

***How Can American Museums Use WeChat as a Tool to Reach Chinese Audiences***

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April 2018

A thesis submitted to The University of the Arts in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree of Masters in Museum Education

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**To the Faculty of The University of the Arts**

The members of the committee appointed to examine the thesis of Huan (Amelia) Deng find it satisfactory and recommend it to be accepted.

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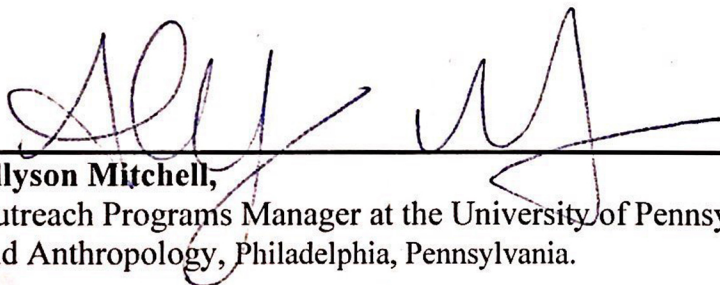
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### Abstract

As the Chinese visitors to the United States of America increase, American museums are trying to reach out to more Chinese audiences. Since American social media and Internet-related services are blocked in China by an official government administered fire wall, American museums need other social media platforms to inform their potential Chinese visitors. The thesis researcher believes that WeChat, one of the most popular social media platforms in China, may be a good tool to reach a Chinese audience. To prove this, this thesis proposes directing a front-end survey to the Chinese to study Chinese people's utilization of WeChat. Based on the collected data, the thesis writer's original hypothesis that WeChat, an online platform easily available and extremely popular in China is the best tool for all American museums seeking to reach a Chinese audience has been confirmed in myriad ways.



### Acknowledgements

I would like to give a special thanks to my thesis advisor, Helen Shannon for her continual guidance. Without her wise suggestions throughout this process I would not be where I am today.

I also want to thank Minda Borun, another of my thesis advisors who helped me mold my survey.

Thanks to Amanda Grady, one of my incredible committee members who helped me realize the importance of applying WeChat at American museums. Also, Virginia Bower and Allyson Mitchell both provided me with a breadth of insight while serving on my committee.

I would like to thank Zeya He, a Ph.D. student in the Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management at the Temple University. She helped me to reach the person (Xingyang Mao) who is in charge of the study tour project for Chinese students at the University of Pennsylvania. I also want to thank Xingyang Mao for sending out my survey to the group of Chinese students who went to the University of Pennsylvania for a study tour in August, 2017.

Thank you to Zixiao Huang, Xinyi Fang (interns in Digital Marketing Communications Department at the Philadelphia Museum of Art), Chessia Kelley (the former associate director of Digital Marketing Communications Department at the PMA), and Li Diandian (the assistant

curator in Chinese Arts Department at the PMA) for their help and support.

Thank you to J&L Travel Services Center, Asia American Group travel agency in Philadelphia and Overseas International Travel Service Co. Ltd. In Shenzhen, China who all posted the survey on their WeChat sites for their customers to fill out.

To my parents thank you for your unwavering support throughout my thesis process.

**Thank you**

## Table of Contents

### Nomenclature

Chapter One: Introduction	1-4
Chapter Two: Review of Literature	5-26
<i>What is WeChat?</i>	7-8
<i>Who Is Using WeChat? How Are They Using WeChat?</i>	8-12
<i>The Increase of Chinese Visitors and the Response of American Museums</i>	12-16
<i>The Role of Social Media in American Museums</i>	16-19
<i>How WeChat Has Been Used by Chinese Museums</i>	19-24
Chapter Three: Thesis Research	27-87
<i>Methodology</i>	27-29
<i>Demographic analysis</i>	29-35
<i>Do you use WeChat?</i>	35-37
<i>How often do you visit museums in China?</i>	37-42
<i>Have you visited (or do you plan to visit) museums in the United States?</i>	43-44
<i>Which museums in the U.S. you have visited (or plan to visit) physically?</i>	45-48
<i>Why would you visit American museums in person?</i>	48-52
<i>Do you know about American museums' WeChat accounts?</i>	52-66
<i>Would you follow American museums on WeChat?</i>	66-69
<i>What do you expect to see on American museums' WeChat sites?</i>	70-78

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<i>What else would you like to see on American museums WeChat sites?</i>	78-81
<i>How would American museums' WeChat affect you?</i>	81-84
<i>Conclusion</i>	84-87
Chapter Four: Applicability to the Field	88-94
<i>Applications</i>	88-91
<i>Best Practices</i>	91-94
Chapter Five: Implications for Further Research	95-97
Appendix I: Bibliography	98-101
Appendix II: Survey	102-118
Appendix III: The Comic in Guangdong Museum's WeChat Post	119-121
Appendix IV: Example of Post About a Coming Event	122-126

## Nomenclature

Social Media— computer-mediated technologies that facilitate the creation and sharing of information, ideas, and other forms of expression via virtual communities and networks.

WeChat (微信, Weixin in Chinese)— a Chinese social media mobile application software developed by Tencent. It was first released in 2011. Now it has become one of the most popular social media sites in China.

Official WeChat Accounts— the WeChat Official Account Admin Platform is a cooperation & promotion service launched for famous persons, and organizations such as museums. Official accounts can promote their brands to billions of WeChat users through this WeChat channel, thus reducing propagation cost, raising brand popularity, and building up more influential brand images.

Weibo— a popular Twitter-like microblog in China. Weibo emphasizes spreading out all the information to all of its users, while WeChat emphasizes sharing certain information to its users based on their personal choices and preferences.

QQ— an instant messaging software service in China.

Baidu— the most frequently used Chinese search engine for websites, audio files and images.

Web-based Platform— a platform that is accessed over a network connection using Internet.

Museum Staff— People who are hired to work for the museum.

Museum Educators— staff that manage education programming and mediate content for visitors.

Visitor Services— staff in charge of assisting and serving visitors' needs.

Digital Department— a museum department that leads the creation, production, presentation, and dissemination of multimedia content to support the viewing and understanding of the museum's collection and exhibitions, both within the galleries and online.

Audio Tour— an audio tour or audio guide provides a recorded spoken commentary, normally through a handheld device, or web-based platform to a visitor attraction such as a museum.

QR Codes— a 2D barcode that contains information which can be read by a smartphone.

Travel Agencies— an agency that makes the necessary arrangements for travelers.

Tourist— a person who is traveling or visiting a place for pleasure.

# Chapter One

## Introduction

Based on the National Travel and Tourism Office's *2016 Fall Travel Forecast*, the number of Chinese people visiting the U.S. has been growing and will continue experiencing growth through 2021.<sup>1</sup> According to an analysis published in *The New York Times*, as the Chinese visitors to the U.S increase, American museums are working to adapt to their needs. Their efforts include offering museum maps and audio tours in Chinese, accepting mobile payment, as well as working with Chinese travel agencies to attract more Chinese visitors.<sup>2</sup>

With American social media (including Facebook) blocked in China, American museums find it difficult to reach out to Chinese audiences online. Still, as the staff of the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archeology and Anthropology has said, they (and no doubt other American museums) wish to be able to reach out to potential visitors in China.<sup>3</sup> How can American museums better reach Chinese audiences better through available web-based and social

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<sup>1</sup> "U.S. Commerce Department Releases Six-year Forecast for International Travel to the United States—2016-2021", *International Trade Administration*, November 9, 2016, [http://tinet.ita.doc.gov/view/f-2000-99-001/forecast/Forecast\\_Summary.pdf](http://tinet.ita.doc.gov/view/f-2000-99-001/forecast/Forecast_Summary.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Jane L. Levere, "As Chinese Tourism Increases, American Museums Adapt", *The New York Times*, March 18, 2015, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/19/arts/artsspecial/as-chinese-tourism-increases-american-museums-adapt.html>.

<sup>3</sup> Amanda Grady (Group Sales Manager at the Penn Museum), personal communications with Huan (Amelia) Deng, July, 27, 2017.

media platforms? One of the tools that American museums should consider to inform Chinese audiences is WeChat. As one of the most popular social media platforms (a comprehensive mobile-based application developed by China Tencent Company in China, WeChat has more than 700 million Chinese users. WeChat combines the functions of Facebook, Instagram, Amazon and Google. Among all the museums in the U.S, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, and the Philadelphia Museum of Art have been at the forefront of owning official WeChat sites.

Once American museums open their WeChat accounts, the further question would be how American museums best utilize WeChat to reach and inform Chinese audiences? There is little research on what Chinese audiences think about American museums' WeChat accounts, or how American museums can meet Chinese audiences' needs through WeChat. As a result, this thesis proposes directing a front-end survey to the Chinese to study Chinese people's utilization of WeChat; Chinese people's frequency of visiting museums in China; their previous experience of visiting museums in the U.S.; their passion of visiting museums in the U.S.; their prior knowledge and experience of following American museums' WeChat sites, their general willingness to follow



and share American museums' WeChat; as well as their expectations of American museums' WeChat accounts. The findings reveal that if American museums have official WeChat accounts and understand how to utilize them efficiently, Chinese audiences would gain a better understanding of those museums through WeChat. Some of the Chinese audiences can also be able to better plan their visits to the museums before traveling to the U.S.

As the thesis research shows, Chinese people who occasionally visit museums in China tend to learn about Chinese museums and their events from web-based platforms, especially from WeChat. However, most of the participants are not aware that some museums in the United States already have WeChat accounts, which means that American museums need to work harder to promote their WeChat accounts. Based on the data, this researcher tries to provide some suggestions of how to promote and organize American museums' WeChat accounts.

Even though most of the respondents do not have any experience of following existing American museums' WeChat accounts, those respondents still claim that they would love to follow American museums' WeChat accounts, as well as share those WeChat accounts with family and friends. When asked about Chinese audiences' expectations of American museum's WeChat

accounts, participants generally said that they care about basic information which can help them to get prepared and make plans before actually visiting the museums. The thesis research also shows that Chinese audiences consider American museums' WeChat as platforms for them to gain better understanding of those museums, and to decide which museums they would like to visit while traveling to the U.S. As the data supports, using WeChat can help American museums get a Chinese perspective and help them reach a broader group of Chinese visitors.

**Research Question:**

How can American museums use WeChat to reach and better inform Chinese audiences?

**Research Hypothesis:**

Using WeChat can help American museums get a Chinese perspective and help them reach a broader group of Chinese audiences.

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## Chapter Two

### Review of the Literature

Even though the visa process has greatly slowed down the process for Chinese visitors into the US, Chinese visitors to the United States of America may still increase according to the National Travel and Tourism Office's forecast.<sup>4</sup> American museums are trying to reach out to more Chinese audiences. However, since American social media and many Internet-related services are all blocked in China by an official government administered fire-wall, American museums find it difficult to reach the Chinese via Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, YouTube or Google. A good way for American museums to solve this problem is to have an official WeChat account. As one of the most popular social media in China, WeChat has about 700,000,000 users in China, which is about 50.9% of the total Chinese population.<sup>5</sup> Establishing official WeChat accounts would allow American museums to inform, educate, and promote to the Chinese directly.

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<sup>4</sup> "U.S. Commerce Department Releases Six-year Forecast for International Travel to the United States—2016-2021", *International Trade Administration*, November 9, 2016, [http://tinet.ita.doc.gov/view/f-2000-99-001/forecast/Forecast\\_Summary.pdf](http://tinet.ita.doc.gov/view/f-2000-99-001/forecast/Forecast_Summary.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> "How China is Changing Your Internet—*The New York Times*", *YouTube*, August 9, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VAesMQ6VtK8>.

Much effort has been made by American museums such as The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of the Modern Art, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, and the Philadelphia Museum of Art to maintain and organize their WeChat sites, while some American museums have not fully realized the importance of WeChat in China. Those museums without WeChat might need some tips about who the audience on WeChat is, how they are interacting with it, and how a museum can use WeChat to better reach this audience. However, there are only a few articles in English mentioning the application for WeChat in the museum field. These articles written in the perspective of American museums only mention that WeChat has been used, but there are no details about how American museums are using it. Some articles exist written in Chinese that talk about how WeChat has been used in Chinese museums.

Though there are no articles that directly discuss how American museums can use WeChat to reach out to and inform Chinese visitors, the following literature review will address five areas related to this issue. The first section talks about what WeChat is. The second section aims to help museum staff to gain a basic understanding of who the users of WeChat are and how they are using WeChat in China. The third section will address research related to the increase of Chinese visitors

and how American museums adapt to this increase. The fourth section will focus on research studies about what kind of role social media plays in American museums' communication and education for visitors. Finally, the fifth section will discuss research related to how WeChat has been used by Chinese museums as a communication and education tool.

## **What is WeChat?**

WeChat is a social media platform which was first released in 2011.<sup>6</sup> It offers multiple features such as Moments, Drift Bottle, Web WeChat, Live Chat, Group Chat, Video Chat, and QR Codes. The features useful to museums are Moments, Drift Bottle, and QR Codes. WeChat is free to download in the U.S, and all the WeChat features are available in America.

Moments is a feature that visually tells the stories of WeChat users. It allows WeChat users to share text posts, and up to nine photos per post.<sup>7</sup> If the user shares his/her pictures on Moments after the museum visit, his/her friends can “like” and “comment” on the post. Also, the users can

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<sup>6</sup> Steven Millward, “WeChat is 5 years old. Here’s how it’s grown”, *TECHINASIA*, January 21, 2016, <https://www.techinasia.com/5-years-of-wechat>.

<sup>7</sup> “Tech Tip – Your Guide to WeChat Moments”, *WeChat*, June 12, 2015, <http://blog.wechat.com/2015/06/12/tech-tip-your-guide-to-wechat-moments/>.

repost the museums' posts to share with their friends, and further the messages that the museums are trying to convey.

According to a Mashable blog, Drift Bottle is "a digital version of a message-in-a-bottle".<sup>8</sup>

With this feature, "museums can send and receive text and voice messages to and from totally random WeChat users around the world."<sup>9</sup>

The WeChat app generates each museum its own QR Codes. Rather than manually following the museums' WeChat accounts, the WeChat users can simply scan the code with the app's built-in code readers to follow the museums' accounts.<sup>10</sup>

## **Who Is Using WeChat? How Are They Using WeChat?**

In this section the thesis researcher will analyze the WeChat user groups based on *The 2015 Statistical Report on WeChat Used in China* and *The 2016 Statistical Report on WeChat Used in China*. The data in these two reports are similar, except the dramatic increase of user numbers,

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<sup>8</sup> Amy-Mae Turner, "5 weird WeChat features that trump other messaging apps", *Mashable*, accessed April 5, 2015, <http://mashable.com/2015/04/05/wechat-features/#WS6.n2P33ggg>.

<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*

from 549 million to 768 million.<sup>11</sup>

Based on *The 2015 Statistical Report on WeChat used in China*, 97.7% of WeChat users were under 50 years old. Among all the WeChat users in 2015, 86.2% of them were between 18 and 36 years old.<sup>12</sup>

Most of the WeChat users identified themselves as male (more than 60%) while less than 40% of them identified themselves as female in both 2015 and 2016.

The occupations of WeChat users in 2015 were mainly Private Enterprise staff (31.9%), Self-employed or Freelancer (28.3%) and Student (19.7%). Other users were people who were seeking for jobs, government employees, agriculture workers or retired. Also, in 2015 80% of people whose net asset amounts are greater than one million dollars were using WeChat. Similar to the occupations of WeChat users in 2015, in 2016 the occupations of WeChat users were mainly Private Enterprise staff (40.4%), Self-employed or Freelancer (25.3%) and Student (14.4%).

