反映出數字崇拜心態是如何根深蒂固並形塑了美國報業對於數字化的不甚理性的追求。本研究建議出版商認清現實，重拾理智，重視受眾，在更受青睞的平台上發布高質量的內容。

關鍵詞：美國報業、報紙、數字化轉型、網絡新聞、紙媒、傳媒經濟

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The Impact of Digitization on the U.S. Newspaper Industry: Reality and Irrationality

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Abstract

Twenty years into newspapers' digital experiment, it is time to evaluate what has been done and where the industry is going. This study first synthesizes empirical research on U.S. newspapers' multiplatform readership, which explains their long-time difficulties in monetizing online content. Also taking into consideration the market power of other players in the media landscape, the researcher concludes that there is no such thing as an all-digital future for the vast majority of U.S. newspapers. However, as U.S. newspapers have collectively acted upon the assumption that their print product will die and they must transform themselves digitally to survive, such a conclusion triggered a heated debate about the state of the newspaper industry among media observers and digital enthusiasts—some responded strongly and emotionally, rejecting research findings accumulated over the years. Such narratives are of interest because they reflect how deeply rooted the “digital mentality” is, which may have shaped the industry's technology-driven strategy with irrationality. Newspaper publishers are advised to acknowledge the reality, drop the death narrative, value audience research, and deliver quality content through preferred platforms.

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Keywords: U.S. newspaper industry, newspapers, digital transformation, online news, print media, media economics

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