Among all the WeChat users in 2015 and 2016, more than 90% of them used WeChat every

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<sup>11</sup> “The 2016 statistical report on WeChat used in China”, *Souhu*, published January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2017.  
<http://mt.sohu.com/20170106/n477993311.shtml>.

<sup>12</sup> “The 2015 statistical report on WeChat used in China”, *ZOL News Center*, published June 1st, 2015,  
<http://news.zol.com.cn/523/5237369.html>.

day. More than 50% of WeChat users in 2015 and 2016 opened WeChat more than ten times a day.

Most of the WeChat users in 2016 spent more than one hour on WeChat every day (54%).

Based on the data of 2015 and 2016 statistical report, more than half of active WeChat users had at least 100 followers. According to the 2016 statistical report, people frequently used the Moments feature of WeChat to post photos and share feelings, as well as to look at others' posts. The Moments feature of WeChat is similar to the function of Instagram. More than 98% of WeChat users used this feature in 2016. More than 60% of WeChat users used the Moments feature to see their families' and friends' posts. With the Moments feature, Chinese audiences can share information and pictures of museums after visits, which would help the museums to promote themselves.

Some other features frequently used by WeChat users include sending and receiving messages, as well as following and reading information on official WeChat accounts. With regard to official WeChat accounts in China, 72.7% of them were hosted by public or private institutions while only 27.3% of them were hosted by individuals. Among the official WeChat accounts hosted by institutions, most of them were owned by cultural institutions (museums, libraries) and media



institutions (27.8%) . In the WeChat users' perspective, most of them said that they were following institutions' official WeChat accounts for getting information (41.1%), making everything more convenient (36.9%) and absorbing knowledge (13.7%). This thesis research proves that Chinese audiences would like to use WeChat as a tool to gain information and absorb knowledge about American museums, as well as their collections. As a result, American museums should think about how to fulfill Chinese audiences' expectations of obtaining information and knowledge when it comes to organizing WeChat accounts.

Overall, in 2015 and 2016 the majority of WeChat users in China were under 50 years old. Most of the WeChat users worked for private or public companies, which means they would have stable (decent) incomes. Most of the WeChat users said that they use WeChat every day. More than half of the WeChat users had more than 100 followers on WeChat. WeChat users spent a lot of time using the Moments feature, sending and receiving messages, as well as following and reading information on official WeChat accounts. Also, most official WeChat accounts were developed and owned by cultural institutions (museums, libraries) and media institutions. The majority of WeChat users saw official WeChat platforms as a resource for information and

knowledge. According to the statistical report, in the near future the demographics of WeChat users and how they would use WeChat are not likely to change dramatically based on the steady increase of WeChat users.<sup>13</sup>

## **The Increase of Chinese Visitors and the Response of American Museums**

To reach out and serve Chinese audiences better, American museums have to know them better. According to the previous research, in 2016 the U.S.-China Tourism Year,<sup>14</sup> “China became the sixth-largest market for tourism to the United States, and may soon become the largest.”<sup>15</sup>

One of the beneficiaries of the growing number of Chinese visitors to the U.S. would be American museums, since more Chinese visitors to the U.S. are looking for intellectual experiences such as museum visiting, according to the *Washington Post*.<sup>16</sup> To be more specific, as

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<sup>13</sup> “The 2017 quantity statistics of WeChat users”, *didown.com*, published April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2017, <http://www.didown.com/news/58584.html>.

<sup>14</sup> “United States President Barack Obama and Chinese President Xi Jinping announced 2016 as the U.S.-China Tourism Year, celebrating the recent reciprocal extension of visa validity and support increased travel and tourism exports. The two countries will work toward expanding and shaping U.S.-China travel and tourism, and strengthening the bond between the two peoples.” “About”, *Brand USA*, accessed March 13, 2017, <http://toolkit.thebrandusa.info/US-ChinaTourismYear/>.

<sup>15</sup> Jen Horner, “Are You Ready for the U.S.-China Tourism Year?” *MTM LinguaSoft*, March 9, 2016, <http://www.mtmlinguasoft.com/u-s-china-tourism-year/>.

<sup>16</sup> Lia Zhu, “Chinese family travelers take to museums”, *Washington Post*, August 15, 2016, <http://chinawatch.washingtonpost.com/2016/08/chinese-family-travelers-take-to-museums/>.

the article in the *Washington Post* says, “China has overtaken Europe as the largest source of international visitors so far in 2016 at the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco.”<sup>17</sup> “At The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the number of Chinese visitors has already over 200,000 since 2014; Chinese visitors have become the largest group of foreign visitors in The Metropolitan Museum of Art since then”, according to the *Xinhua News Agency* (the official press agency of the People's Republic of China/the biggest and most influential media organization in China).<sup>18</sup>

If Philadelphia is taken as an example, based on the data offered by Philadelphia Convention & Visitors Bureau, the number of the Chinese traveling to Philadelphia will continue increasing and is considered one of the top overseas markets visiting Philadelphia.<sup>19</sup> Who are these visitors? Why do they visit Philadelphia? According to the Philadelphia Convention & Visitors Bureau, in 2016 8% of Chinese visitors came to Philadelphia for conventions or conferences, 10% of Chinese visitors came to Philadelphia for business, 23% of visitors came to Philadelphia for education, and 58% of visitors came to Philadelphia for enjoying leisure time.<sup>20</sup> It seems that

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> “Chinese tourists in US from shopaholics to culture lovers”, *Xin Hua*, July 19, 2016, [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2016-07/19/content\\_26140477.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2016-07/19/content_26140477.htm).

<sup>19</sup> “Overseas Visitors to Philadelphia 2016 Snapshot: All Markets”, *Philadelphia Convention & Visitors Bureau*, accessed December 11, 2017, <https://www.discoverphl.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/China-Snapshot-2016.pdf>.

<sup>20</sup> “Overseas Visitors to Philadelphia 2016 Snapshot: China”, *Philadelphia Convention & Visitors Bureau*, accessed December 11, 2017, <https://www.discoverphl.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/China-Snapshot-2016.pdf>.

the Chinese who visited Philadelphia in 2016 were mainly middle-class citizens eager to experience American culture and students attending American universities. Among all these Chinese visitors, 57% of them visited art galleries/museums.<sup>21</sup>

The same thing can be seen in the case of New York. The Museum of Modern Art saw a 49 percent increase in Chinese visitors for fiscal year 2016, and a 218% increase in Chinese visitors over the last five years.<sup>22</sup> As Meagan Johnson, director of membership and visitor services said, they put “major efforts on bringing more diversity to the museum.”<sup>23</sup> They tried and will still try to accommodate Chinese travelers to secure a continuous increase of Chinese visitors. Along with developing audio tours and maps in Mandarin and accepting Chinese credit cards, one of the best ways to accommodate Chinese travelers is to have an official WeChat account. The Museum of Modern Art is the first museum in New York to have an official WeChat and use it to make the museum more well-known with the Chinese who are living in the United States and those who are visitors to the United States. The information they posted on WeChat were details

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> “Chinese tourists flock to MoMA”, *China Daily*, January 26, 2017, [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/kindle/2017-01/26/content\\_28062408.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/kindle/2017-01/26/content_28062408.htm).

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

about their collection, special exhibitions and events.<sup>24</sup> Not only The Museum of Modern Art, museums like The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Art Institute of Chicago also use WeChat as a tool to reach out and inform Chinese visitors.

However, the data from this thesis research show that most of the Chinese do not know that some of the American museums already have WeChat accounts, which means WeChat still has not been efficiently promoted by American museums. The thesis research also shows that some American museums have not posted information on their WeChat sites with enough frequency, which means WeChat still has not been fully utilized by American museums. Also, the thesis researcher found grammar mistakes in American museums' WeChat accounts when she read their WeChat posts, which means American museums should do a better job editing their WeChat posts.

In summary, there has been a general uptrend in the number of Chinese visitors traveling to the United States. Many of these Chinese visitors could potentially visit museums and art galleries during their stay. Some of the American museums have adapted to this trend through

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<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*

using one of the most popular Chinese social media--WeChat-- to accommodate more Chinese people. The importance of WeChat has been mentioned many times in this thesis. However, American museums should attempt to better organize their WeChat sites to reach more Chinese audiences. Actually, as a useful tool of museum education and communication, social media's importance has been emphasized many times by American museum directors and the heads of museum digital departments according to the following literature review.

### **The Role of Social Media in American Museums**

“More things you put online, more possible that people will come to the museum,”<sup>25</sup> said Julian Siggers, the Williams Director of the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. When people are spending more and more time online, museums are thinking about how to use social media to reach out to people online. When museums post information on social media, they hope that social media can help them engage and educate people. As JiaJia Fei, the digital director at the Jewish Museum in New York City said: “Social media has been a huge

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<sup>25</sup> Julian Siggers, “The Recent Trend of Museums”, (presentation, at the Penn Museum, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, March 9, 2017).

part of outreach and engagement as a tool of education.”<sup>26</sup> According to *The New York Times*, social media is “delivering quirky, educated content to capture new audiences with short video gallery tours led by a curator or a guest on camera on Facebook Live, or via Instagram real-time feeds, Twitter chats and more.”<sup>27</sup> Although social media has always served as a tool of promotion and marketing, their educational function in the museum field cannot be ignored. Not only video gallery tours but also collection and exhibition information that museums post on their social media accounts have useful content that educates people. Social media can be thought of as online forums where curators and scholars can share their knowledge and offer interpretation of the museum exhibitions and collections. Also, the information about coming museum activities and lectures should be posted on social media platforms to bring people to the museums and allow them to interact with museum educators and specialists in the fields.

Social media platforms are tools that audiences can benefit from not only inside the museum, but outside the museum as well.<sup>28</sup> They can be used before, during and after the visit. Social

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<sup>26</sup> Kerry Hannon, “Museum, the New Social Media Darling”, *The New York Times*, October 28, 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/30/arts/design/museums-the-new-social-media-darlings.html>.

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> Nancy Proctor, “Digital: Museum as Platform, Curator as Champion, in the Age of Social Media”, *Curator* 53.1(2010), 35-43: <http://0-eds.a.ebscohost.com.catalog.library.uarts.edu/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=60d44a4e-a2f1-4bf4-8284-7418de5add5f%40sessionmgr4010&vid=3&hid=4205>.

media allows access whether audiences want to know about the operating hours, admission fees, exhibition information before a museum visit or if they want to leave comments and communicate with other visitors during or after going to the museum. Furthermore, social media can help museums to serve and inform people who might not be able to visit the museum physically. As the head of new media initiatives department of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nancy Proctor, says in her article “Digital: Museum as Platform, Curator as Champion, in the Age of Social Media”, “many museums now receive the majority of their visitors online.”<sup>29</sup> By the calculation of Sree Sreenivasan, The Metropolitan Museum of Art’s former chief digital officer, “the Met draws about six million physical visitors a year but also has 29 million visits to its website and reaches 92 million people through its Facebook page, which raises interesting questions about what we mean when we speak of ‘the museum’.”<sup>30</sup> Looking at the online exhibitions, online collections on museums’ social media accounts cannot replace an on-site experience but web-based information can provide access for people who cannot go to the museum in person. For example, for people in China with limited resources and or time, they

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Anand Giridharads, “Museums See Different Virtues in Virtual Worlds”, *The New York Times*, August 7, 2014, <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/08/arts/design/museums-see-different-virtues-in-virtual-worlds.html>.



are unlikely to be able to fly to America to visit the museums, looking at museums' social media information can be the only experience they have with the museums.

## **How WeChat Has Been Used by Chinese Museums**

In general, WeChat offers two account options—the personal account and the official account.

Most WeChat users only have personal accounts. Organizations like museums always register for official accounts. The purpose of having personal accounts or official accounts could be different.

The personal WeChat account is often used to build a network between individuals and people whom they know. To be more specific, WeChat is a platform to chat with families and friends just like Facebook Messenger. Users can also post their photos to share their life on WeChat, similar to Instagram. On the other hand, the official WeChat account is always organized and maintained by professional groups, which makes it a platform for organizations or individuals to spread information to the public. WeChat users with personal accounts can follow every official account they are interested in. After following, people will be able to read the basic information and also receive the new information daily or weekly posted by every account they follow, like following museums or public figures on Facebook. Based on the previous research, people who are following

the Chinese museums' WeChat tend to be those who are planning to visit the museums and those who are visiting the museums, or fans of the museums.<sup>31</sup>

WeChat is similar to Facebook and Instagram but it is actually far more influential. Chinese museums use their WeChat as a tool to inform people, offer audio tours, convey knowledge and communicate with their audiences.<sup>32</sup> Besides posting information about hours, admission fees, location, direction, exhibitions, lectures, interviews and activities, some Chinese museum's WeChat accounts allow people to buy tickets online. The WeChat features that have been continuously developed by the Chinese museums' WeChat groups are online tour feature, online Drift Bottle feature (explained below) as well as online collection and exhibition features.

With the online tour feature, museum visitors can receive the audio, video or text interpretation with pictures of all the objects in the museum. All they need to do is to follow the museum's official account, then type the object number attached to the museum showcase at the gallery, or scan the QR code of the objects in the museum through their cell phones. Then, the museum will

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<sup>31</sup> Huo Yufeng, "To make museums' WeChat more audience-friendly—— take Museum of the Western Han Dynasty Mausoleum of the Nanyue King as an example, " *Chinese Cultural Relics Official Website*, August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016, <http://www.ccrnews.com.cn/index.php/Zhuanlanzhuanke/content/id/61660.html>.

<sup>32</sup> Rong Zhengtong, "Using WeChat in Museum Social Education", *Museum Research* 1 (2017): 17-20, <http://kns.cnki.net/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?dbcode=CJFQ&dbname=CJFDTEMP&filename=BWYJ201701003&v=Mjc0NjNVUkwyZlllWnFGaWprVUwzQkp6clNaTEc0SDliTXJvOUZaNF14ZVgxTHV4WVM3RGgxVDNxVHJXTTFGckM=>.

send the interpretation to them.<sup>33</sup> All the online tours are free. Using WeChat's online tour feature is a good choice for visitors who do not want to spend money on museum audio-tour tools. Based on this thesis research, American museums are also developing the online audio feature on WeChat accounts. They include object numbers, object names, and object pictures on WeChat sites, which allow Chinese audiences to enjoy the audio-tour at home if they were not able to visit the museum in the U.S. physically.

The online Drift Bottle feature is one of the basic WeChat features. With this feature, WeChat users can write down something and put it into a virtual drift bottle. The bottle will be thrown into the "WeChat sea". Any other WeChat users may have the chance to get this drift bottle and read the information inside it. They can also leave comments on the same page and throw it into the sea again so other people can read it and leave comments. Chinese museums use this online Drift Bottle feature as a tool to inform people and get people's feedback. The museum will write down information about museum objects or exhibitions, putting it into the virtual drift bottle, throwing it into the "WeChat sea" and waiting for people's comments. Using the online Drift Bottle feature

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<sup>33</sup> Wang Xueliang, "Museums on WeChat", *Xinhua Net*, April 12, 2013, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/mrdx/2013-04/12/c\\_132303467.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/mrdx/2013-04/12/c_132303467.htm).

is a good way to communicate with people, letting them know about the museum objects and also getting feedback from the public to improve exhibitions.<sup>34</sup>

With the online collection and exhibition feature, people can explore the museum's collections on WeChat. Online collection offers pictures (sometimes three-dimensional images), interpretation of the collections, and the background of the exhibitions. The online collection and exhibition feature of some Chinese museums also offer a 360-degree view of museum galleries. People can walk through all the exhibitions and know about the history, materials, makers, and other information about the collections without stepping into the museums physically.<sup>35</sup> Usually, Chinese museums see the online collection and exhibition feature as a means to prepare visitors for a visit to the museum and a platform with collections' interpretation for visitors to review after their visit, as well as a tool to reach people who are interested in museum exhibitions but would not be able to go to the museum physically.<sup>36</sup> Based on this thesis research, American museums

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<sup>34</sup> Wang Ying, "Museums at your fingertips—WeChat used in museums", *Doc88*, accessed March 13, 2017, [http://xueshu.baidu.com/s?wd=paperuri%3A%280fdf35392a36f1f3e3a5386eeff1333c%29&filter=sc\\_long\\_sign&tn=SE\\_xueshu\\_source\\_2kduw22v&sc\\_vurl=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.doc88.com%2Fp-9979565058934.html&ie=utf-8&sc\\_us=8038642869867877717](http://xueshu.baidu.com/s?wd=paperuri%3A%280fdf35392a36f1f3e3a5386eeff1333c%29&filter=sc_long_sign&tn=SE_xueshu_source_2kduw22v&sc_vurl=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.doc88.com%2Fp-9979565058934.html&ie=utf-8&sc_us=8038642869867877717).

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Rong Zhengtong, "Using WeChat in Museum Social Education", *Museum Research* 1 (2017): 17-20, <http://kns.cnki.net/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?dbcode=CJFQ&dbname=CJFDTEMP&filename=BWYJ201701003&v=Mjc0NjNVUkwyZlllWnFGaWprVUwzQkp6clNaTEc0SDliTXJvOUZaNF14ZVgxTHV4WVM3RGgxVDNxVHJXTTFGckM=>.

that use WeChat also offer online collections information on WeChat. To be more specific, American museums would highlight some of their collections and offer interpretation of those collections in Chinese. According to the data of this thesis research, Chinese people show a strong interest in American museums' online collections interpretation.

Along with the previous research on how WeChat has been used by Chinese museums, some previous research reveals the public's expectation of Chinese museums' WeChat accounts. To be more specific, Chinese audiences prefer museums' WeChat posts that attempt to convey knowledge, rather than posts that are written in a direct marketing tone. Based on the data collected by Hu Ying (scholar of Chinese history, Chinese culture and archeology), the WeChat posts of the Palace Museum that tried to convey content (written in an educational tone) got about 260,000 more page views than the posts with a marketing tone in the first three months in 2015.<sup>37</sup> This means museums' WeChat followers expect to gain knowledge when they read the museums' posts, and combining education and promotion would be a better way to attract people to read the

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<sup>37</sup> Hu Ying, "The Future of Education in Museum and the Use of WeChat," *China Cultural Heritage Scientific Research* 4 (2016): 20-25, <http://kns.cnki.net/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?dbcode=CJFQ&dbname=CJFDLAST2017&filename=ZGWW201604004&v=MjlxNjBQeXJjZWJHNEg5Zk1xNDIGWUISOGVYMUx1eFITN0RoMVQzcVRyV00xRnJDVVJMMmZZdVpxRmlqbVVMN0I=>.

museums' posts. Many Chinese museums understand the audiences' expectations, and have been trying to provide more educational content in their posts. Chinese museums often try to make their posts appealing and eye-catching, for example creating a story with illustrations to further explain the history of a museum object and better explain the background of their exhibitions. The Chinese public looks forward to and enjoys reading museum posts with interesting content.<sup>38</sup>

Chinese museums offer some useful examples of how museums can use their WeChat. However, what Chinese visitors would like to see on Chinese museums' WeChat accounts might be different from what they expect to see on American museums' WeChat accounts. Do they want the information on American museums' WeChat accounts to be more basic, simple and clear? Maybe people who plan to go to America and visit museums would be more eager to know about the museum's location and how to get there. Perhaps people who might not have a chance to visit American museums in person might be more eager to get information of museums' collections. No matter what, one important thing that American museums need to consider is who would be able to edit WeChat information in Chinese so that it is grammatically correct?

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<sup>38</sup> *ibid.*

## Summary

The number of Chinese visitors traveling to the United States is steadily increasing. More and more American museums are realizing that it is important to actively cultivate the Chinese market. However, to reach out to the Chinese who are not currently in the U.S. is difficult for American museums because American social media and websites are blocked in China. To solve this problem, American museums such as The Museum of Modern Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Philadelphia Museum of Art are trying to develop their WeChat accounts as tools to communicate and inform the Chinese. Other museums that also want to attract Chinese visitors but do not have WeChat accounts might need some help to organize their WeChat information. Unfortunately, we know from the literature review that there are no articles directly talking about how American museums can use WeChat to reach out to the Chinese (who are not currently in the U.S.). Although there are articles talking about how Chinese museums have been using WeChat in museum education and communication, people's expectation for Chinese museum's WeChat accounts might be different from their expectation for American museum's WeChat accounts. The good news is, we already know about who are using WeChat and how people are using WeChat in

China. This helps educators, curators, and social media managers of the American museums to know what kinds of Chinese audiences they can expect when they use WeChat, and how to reach out to the target audiences better. The next step is to answer the following questions: What do Chinese audiences consider as the most important and necessary information on American museum's WeChat accounts? What kind of information might be unnecessary for them? What would they like to see on American museum's WeChat accounts?



## Chapter Three

### Thesis Research

To answer the questions developed from the literature review, the following chapter will present the data collected during evaluations conducted over a two-month period in Summer 2017.

As the thesis proposes to improve American museums' popularity among Chinese audiences through WeChat, this study was driven by the question: How can American museums use WeChat to better reach and inform the Chinese audience?

#### Methodology:

A front-end survey (in Chinese) was administrated to Chinese people in two time periods: June 17<sup>th</sup>-July 1<sup>st</sup> and August 8<sup>th</sup>-August 11<sup>th</sup>. The survey was generated on Wen Juan Xing (a Chinese online survey development cloud-based software) and distributed online via Chinese social media platforms such as WeChat and QQ (an instant messaging software service). As the thesis aims to help American museums reach a broader group of Chinese visitors, especially those who might physically visit the museums in the U.S., the survey was directed to those

Chinese who had visited the U.S. in the past; who were visiting the U.S. at the moment, and those who plan (hope) to visit the U.S. in future. To reach these groups, the thesis researcher sent out the survey to three tourist (to the U.S.) chatting groups on QQ with thousands of people who will visit (or have already been to) the United States. This researcher also made contact with two travel agencies in Philadelphia's Chinatown, as well as one travel agency in China, which all posted the survey on their WeChat accounts for their customers to fill out. In addition, this researcher posted the survey on her personal WeChat account so that the researcher's followers could spread the survey to more people. The researcher has received approximately 226 answer sheets during June 17<sup>th</sup>-July 1<sup>st</sup>. From August 8<sup>th</sup> to August 11<sup>th</sup> this researcher received nine more answer sheets through WeChat from a group of Chinese students who went to the University of Pennsylvania for a study tour. A total of 235 answer sheets have been collected.

The research purpose of this thesis is to improve the popularity of American museums among Chinese audiences with the usage of WeChat. This researcher proposed 15 questions in the questionnaire in order to understand how Chinese people think about museum visiting and museums' WeChat accounts. The first two questions asked people about their usage of WeChat

and their visiting museums in China. The third question asked people about their visiting museums in the United States (either online or in person). Question four asked about people's prior knowledge and experience of following existing American museums' WeChat accounts, followed by question five to nine that asked people about their thoughts and expectations of American museums' WeChat accounts. Some demographic questions were included at the end of the survey. (See Appendix II)

## **Data Analysis**

### **Demographic analysis:**

Based on the survey data, the majority of participants are females (71.4%). Most of them are well-educated: 45.5% of participants claim that they have completed bachelor's degree, and 29% of them claim that they have completed a post-graduate degree. Research has shown that females with higher education levels tend to visit museums more frequently, either in China or America. That means the identity of the majority of participants matches with the identity of main museum-goers, which makes the survey data more meaningful.

Moreover, most of the participants are within the age of 18-34(75.9%). People in this age

group are the prime population that American museums hope to attract as visitors. Also, people within this age group tend to visit different places (possibly museums) with family and friends who might become museums' potential visitors as well. Chinese people who are between 18 and 36 years old are the main WeChat users. That means the prime age group of participants overlaps with the main age group of WeChat users, which makes the results of the survey more representative of the target audience. That also reminds museums in the United States to think about how to customize their WeChat accounts to attract more people from this age group so that they could reach to more Chinese visitors.

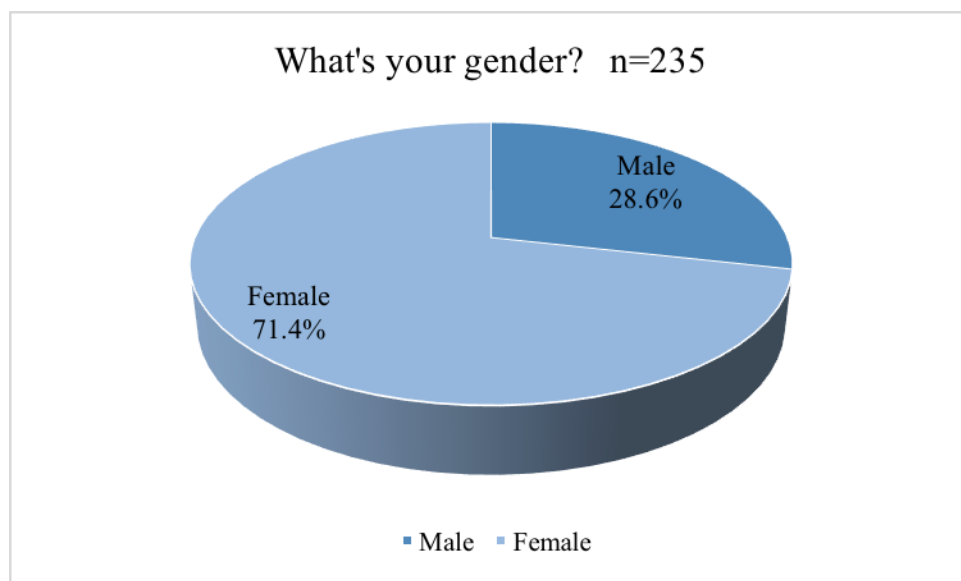


Figure 1

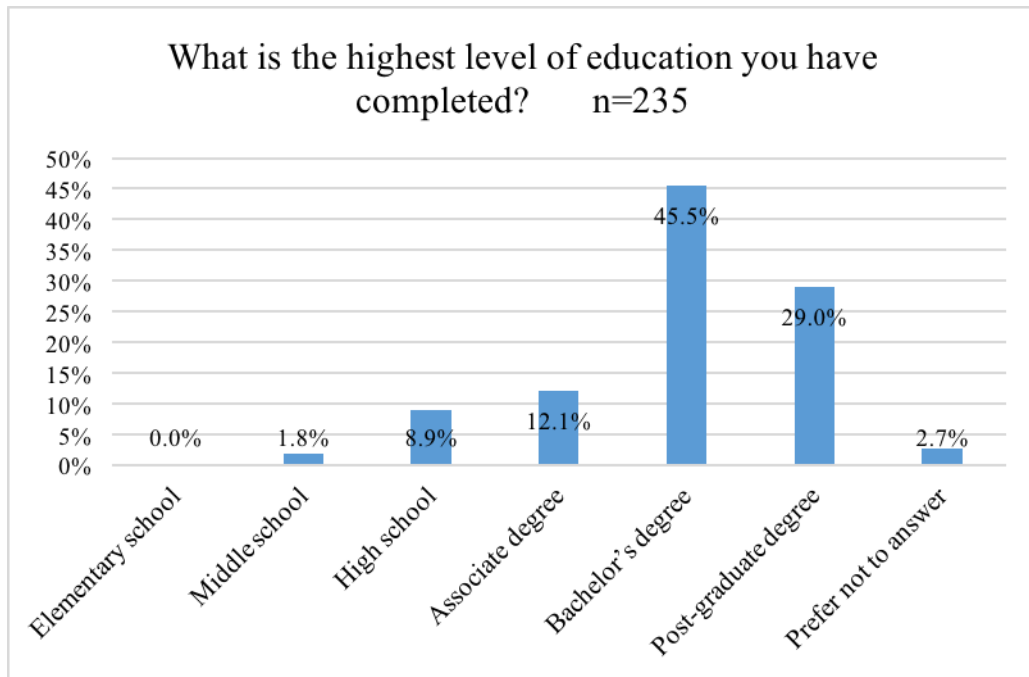


Figure 2

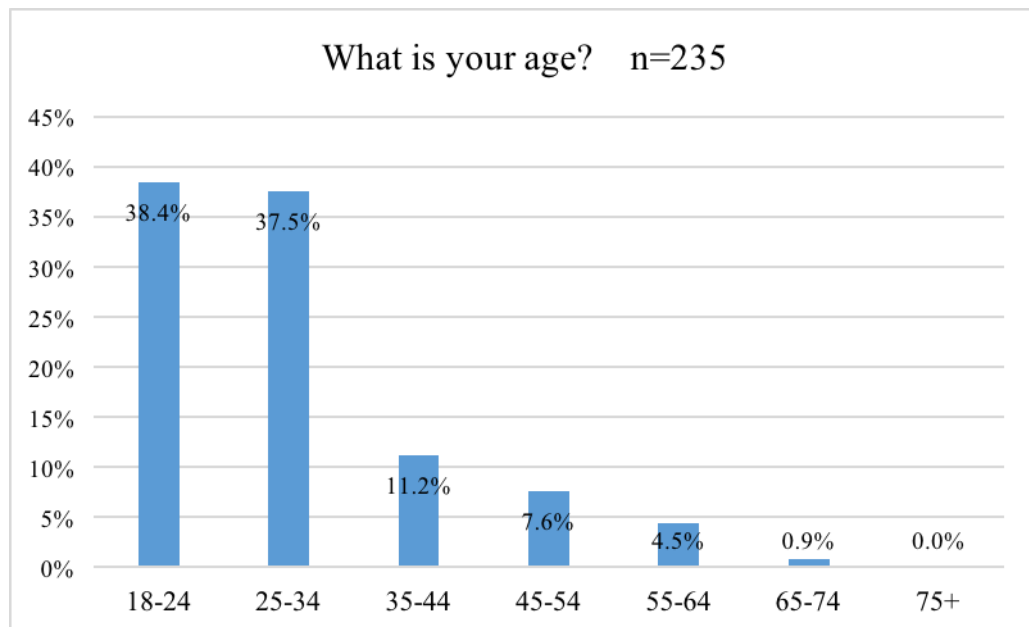


Figure 3

In addition, to obtain data about participants' financial background, they were asked to select their occupations, and to fill out which area of China that they come from. Most of the respondents claimed that they are either working in private enterprises (30.8%) or students (35.3%) coming from Guangdong (56.2%), Beijing (5.07%), and Shanghai (6%).<sup>39</sup> In China people working in private enterprises tend to have a higher income than people in other occupations. Also, Beijing is the capital of China, and its economy ranks among the most prosperous in China; Shanghai is China's biggest city and a global financial hub; and Guangdong is one of the largest province in China, whose economy is strong enough to be compared with that of many countries. Moreover, Beijing and Guangdong have the largest numbers of people traveling abroad according to a previous research.<sup>40</sup> Therefore, people involved in private enterprises from Beijing, Shanghai and Guangdong tend to have decent incomes, and they are more likely to travel abroad, and they are more inclined to spend money on cultural institutions while visiting the U.S. In addition, students from Beijing, Shanghai and Guangdong tend to live

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<sup>39</sup> The administrative divisions of China consist of several levels, the provincial level (first level) includes Province, Municipality, Autonomous Region, and Special Administrative Region. Guangdong is a Chinese province. Both Shanghai and Beijing are Chinese municipalities.

<sup>40</sup> "The Report of Chinese people traveling aboard", *Sou Hu*, February 22, 2016, <http://news.sohu.com/20160202/n436605497.shtml>.

in families with better economic conditions. Therefore, their family might be more financially supportive if those students wanted to visit the museums in the U.S.

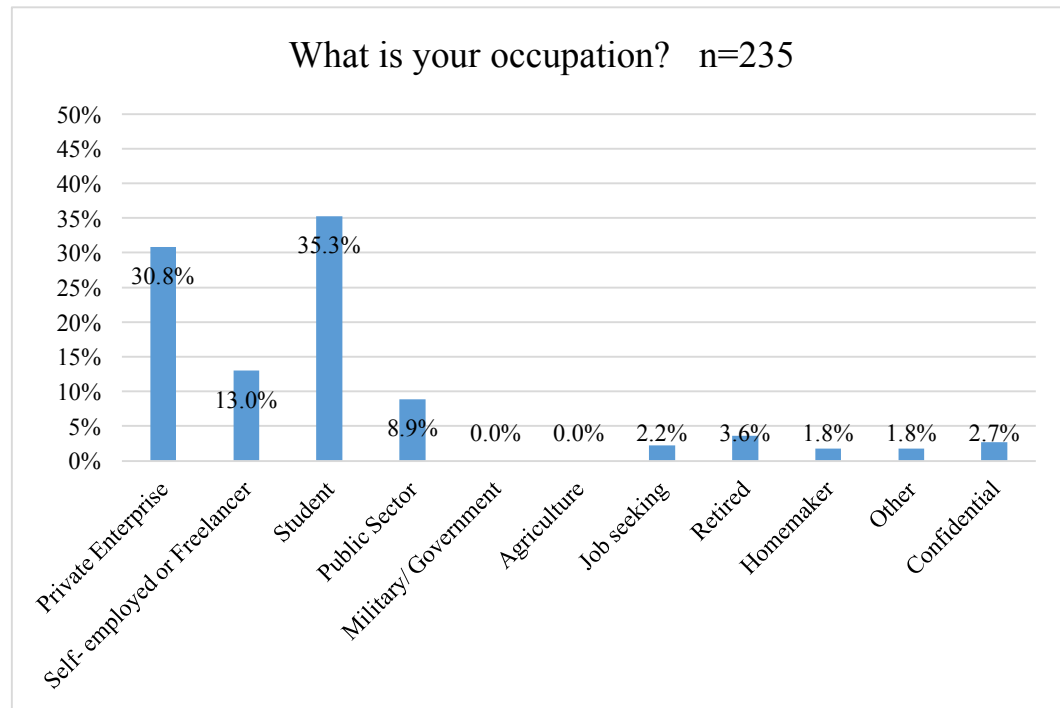


Figure 4

When asked about their reasons to travel to the U.S., most of the respondents said that they would travel to America for vacation/holiday (53.1%), or visiting friends and relatives (13%). Some of the participants said that they would travel to the U.S. for education (28.1%). Chinese people who would visit America for vacation or for education are probably more likely to visit museums in the U.S, because people who are enjoying their vacation would have more leisure time; and they may look for an activity in which to participate. Students (Chinese people who

would visit the U.S. for education) might also be inclined to look for interesting places to relax and hang out with friends. They tend to pay more attention to museums and tourist attractions since they want to explore the city they are living in, and want to immerse themselves in the culture. Also, museums would hope to attract students. As learners, students need to be informed, and they might be eager for knowledge. Moreover, young students may already be familiar with museums because of previous experience of museums visiting with their parents.

Only a few people said that they would travel to the U.S. for business (4%), or to attend a convention (1.8%). Since this survey was sent out mainly through travel agencies, most of the respondents tend to be tourists to the U.S. The low percentage of people traveling to the U.S for business was most likely because of the methodology of this thesis, and not because Chinese people don't often travel to the US for business. As a result, American museums should still think about how to use WeChat to promote their tours and activities to these people, so that they may think to take a break at the museums after their business meeting or convention event.



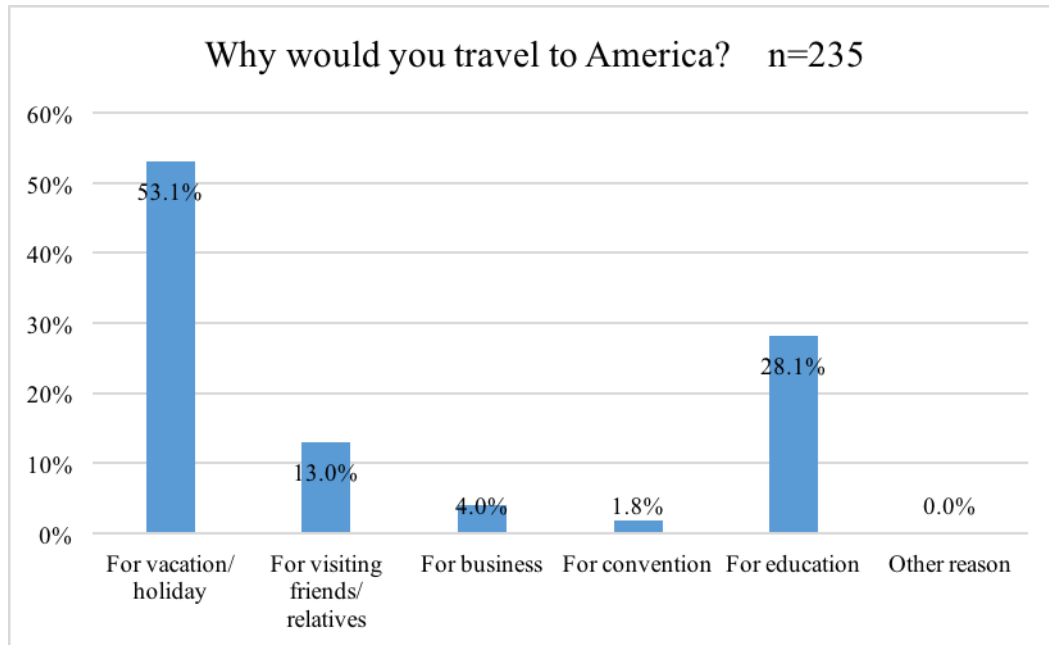


Figure 5

Since the data shows that most of people would visit America for vacation or education, museums in the U.S. should put emphasis on attracting tourists and students through WeChat. Hopefully, the following study will provide some answers about how to reach these groups.

### **Do you use WeChat? /Chinese people's utilization of WeChat**

Participants were first asked "Do you use WeChat?" Overwhelmingly, 95.3% participants selected "Yes". Only a few people selected "No". Those people who selected "No" said that using WeChat might be time-consuming. People who do not use WeChat would not need to answer the following questions in the survey.

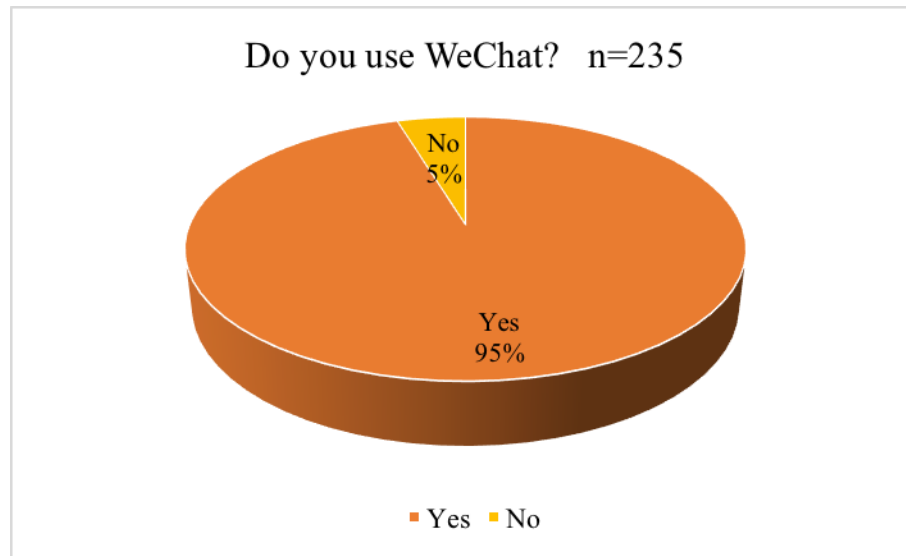


Figure 6

WeChat is popular in China, but it is rarely known by people in the U.S. Therefore, staff from American museums may ask some questions, such as “Can people download WeChat in the U.S? Can people use WeChat in the U.S.? Can people in the U.S. make contact with people in China via WeChat? Can people access American museums’ WeChat accounts in China?” The answers to all these questions is “Yes”. The WeChat app can be downloaded for free from Google Play in the U.S. The WeChat app downloaded from Google Play is the same as the WeChat app used in China. The basic WeChat features such as multimedia messaging (send video, photo, text, and voice messages), group chat & calls (create group chats with up to 500 people and group video

calls up to 9 people), moments (share best moments on personal photo stream), language support (localized in 20 different languages and can translate messages to any language), real-time location, free voice & video calls are all available in the U.S. Also, people in the U.S can use WeChat to contact people in China anytime. People in China can also follow and contact museums in the United States on WeChat. Every time the American museums post new information on their WeChat accounts, people in China who have followed those museums' WeChat are able to check the information. This is a way that American museums can bypass the regulations around other popular internet sources like Google and Facebook. Through posting information on their official WeChat sites, American museums would be able to better inform their Chinese audiences.

### **How often do you visit museums in China? /Chinese people's frequency of visiting museums in China**

For the thesis purpose, this researcher needed to learn about Chinese audiences' previous experiences of museum visiting, so respondents were then asked to select their frequency of visiting museums in China. Over 50% of them said that they would visit museums in China less than three times a year. About 20% of participants said they would visit museums in China three

to five times a year. A few participants chose that they would visit museums in China six to ten times a year (7.6%), while 10.3% of participant would visit museums in China more than 10 times a year. However, there are 7.6% of participants that have never been to any museums.

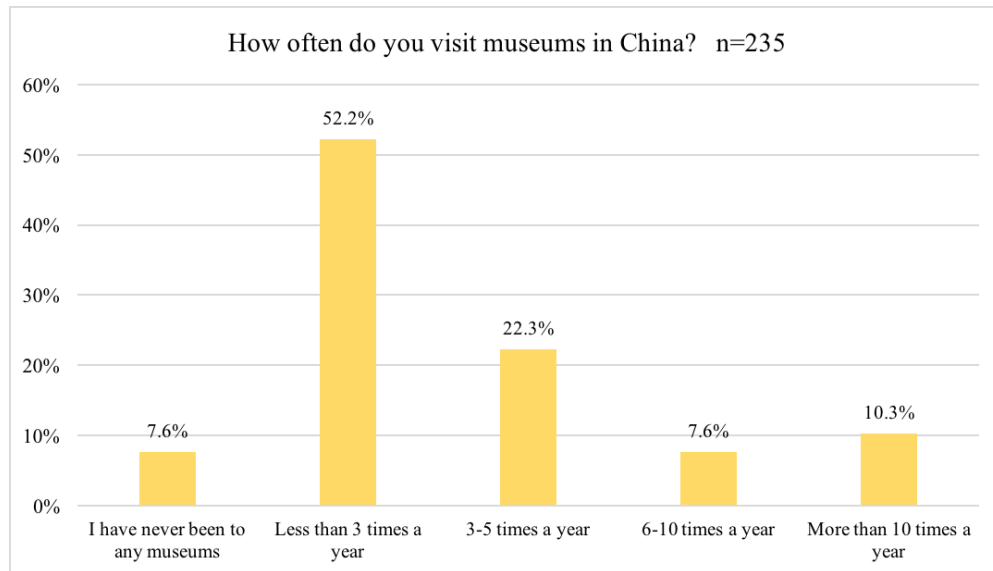


Figure 7

To further understand how people know about the Chinese museums they have been visiting, the group of participants who occasionally visit museums in China (3-10 times a year, and more than 10 times a year) were asked to choose the ways that they learn about Chinese museums and their events (programs). Out of 90 respondents, the majority of them (63.3%) selected museum's official WeChat as the way to learn about the museums in China; when 56.7% of them selected museums' official website, and 36.7% of them selected museums' official Weibo (a popular

Chinese microblogging website). The data reveals that most of the participants who occasionally visit museums in China learn about the museums and their events from web-based platforms such as museum's official WeChat, museums' official website, and museum's official Weibo. Among all the web-based platforms that people use to learn about museums in China, WeChat has been used most frequently.

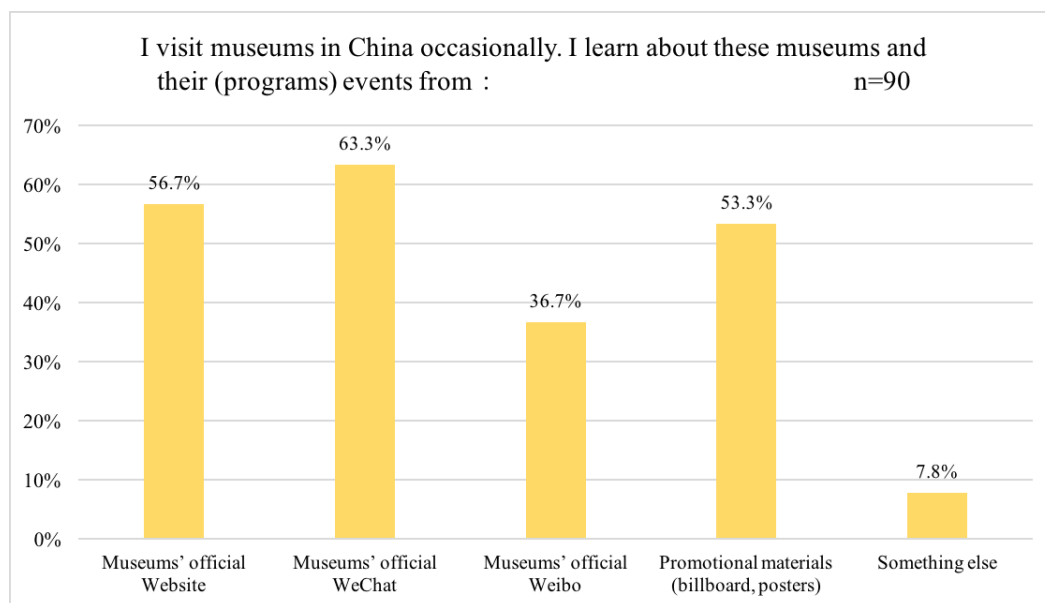


Figure 8

Along with web-based platforms, more than half of the participants who occasionally visit museums in China get information about Chinese museums and their events from promotional materials such as billboards, posters, newspapers, as well as advertisements on buses and subways (53.3%). That means the Chinese museums' marketing strategy is working. However, different

from web-based platforms, people receive information through promotion materials such as billboards and posters more passively. People would often choose to search museums' information online actively via web-based platforms but they would always run into billboards and posters unexpectedly on their way to work on a regular basis. Therefore, promoting through web-based platforms may be a better way to encourage people to learn about the museums actively.

Along with all the ways to learn about Chinese museums and their events that are mentioned above, 7.8% of participants who occasionally visit museums in China chose that they learn about those museums from something else. To be more specific, five participants pointed out that they learned about the museums in China from friends. One participant mentioned that he/she hears about the museums and their events from Douban.com (a Chinese social networking service website allowing registered users to record information and create content related to film, books, music, recent events and activities in Chinese cities). Another participant said that he/she knew about the museum events when he/she was physically inside the museum.

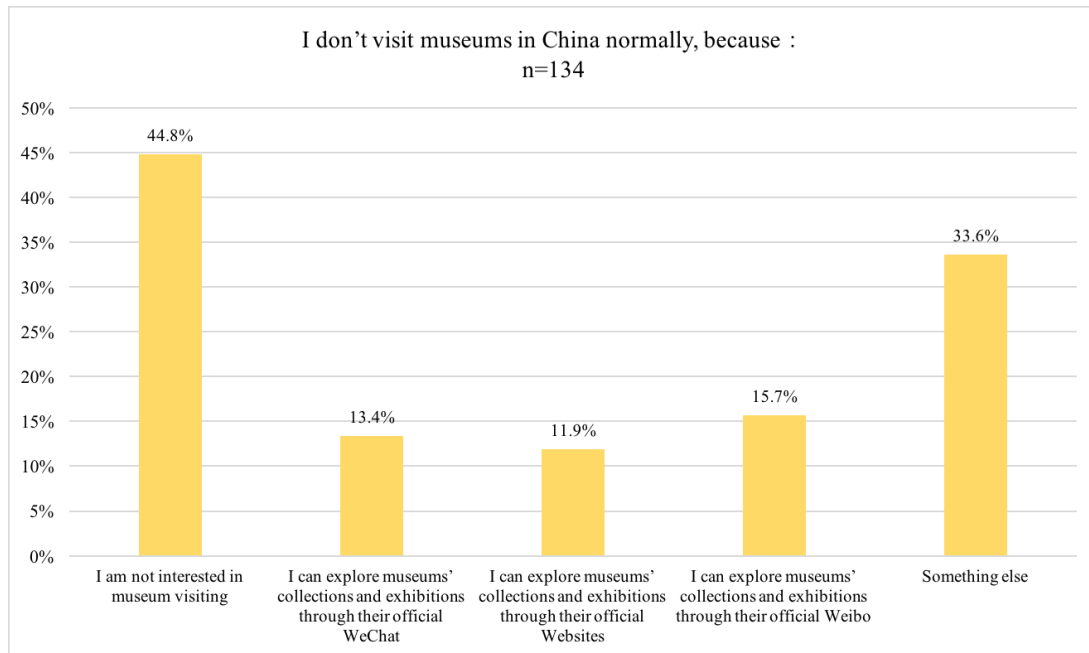


Figure 9

In addition to the group of participants who would visit museums in China occasionally (3-10 times a year, or more), there are a majority of participants who do not always visit museums in China (less than 3 times a year/ have never been to any museums in China). To further understand why they would not visit museums in China normally, those participants were asked to choose the reasons. Out of 134 respondents, 13.4% of them selected the option “I can explore museum’s collections and exhibitions through their official WeChat.” A similar number of participants chose the options that they can explore museum’s collections and exhibitions through their official websites” (11.9%), and official Weibo (15.7%). The data shows that people who would not

normally visit museums in China tend to pay less attention to Chinese museums' websites and social media. Surprisingly, about 45% of participants who do not always visit museums in China selected the option "I am not interested in museum visiting" as the reason that they rarely visit museums in China. Why are these people not interested in visiting museums in China? Further research might need to be done to find out the reasons behind Chinese people's low interest in visiting Chinese museums. Some of the participants who would not normally visit museums in China said that they rarely visit those museums for other reasons (33.6%). Thirteen of them said that they are not interested in Chinese museums' collections. That explains in some ways why there is such a high rate of people saying that they are not interested in museum visiting. They also pointed out that Chinese museums' exhibitions and interpretation of objects are not attractive enough. Another fifteen people said that they do not normally visit museums in China because they do not have time. Another eleven people pointed out that there are not many interesting museums in the cities they live in. A few people mentioned that they do not visit museums in China because of financial condition, or the lack of company.



### **Have you visited (or do you plan to visit) museums in the United States?**

To learn about Chinese audiences' potential of visiting American museums, participants were then asked "Have you visited or do you plan to visit any museums in the United States (either on-line or in person)?" Surprisingly, a majority of the population selected "Yes" (68.8%). Only minority of participants selected "No" (31.3%).

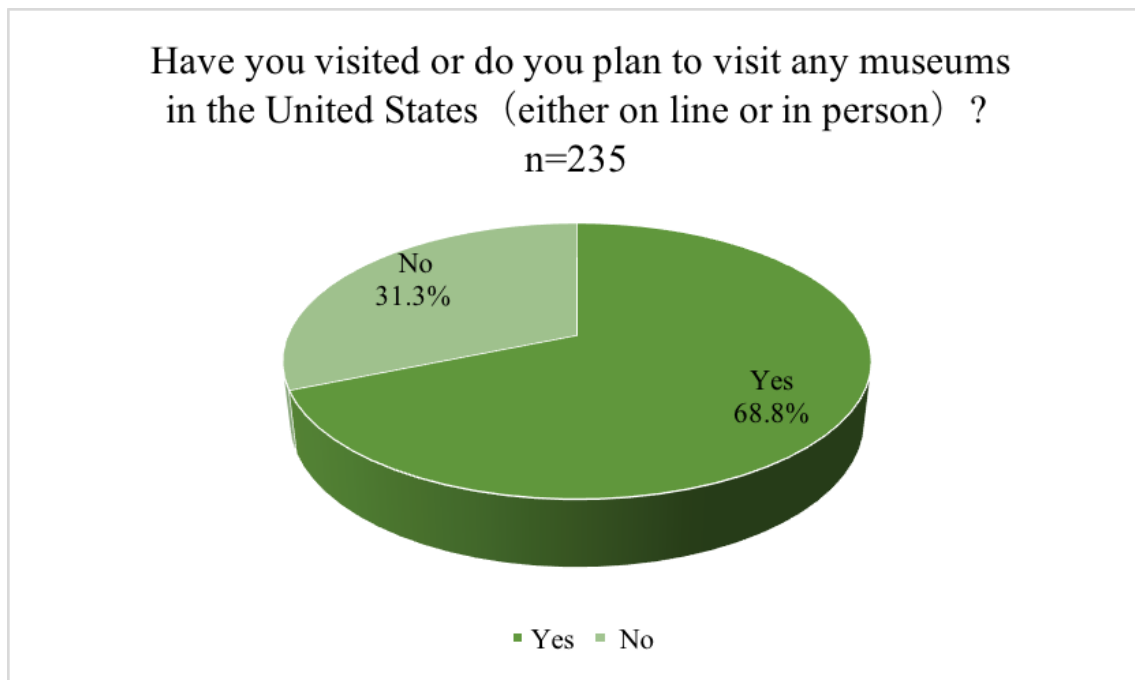


Figure 10

Among all the people who have visited (or plan to visit) museums in the United States (154 participants), up to 72.1% of them said that they have visited (or plan to visit) museums in the United States during their trip; about 28% of them said that they have visited (or plan to visit)

museums in the United States online.

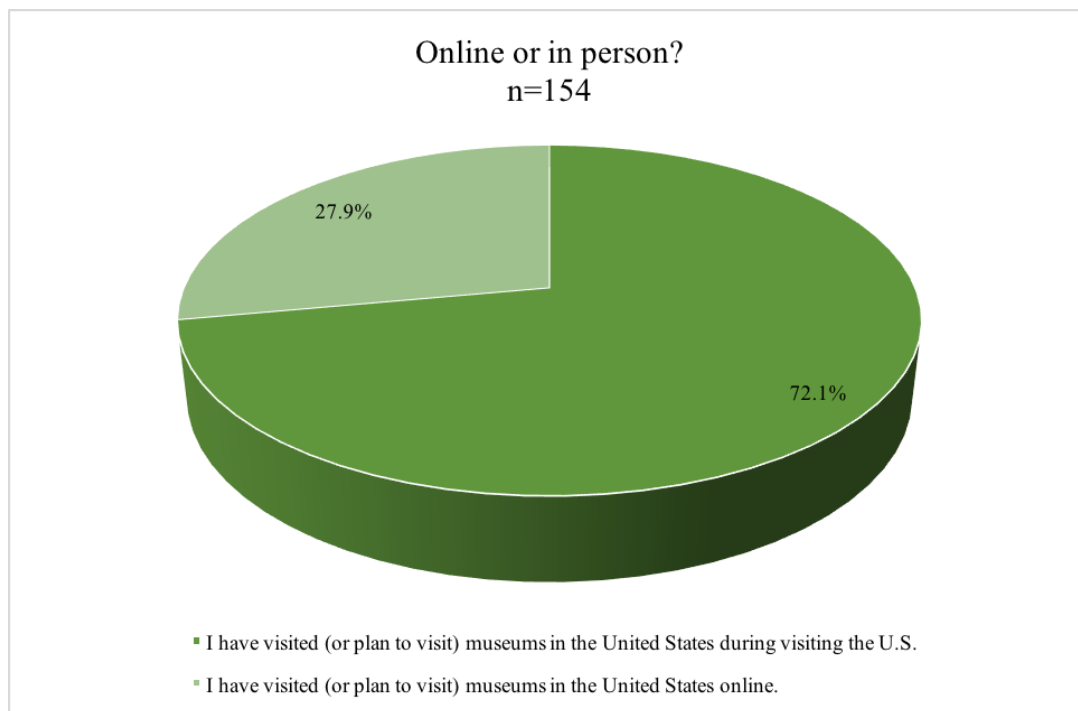


Figure 11

The high rate of visiting museums in the United States shows that Chinese people have a strong interest in American museums. That is in a sharp contrast to many Chinese people's low interest in visiting museums in China. Why there is group of participants that might not be interested in visiting museums in China, while most of participants show interest in visiting museums in the U.S.? This researcher will try to answer this question in the following research.

**Which museums in the U.S. you have visited (or plan to visit) physically?**

In order to further understand Chinese people's previous experience of visiting museums in the U.S., participants were then asked "If planning to actually visit the U.S, which American museums have you visited or do you plan to visit?" Among all the museums in the US which participants have visited (or plan to visit) physically, The Metropolitan Museum of Art is the most frequently-visited one, followed by the Museum of Modern Art. The third most popular one is the Philadelphia Museum of Art. (For more details, please see the table in the next page)

## Types of museums in the U.S that participants have visited or plan to visit physically:

n=111

Name of Museums	Metioned Times
<b>The Art Museum/ Art Galleries</b>	
Metropolitan Museum of Art	50
Museum of Modern Art	29
Philadelphia Museum of Art	10
Museum of Fine Arts of Boston	6
The Art Institute of Chicago	5
J. Paul Getty Museum	5
National Gallery of Art	4
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art	4
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum	3
Whitney Museum of American Art	3
Smithsonian American Art Museum	3
Asian Art Museum of San Francisco	3
Brooklyn Museum	2
Barnes Foundation	2
Harvard Art Museums	2
Chihuly Garden and Glass Exhibition in Seattle Center	2
Seattle Art Museum	2
de Young	2
Corning Museum of Glass	1
RISD Museum	1
Crocker Art Museum	1
Los Angeles County Museum of Art	1
New Museum	1
Museum of Fine Arts, Houston	1
The Frick Collection	1
Legion of Honor	1
Princeton University Art Museum	1
High Museum of Art	1
<b>Natural History and Antropology Museums</b>	
American Museum of Natural History	9
Smithsonian Institution National Museum of Natural History	6
Harvard Museum of Natural History	2
The Field Museum	1
Arizona Museum Of Natural History	1
Houston Museum of Natural Science	1
University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology	1
<b>The Hsitory Museum/ The Historic House</b>	

National September 11 Memorial & Museum	2
National Museum of American History	2
National Museum of the American Indian	1
Independence Hall	1
North Carolina Museum of History	1
Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum	1
National Civil War Museum	1
O. Henry Museum	1
Ellis Island Immigration Museum	1
New-York Historical Society	1
Atlanta History Center	1
International Spy Museum	1
Newseum	1
Maritime Museum of San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park	1
USS Midway Museum	1
Museum of Pop Culture	1
National Archives of the United States	1
U.S. Marshals Museum	1
<b>Science and Technology Museums and Centers</b>	
National Air and Space Museum of the Smithsonian Institution	5
California Academy of Sciences	2
The Museum of Flight	1
The Tech Museum of Innovation	1
<b>Medical Museums</b>	
Mütter Museum	1

Table 1

The data shows that the Chinese have a strong interest in visiting art museums/art galleries in the United States. They also prefer visiting natural history museums in the United States. History museums/historic houses as well as science and technology museums are also in participants' visiting lists.

However, how do people know about those American museums? Despite those who learned from their friends or those who found the museums online, some people might know about (or have been to) the American museums because they joined the travel programs offered by travel agencies. When this researcher looked at the official websites of some well-known Chinese travel agencies such as “China Travel Service”, “Beijing China International Travel Service”, and “China Youth Travel Service”, the researcher found that they all include American museums in some of their plans of traveling to the U.S. For instance, some included museums are The Metropolitan Museum of Art, American Museum of Natural History, J. Paul Getty Museum, National Air and Space Museum of the Smithsonian Institution, Smithsonian Institution National Museum of Natural History, and Corning Museum of Glass. As a result, if American museums hope to attract more Chinese visitors, they should consider working with Chinese travel agencies, who can promote the museums through including them as part of their tourists’ travel schedule.

### **Why would you visit American museums in person?**

Furthermore, to better understand Chinese people’ passion of visiting museums in the U.S.,

participants who have visited (or plan to visit) museums in the United States were asked the open-ended question: “Why would you visit these museums in person?” Based on the collected data, out of 111 participants, 39.5% of them said that the reason was they have curiosity about discovering more about the American museums, or have general interest in American museums’ collections. Some of the participants mentioned that they prefer the museums in the U.S. because those museums have a better quantity and quality of collections. Almost 28% of them said that they would visit museums in the U.S. because some of the American museums are popular tourist attractions (probably recommended by family and friends) and they would like to visit well-known places during travel. Some of them explained that they would visit museums in the U.S. because they are interested in Western culture, art and science (18.6%). People’s preference for American museums’ broad collections, as well as their curiosity about Western culture somewhat explains why they prefer museums in the U.S. rather than the museums in China. (Most of the collections in Chinese museums are from China originally, while many collections at American museums, especially the collections of those encyclopedic museums, are from all over the world). Some other reasons for participants’ visiting museums in the U.S. would be to spend spare time, to satisfy

family and friends, to enjoy the atmosphere at the museums, to see famous Chinese collections as they are displayed abroad, or for academic research.

Discounted tickets or free admission might be another attraction for the Chinese to visit some of the museums in the U.S. Many Chinese people show specific interest in museums of the Smithsonian Institution. They mentioned that their interest in museums of the Smithsonian Institution is not only due to the fame of the institution, but also because of the free admission for all Smithsonian museums and the zoo in Washington, D.C. People's preference for discounted tickets has also been proved in their answers. Their answers have also suggested the discounted ticket packages of CityPASS cover some museums' admission fee which allow them to visit museums with less cost. Based on the official website of CityPASS, it is "an American company that produces and sells discounted ticket packages to top tourist attractions in various North American metropolitan areas."<sup>41</sup> For example, the discounted ticket packages of Philadelphia tourist attractions cover the admission fee of the Franklin Institute, Big Bus Tours, One Liberty Observation Deck, the Adventure Aquarium, and the Philadelphia Zoo. Each adult only need to

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<sup>41</sup> "About Us", *CityPASS*, accessed August 1, 2017, <http://zh.citypass.com/philadelphia>.



pay 55 dollars to visit all the tourist attractions mentioned above (35 dollars for each child). People can pay for their CityPASS discounted ticket packages online, and get the ticket packages mailed to their hotel addresses in the U.S. There are other options that are fully mobile and do not require tickets to be sent in the mail. They can also buy the discounted ticket packages in tourist attractions which are included in the package plan.<sup>42</sup>

The data reveal that most of the participants who would visit American museums are museum explorers according to museum researcher John Falk.<sup>43</sup> They are generally interested in the museums or Western culture. The rest of them are facilitators, professionals, experience seekers, spiritual pilgrims, people who would like to see famous Chinese collections, or people who would look for places to spend spare time. Generally, people are attracted by discounted tickets or free admission to the museums. American museums should think about how to attract museum explorers via WeChat sites. Highlighting their Western collections which shows people the culture, history, art, or science of Western countries would be helpful. Mentioning some famous Chinese collections on WeChat sites may also help to attract Chinese visitors. Information about discounted

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<sup>42</sup> "How it works- Get it", *CityPASS*, accessed August 1, 2017, <http://zh.citypass.com/philadelphia>.

<sup>43</sup> John H. Falk, "An Identity-Centered Approach to Understanding Museum Learning". *Curator* 49.2 (2006): 156-157.

admission fee or free visiting day would always drive people's attention.

### **Do you know about American museums' WeChat accounts? /Prior knowledge and experience of following American museums' WeChat accounts**

To directly relate to the purpose of this thesis--helping American museums reach a broader group of Chinese visitors through WeChat--participants were then asked "Do you know that some museums in the United States already have WeChat accounts?" Overwhelmingly, 92.9% of population selected "No, I don't." Only 7.1% of participants selected "Yes, I do". The data reflect the urgency to promote American museums' official WeChat to the Chinese.

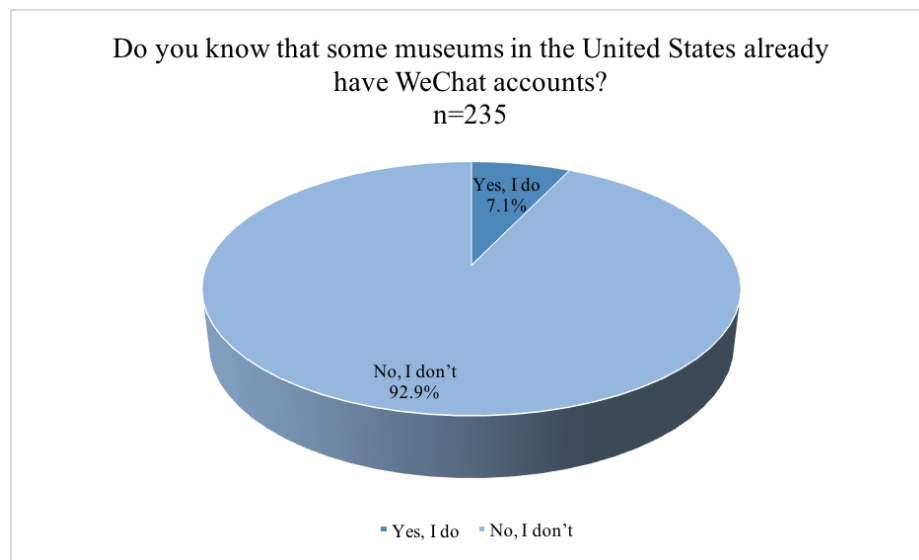


Figure 12

For the purpose of understanding participants' prior knowledge of American museums'

WeChat accounts, the participants who said that they already know about American museums'

WeChat accounts were asked to select which accounts they know (they can check all that apply).

Out of sixteen people, fifteen people selected that they know about The Metropolitan Museum of

Art's WeChat account. Eight people chose that they know about the Museum of Modern Art's

WeChat account. Five people selected that they know about The Art Institute of Chicago's WeChat

account, along with five people selected that they know about the WeChat account of the Asian

Art Museum of San Francisco. Four people know about the Philadelphia Museum of Art's WeChat

account.

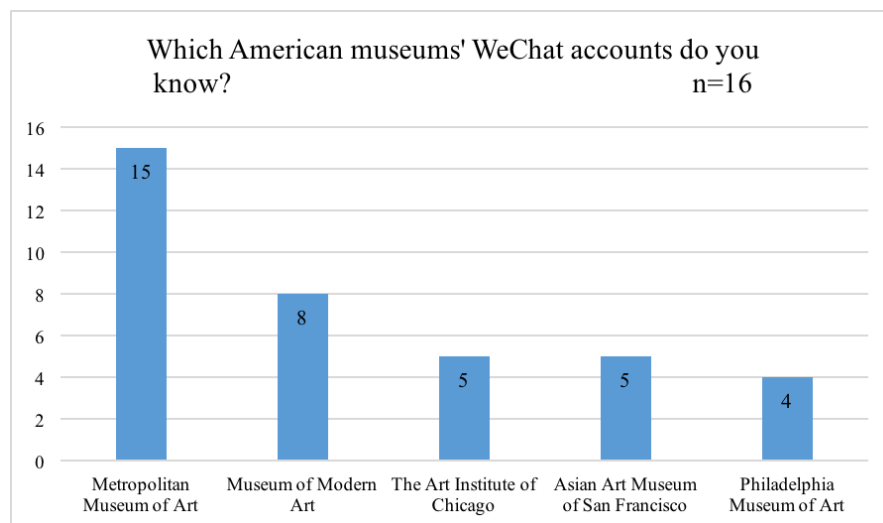


Figure 13

People were then asked “How do you know about American museums’ WeChat accounts?”

Out of ten participants, five of them said that they know about those museums’ WeChat accounts by searching for them online. The other five participants said that they know about those museums’ WeChat accounts from friends (who probably shared the posts of American museums WeChat sites on WeChat moments), promotional materials, or Weibo.

American museums could do a better job of informing Chinese people about their WeChat sites. To be more specific, museums in the U.S can and should publicize the fact that they have WeChat accounts frequently in museums’ online news and articles, because the more information about museums’ WeChat is put online, the more possible it is that Chinese people would find them. Aside from the traditional channels that American museums use, they should publicize their WeChat accounts on Baidu, which is the most frequently used Chinese search engine for websites, audio files and images. Baidu is available in the U.S. It functions similarly to Google, and is a great way to utilize this functionality seeing as Google is blocked in China. To publicize information on Baidu, American museums need to register for Baidu accounts. The register of Baidu account requires a Chinese mobile phone number. Some American museums may not have

Chinese staff who can help them to get Chinese mobile phone numbers; but they do not need to worry about that. Normally, American museums' posts on Google will also show up on Baidu. Only the posts with illegal information will be blocked by Baidu. American museums can and should go to Baidu and search the names of their museums to see if their information is on Baidu. If their museums' information is not on Baidu, American museums can try to contact the Baidu team on the first page of Baidu for help. (go to "About Us", and then go to "Contact Us".)

Another way to promote American museums' WeChat is to mention museums' official WeChat accounts in museums' promotion materials. The Philadelphia Museum of Art provides a good example of including WeChat account on printed materials. On the back of Philadelphia Museum of Art's sheets about "Today at the Museum" (mentioning featured exhibitions, tours and programs) (Figure 14), the QR code of the Philadelphia Museum of Art's official WeChat is included (every WeChat account would have a QR code). Next to the QR code there are words in both Chinese and English which say "Our Official WeChat Subscription Account—Philadelphia Museum of Art". Another sentence written in Chinese which means "Please scan the code and follow our WeChat to get tour guides and other visiting information" is also on the sheet to

encourage audiences to follow the Philadelphia Museum of Art’s official WeChat.

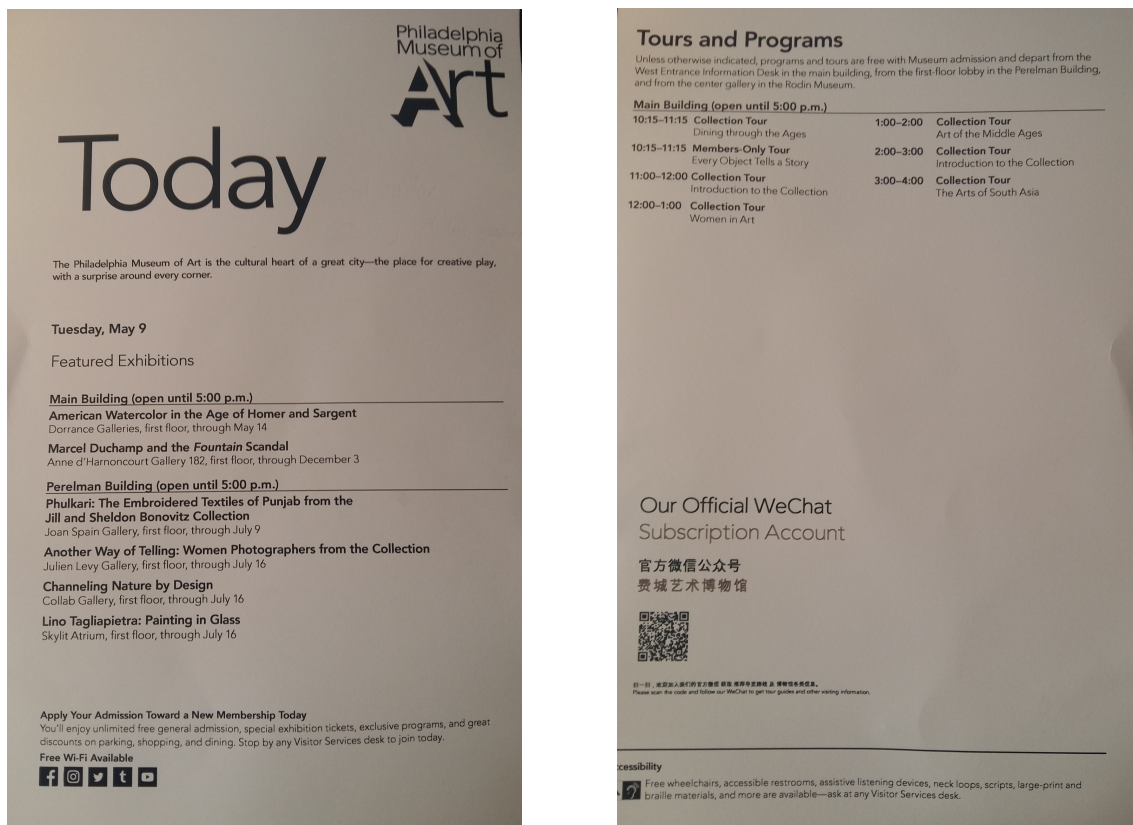


Figure 14 The PMA’s printed sheets about “today at the museum” and the QR code of PMA’s official WeChat

To promote their WeChat account, American museums can also mention their official WeChat in museums’ postcards. The Philadelphia Museum of Art designed a postcard with contents written in Chinese to promote the museum and its WeChat (Figure 15). The content on the front of the postcard says: “Visit one of the most popular museums in the U.S—at the Philadelphia Museum of Art you can enjoy art, tasty food, and shopping at the gift shop. The museum displays the wonderful works of Vincent van Gogh, Claude Monet, and Pablo Picasso.

You can also appreciate the beauty of the Japanese tea house and the Chinese palace.” The number and official website of the museum is also attached. On the back of the postcard the QR code of the museum’s official WeChat is attached.



Figure 15 The PMA’s postcard that promotes the museum and its official WeChat

Another suggestion of promoting American museums’ WeChat would be mentioning museums’ WeChat accounts in museums’ Weibo posts (some museums may need to create Weibo

accounts first), since American's Weibo followers may be always more than its WeChat followers.<sup>44</sup> For example, the amount of the Philadelphia Museum of Art's Weibo followers is about twice as large as the amount of its WeChat followers.<sup>45</sup>

Mentioning museums' WeChat accounts on museums' official websites could be helpful. The data have already shown that Chinese people would always know about Chinese museums through their official websites. If Chinese audiences are interested in museums in the U.S., they are more likely to take a look at American museums' website before searching for their social media. That means American museums should put the QR code of their WeChat on official websites, just like they put the logo of Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter on the first page of their official websites and make those logos link back to museums' pages on different social media.

In addition to finding out whether or not participants were aware of American museum's WeChat accounts, it was also important to find out whether or not they follow these accounts. A

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<sup>44</sup> Weibo is popular in China in general. It has more than 240 million users. Weibo is not as popular as WeChat nowadays. However, it was launched few years earlier than WeChat, which allows Weibo to have a firm user base. Bob Wang, "Weibo, one of the most popular social media platforms in China", *LinkedIn*, August 26, 2016,

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/weibo-one-most-popular-social-media-platform-china-bob-wang/>.

<sup>45</sup> Zixiao Huang (intern in digital marketing communications at the PMA), interview by Huan Deng, May 9, 2017.



follower-up survey question asked the small group of participants (16 people) who were already aware of American museums' WeChat if they have followed them or not. Nine participants said that they did not follow those WeChat accounts, while only seven of them said that they have become followers of those WeChat accounts. Comparing this with the previous data which indicates that while WeChat is the most frequently-used platform for Chinese people to learn about Chinese museums, Chinese people have not yet fully adopted American museums' WeChat sites. This researcher needs to do further research about the differences between Chinese museums' WeChat sites and American museums' WeChat sites, to understand why Chinese people tend to be unaware of American museums' WeChat accounts, despite following Chinese museums' WeChat accounts.

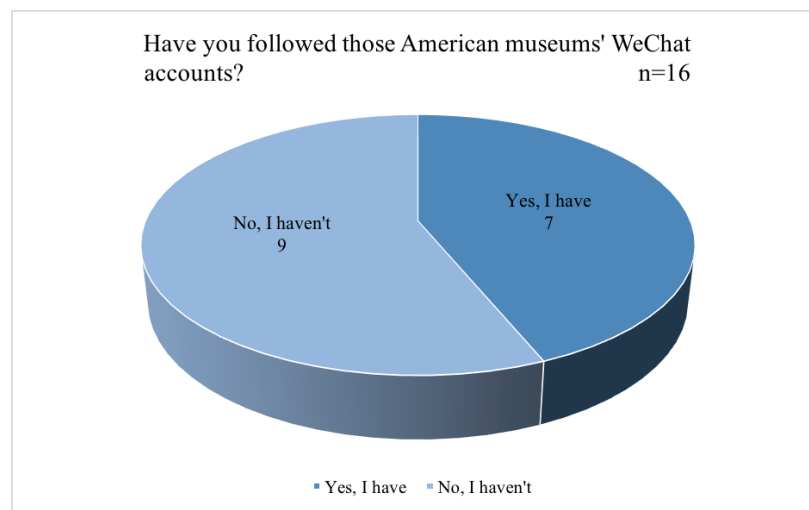


Figure 16

One obvious reason for a lack of American museum WeChat awareness may be that WeChat is still one of the recently-imported social media channels for American museums; and the museums are still exploring how to use it effectively. Furthermore, the infrequencies of posting lead to unstable amounts of followers. The more frequently museums post information on their social media, the more people tend to follow them. Chinese museums post information such as coming events, coming exhibitions, overview of exhibitions, as well as curator interviews on their WeChat sites about four times per month in general, while some American museums only post information twice per month, or less. No doubt this is a factor in Chinese museums gaining and retaining more WeChat followers than American museums.

Speaking of frequency of posting, this researcher needs to mention an important thing: there are two kinds of WeChat official accounts that American museums can apply for: the official subscription account, and the official service account. The service account is more frequently used by institutions, while the subscription account is more frequently used by individuals. The application for official subscription accounts is much easier than the application for official service accounts. If museums would like to apply for official subscription accounts, they only need a

Chinese credit/debit card number with its attached Chinese phone number, as well as a Chinese ID number with its owner's name, and submit the above information online. On the other hand, if museums would like to apply for official service accounts, they would need to submit the name and business license of a mainland China company/organization. Therefore, American museums need to find a cooperating organization in mainland China to help them apply for official service accounts.<sup>46</sup> Both official subscription accounts and official service accounts can be used to post information. However, the frequency with which they are allowed to post on WeChat sites differ. The subscription account can post once per day, while the official service account can only post four times per month. Even though official service accounts can only post four times per month, most of Chinese museums and American museums are using them. To be more specific, the Art Institute of Chicago has both service account and subscription account;<sup>47</sup> The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco are using service accounts, while only the Philadelphia Museum of Art is using a subscription account.

The reason why most of the museums are using service accounts may be that their functions

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<sup>46</sup> "WeChat Account Registration", *WeChat*, accessed August 1, 2017, <http://www.wechatagency.com/wechat-official-account-registration.html>.

<sup>47</sup> The Art Institute of Chicago recently opened its service account which is called "The Art Institute of Chicago AIC".

are much stronger than subscription accounts' functions. For example, the way the messages are displayed on both kinds of accounts is different. According to WeChat's official website, each post of the service accounts would be shown individually on the first page of an individual's personal contact page, which would remind people to read those posts (Figure 17). On the other hand, the posts of subscription accounts would be grouped into one folder containing all the subscription accounts instead of being pushed to user's session list (Figure 18). This means that a follower has to go into that folder to retrieve the delivered content.<sup>48</sup> People tend to miss the posts in the WeChat folder, but they tend to read the posts of service accounts which are highlighted. Therefore, this researcher would recommend American museums to apply for official service accounts, and try to post as frequently as possible (four times a month would be the best). To be clearer, although the subscription account is easier to get and can be used very frequently, it is actually not as good as the more difficult to get service account which will have a stronger impact on people due to how its posts impact individual users accounts. The survey accounts are more noticeable.

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<sup>48</sup>“WeChat Account Registration”, *WeChat*, accessed August 1, 2017, <http://www.wechatagency.com/wechat-official-account-registration.html>.



Figure 17

The MET's official service accounts is shown individually on the first page of an individual's personal contact page

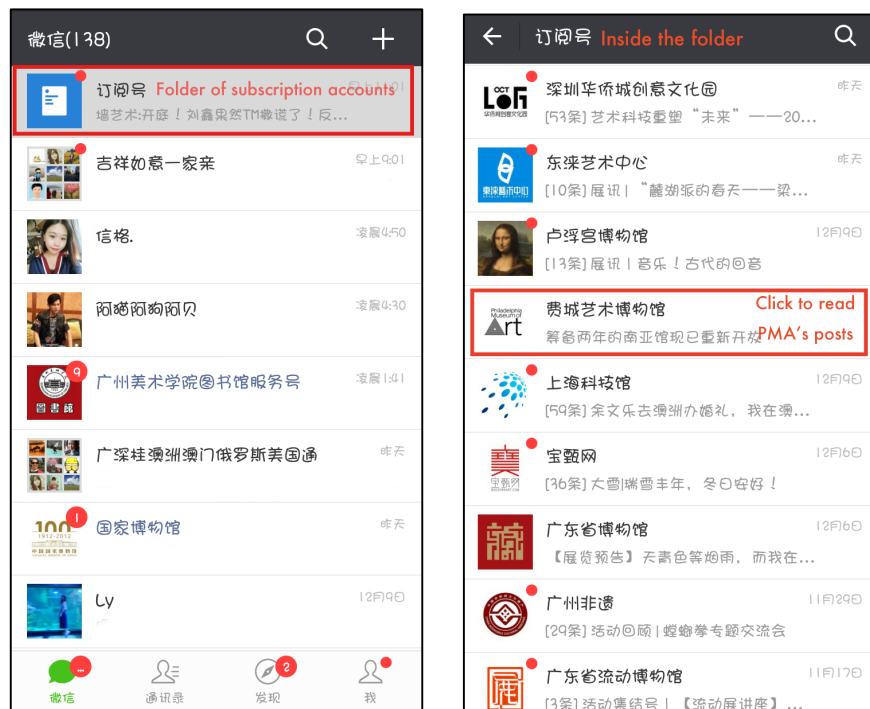


Figure 18

The PMA's official subscription account is in a folder with other subscription accounts

American museums tend to focus on American social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, and attention is not often paid to platform such as WeChat. What was found is that most of the information on American museums' WeChat sites is written by museums' Chinese interns.<sup>49</sup>

Chinese museums' would also ask their interns and volunteers to post information on official WeChat sites, but as one of the most popular social media in China, WeChat receives much time and attention from Chinese museums' promotional (communication) department. As a result, Chinese museums better understand Chinese people's preference for museums' information. It was found that Chinese audiences enjoy seeing colorful pictures and reading fun stories on WeChat,<sup>50</sup>

Chinese museums such as the Guangdong Museum, and the Palace Museum post interesting stories and comics based on the background of exhibitions, collections, and events to engage their audiences (Please see Appendix III for examples of the comic about a coming exhibition at the Guangdong Museum). If American museums took a similar approach, they would have a easier time attracting more audiences to follow their WeChat accounts.

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<sup>49</sup> Zixiao Huang, Xinyi Fang (interns in digital marketing communications at the PMA), interview by Huan Deng, May 9, 2017, and November 4, 2017.

<sup>50</sup> Hu Ying, "The Future of Education in Museum and the Use of WeChat," *China Cultural Heritage Scientific Research* 4 (2016): 23, <http://kns.cnki.net/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?dbcode=CJFQ&dbname=CJFDLAST2017&filename=ZGWW201604004&v=MjkkxNjBQeXJjZWJHNEg5Zk1xNDIGWUISOGVYMUx1eFITN0RoMVQzcVRyV00xRnJDVVJMMmZZdVpxRmlqbVVMN0I=>.

Last but not least, American museums and Chinese museums utilize WeChat in different ways:

American museums might only use their official WeChat sites as marketing tools to attract visitors,<sup>51</sup> while Chinese museums utilize WeChat as both marketing tools and educational tools to attract, as well as to educate audiences.<sup>52</sup> Chinese museums would try to convey knowledge and contents to audiences through WeChat by mentioning the context of exhibitions and collections, attaching high-quality pictures of museum objects, as well as posting curator interviews. On the other hand, many American museums' WeChat posts only include the theme, time, location and a brief introduction of coming exhibitions and events. Without further explanation, those posts appear rather like an advertisement even if they intended to be primarily informational. The literature review (see above) has already revealed that Chinese audiences prefer museums' WeChat posts which try to convey knowledge rather than posts which are written in a direct marketing tone.<sup>53</sup> No doubt that this is the reason Chinese audiences would prefer Chinese

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<sup>51</sup> Zixiao Huang, Xinyi Fang (interns in digital marketing communications at the PMA), interview by Huan Deng, May 9, 2017, and November 4, 2017.

<sup>52</sup> Most of the museums in China are nonprofit institutions, and people can enter most of the Chinese museums for free. That does not mean that Chinese museums do not want to promote themselves, but they would love to market to people as well as educate people at the same time. Sometimes, conveying knowledge is more important than marketing in Chinese museums' WeChat posts.

<sup>53</sup> Hu Ying, "The Future of Education in Museum and the Use of WeChat," *China Cultural Heritage Scientific Research* 4 (2016): 23, <http://kns.cnki.net/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?dbcode=CJFQ&dbname=CJFDLAST2017&filename=ZGWW201604004&v=MjkkNjBQeXJjZWJHNEg5Zk1xNDIGWUISOGVYMUx1eFITN0RoMVQzcVRyV00xRnJDVVJMMmZZdVpxRmlqbVVMN0I=>.

museums' WeChat sites, which allow them to learn knowledge actively, rather than American museums' WeChat sites, which tend to make them absorb information passively.

As a result, American museums could consider posting more frequently, and using interesting stories based on the context of exhibitions and collections, as well as designing colorful images to attract Chinese audiences. They should also think about not only aiming to market to audiences, but also trying to educate and engage audiences with their contents.

**Would you follow American museums on WeChat? /Chinese people's general willingness to follow American museums' WeChat/**

The previous question that asked "Have you followed American museums' WeChat accounts" was a follow-up question for those participants who were already aware of American museums' WeChat accounts. To know about respondents' general willingness, all the participants were asked "If museums in the United States had WeChat, would you follow them on WeChat? Why or why not?" Among all of 235 participants, a larger part of them said that they would love to follow American museums' WeChat accounts (71.9%). They said they would follow American museums' WeChat accounts because WeChat is a convenient platform to learn about American museums'



upcoming exhibitions and coming events. Furthermore, some people said that reading information on American museums' WeChat sites can help them to get ready and informed before visiting the museums physically. Also, they want to follow American museums' WeChat to help them broaden their horizons, and gain knowledge about the culture and history of America. (this reason also explain why Chinese people show higher interests in American museums than Chinese museums).

Those reasons for following American museums' WeChat accounts reveal the Chinese expectation of the official WeChat sites. Therefore, to meet Chinese audiences' expectations, American museums should update their WeChat information in time, post frequently, and highlight their collections from America, or other different countries (especially Western countries).

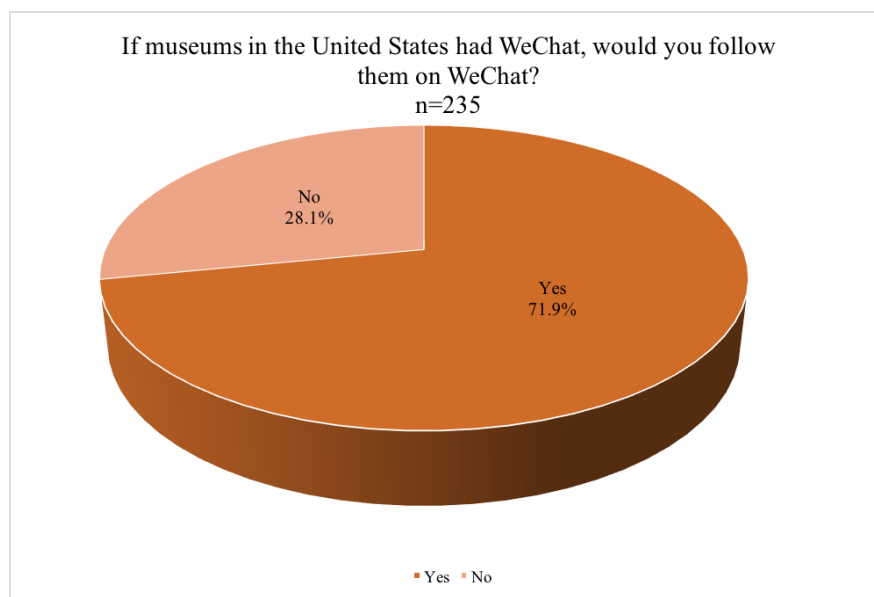


Figure 19

On the other hand, there are 28.1% participants who would not follow American museums' WeChat accounts. They said they would not follow American museums' WeChat accounts because they might not be able to visit museums in the United States physically, so that it is unnecessary to follow those museums' WeChat accounts. Some people also pointed out that the contents on American museums' WeChat sites might not be translated to China perfectly. When this researcher read through the posts on some American museums' WeChat sites, the researcher did find some Chinese grammar mistakes. Chinese audiences would be able to understand the meaning of the sentences, but they might not enjoy the process of reading that information. As a result, in order to capture WeChat followers, American museums should pay more attention to the contents they put on WeChat. Museum interns who wrote those contents should not translate English directly to Chinese without considering Chinese people's reading habits.

In the research, this researcher not only wanted to know if participants would follow American museums' WeChat, she also wanted to know if they would introduce American museums' WeChat accounts to other people. Thus, the researcher also asked them "would you share American museums' WeChat accounts with your family and friends (people who you know)?"

Overwhelmingly, among all of 235 respondents, 83% of them selected “yes”, while only 17% of them selected “no”. One of the main reasons that people chose “yes” may be WeChat allows its users to share other WeChat accounts with their followers easily through group chats, individual chats, and moments. As a result, if people who follow American museums’ WeChat would like to share those WeChat accounts with his/her followers, the museums tend to gain several followers at one time. That means WeChat may be able to help American museums improve their popularity among the Chinese.

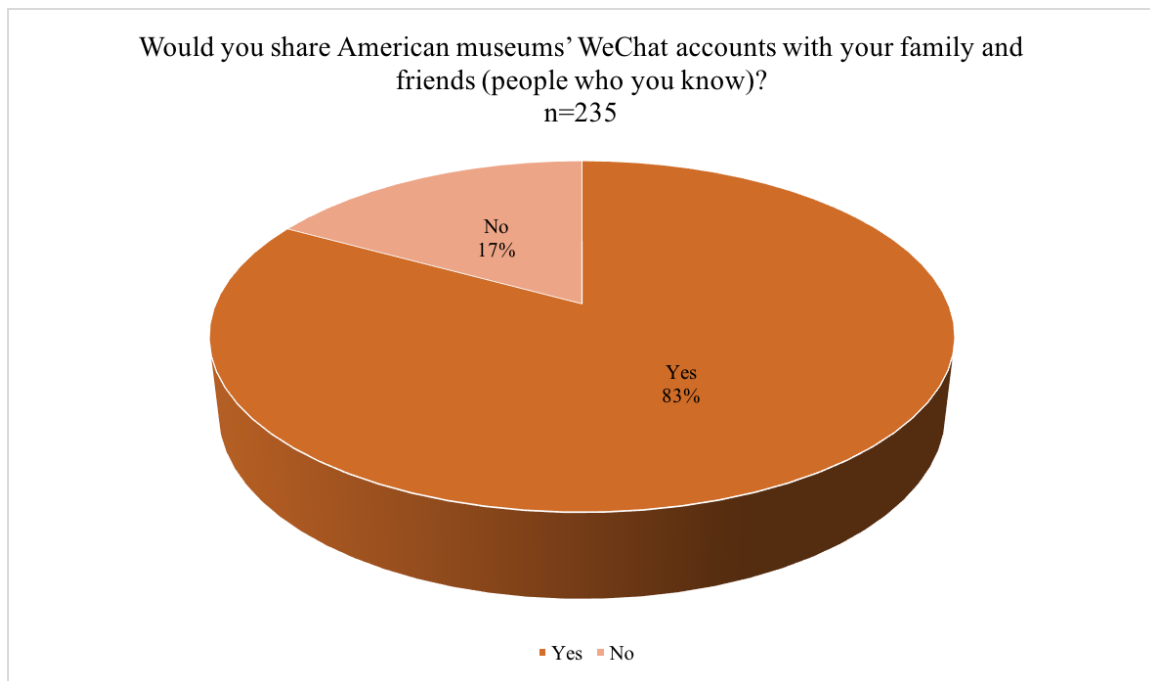
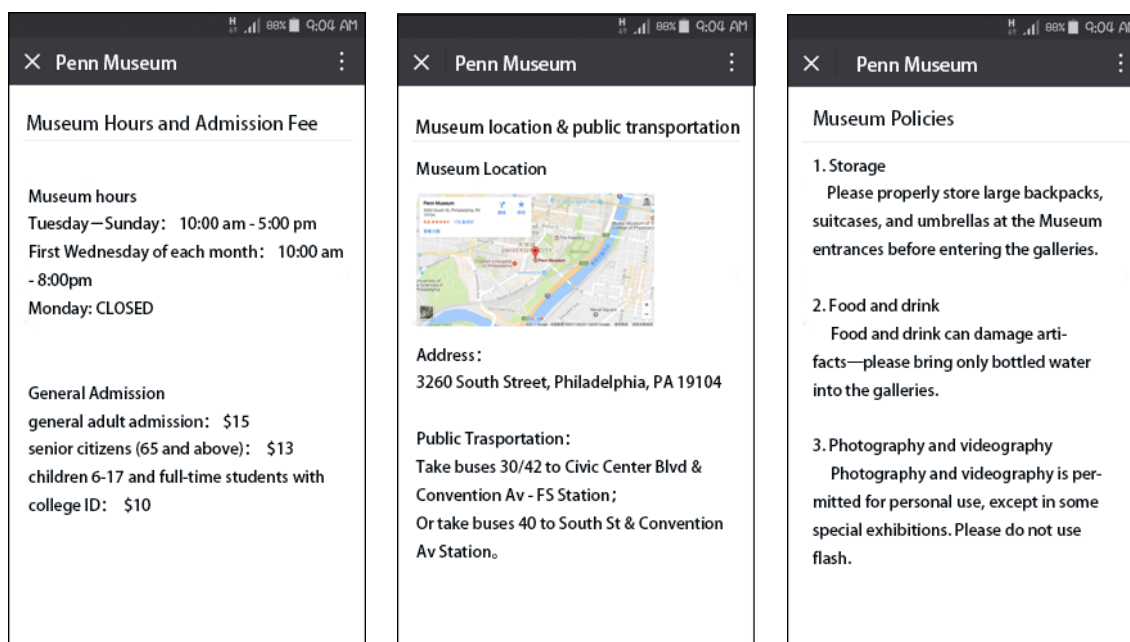
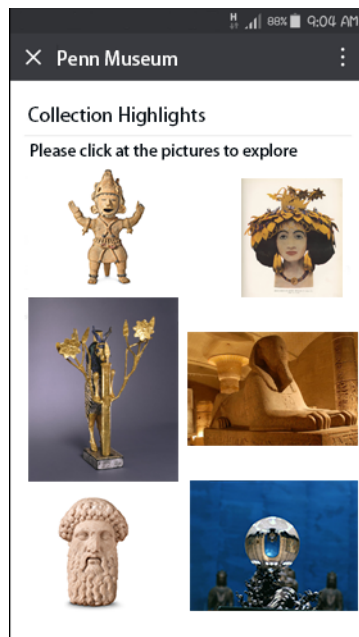
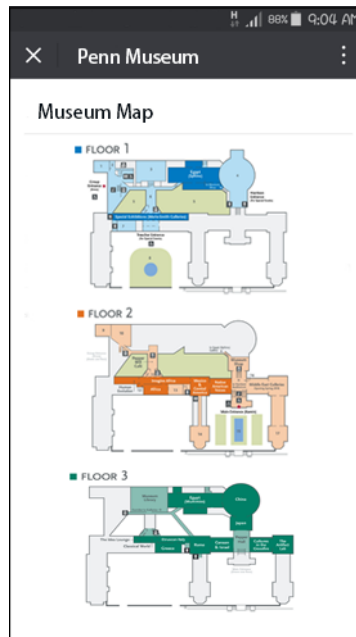


Figure 20

## What do you expect to see on American museums' WeChat sites? /Expectations of American museums' WeChat sites

Since most of the participants said that they would like to follow American museums' WeChat accounts, this researcher would like to further understand their expectations of American museums' WeChat sites to help American museums reach more Chinese audiences. To let participants better understand their choices, this researcher took the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology as an example, and created a few fake WeChat pages which covered a wide range of information which used the contents from the Penn Museum's official website. Then, participants were asked to choose what kinds of information they would like to see on American museums' WeChat accounts.





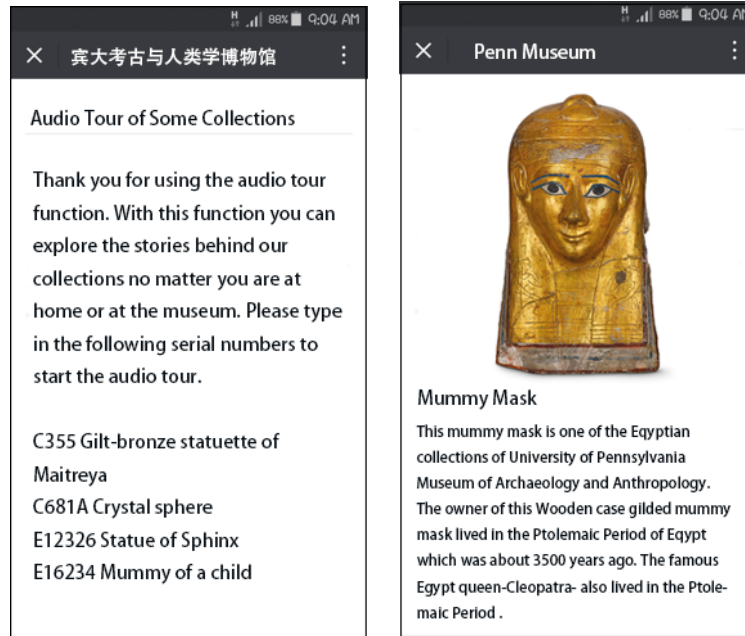


Figure 21-28

Sample pages of the Penn Museum's WeChat sites (created by the thesis researcher)

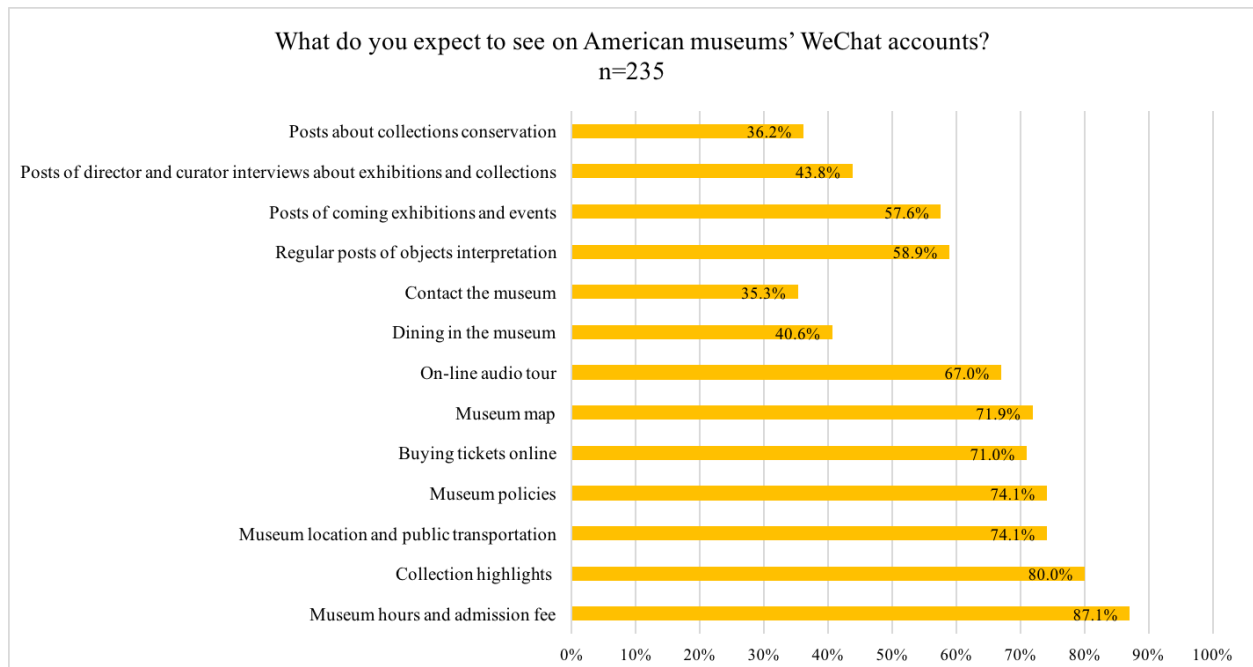


Figure 29

Typically, existing American museums' WeChat sites consist of two parts of information. The first part includes basic facts such as museum hours, admission fee, and museum map. This section is modified infrequently when hours are changed or fees are raised, for example. The second part consists of museum posts such as coming exhibitions, coming events, and curator interviews. This section tends to be updated every month. The data shows that participants generally care about basic information which can help them to get prepared and make plans before actually visiting the museums, such as Museum hours and admission fees (87.1%), Museum location and public transportation (74.1%), Museum policies (74.1%), buying tickets online (71%), and dining in the museum (40.6%). All the existing American museums' WeChat sites include information such as museum hours, and museum location. However, many of them exclude the "buying tickets online" feature on their WeChat sites. Only the WeChat official service accounts of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Art Institute of Chicago include this feature. Since a majority of the participants would love to purchase museum tickets online, other American museums should consider including this feature on their WeChat sites to attract more followers.

Normally, all the WeChat official service accounts can use the "WeChat online money transfer"

feature. This feature allows individuals to transfer money from their WeChat wallets (a WeChat feature which allows people to link their credit/debit card to their WeChat accounts) into American museums' WeChat wallets. However, both The Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Art Institute of Chicago do not use the "WeChat online money transfer" feature. Instead, they link the "buying tickets online" feature on their WeChat sites back to their museums' official website page of "buying tickets in advance", which allows people to fill out their credit/debit card information and pay online through the museums' website. American museums do not use the "WeChat online money transfer" feature due to the fact that only Chinese banks are allowed to be used in this feature. As a result, this researcher suggests American museums to imitate The Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Art Institute of Chicago: to include the "buying tickers online" feature on their WeChat sites, and link it back to their official website page of "buying tickets in advance" (if they have this page) to make the feature available.

Furthermore, another kind of information people would like to see on American museum's WeChat sites are collection highlights (80%). To be more specific, before actually going to the museums, people might want to take a look at the museum collections, so that they would know



what the museums have, and what they shouldn't miss during museum visits. Moreover, for those people who could not visit American museums physically, collection highlights would be very important since the descriptions and images that comprise this feature allow them to learn about the museum objects without going to the U.S. As far as people who have already visited the museums physically, they might want to use collection highlights as examples to show family and friends what they saw at the museums. Collection highlights could therefore function as a tool to encourage their family and friends to visit the museums themselves. Indeed, collection highlights is an aspect of WeChat that could really help American museums in their quest to improve their popularity among Chinese people. Thus, this researcher suggests that American museums should put more attractive contents about their collections (either interpretations or high-quality pictures) on WeChat sites. Also, the museums should consider using WeChat as long-distance learning tools to tell people the stories behind the museum objects, as well as a marketing tool to promote themselves.

Besides, additional kinds of information people expect to see on American museum's WeChat sites are museum maps (71.9%), and on-line audio tours (67%). Online museum maps could help

people to find their way when they are already inside the museums (maps in Chinese would be more helpful). Moreover, online maps are more environment-friendly than paper maps. Therefore, every museum should include online maps on their WeChat sites. As far as on-line audio tour feature, it can include some Chinese interpretations of highlighted collections, which can help Chinese visitors who do not understand English well to gain more knowledge about the collections during visits. Even though some museums' rental players already offer Chinese audio tours, the WeChat audio tour feature would give budget conscious visitors another option, in case they do not want to spend money on renting the players. American museums such as the Museum of Modern Art, the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, The Art Institute of Chicago already have a Chinese audio tour feature on their WeChat sites; other museums should consider including this feature as well to release visitors' eyes from labels, and encourage them to take a closer look at the highlighted objects.

Compared with the above information and features, "contact the museum" would be the least important feature, as only 35.3% of participants expect to see this feature on American museums' WeChat sites. One reason might be that Chinese people are worried that the museum staff who

they make contact cannot speak Chinese. Therefore, the thesis researcher suggests that the museums can keep this feature, yet it shouldn't be an individual section. It would better be a subsection of the "Services and help".

As for the museums' WeChat posts, the data shows that participants are not only interested in regular posts of object interpretation (58.9%), but also expect to see posts of director and curator interviews about exhibitions and collections (43.8%), which reveals participants' passion to learn about the stories behind American museums' collections as well as exhibitions. That again proves that American museums should consider using WeChat as a virtual education tool to convey knowledge behind-the-scenes so that they can attract more WeChat followers, and potential museum-goers. Furthermore, more than half of the participants showed interests in the posts of coming exhibitions and events (57.6%). As the participants said, they would like to know about that information to help them make plans before traveling to the U.S. Therefore, American museums should fully use those posts as tools to promote their museums. They should use them to encourage people to visit the museums physically, as well as join the museums' educational activities. To achieve this goal, further research might need to be done to know what kinds of

words should be use for marketing, so that they can convince Chinese people to actually visit the museums during their trip to the U.S. Along with all kinds of post mentioned above, only 36.2% of the population would like to see posts about collections conservation. This researcher expected the percentage to be higher, since there is a very popular documentary television series about collections conservation in China, which is called “Masters in Forbidden City”. According to the *China Daily*, this documentary “features the Forbidden City’s cultural relics and their restorers’ lives became a surprise hit, with than 2.4 million watching on iQIYI, a major video- streaming website in China.”<sup>54</sup> Therefore, even though the percentage is not high, this researcher still believes that the Chinese would have a general interest in collections conservation. That means American museums could still consider including relevant posts on their WeChat sites to evoke an education voice.

### **What else would you like to see on American museums’ WeChat sites?**

In order to provide a broader understanding of people’s expectation of American museums’ WeChat sites, participants were then asked the opened-ended question: “What else would you like

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<sup>54</sup> Keyao He, “What made Master In Forbidden City documentary a success?”, *China Daily*, updated April 2016, [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/culture/2016-04/14/content\\_24539022.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/culture/2016-04/14/content_24539022.htm).

to see added to the museums' WeChat sites?"

Some people mentioned that they would like to see information about recommended self-guided tours of collection highlights; since they would not stay at the museums for a long time, the recommended self-guided tour should be in half hour, or an hour. However, when it comes to large museums, the time of tours could be longer. For instance, The Metropolitan Museum of Art offers half-day-long self-guided tours recommended by the museum director on its WeChat site.

Also, some participants said that they would love to learn about the history of the museums through WeChat. Among all the American museums' WeChat sites, only the Philadelphia Museum of Art has mentioned its museum history. As far as this researcher is concerned, including the history of the museums might be a good way to improve Chinese people's knowledge about the museums. Also, the stories behind the museums probably will increase people's interests in actually visiting the museums. Thus American museums should add their history in WeChat information.

People also mentioned that they would also like to see additional information such as: if the museums offer audio tours in Chinese at the museums (given by museum staff, volunteers, docents,

interns, or audio players); objects sold at the museum shops; as well as review of past events. As the thesis researcher observed, all the American museums' WeChat sites have already mentioned audio tours in Chinese at the museums (if they offer them). Since visitors from China would love audio tours in their language, if American museums that plan to open WeChat accounts offer those tours, they should mention that on their WeChat sites.

For the objects sold at the museum shops, since most of the Chinese museums would mention products from their gift shops on WeChat sites, Chinese people might already be used to taking a look at online museum shops. The Art Institute of Chicago, the Museum of Modern Art, as well as Asian Art Museum of San Francisco all mention their museum shop on WeChat sites. If American museums plan to include this sort of information on their WeChat sites, they can design the page of gift shops like this: firstly, give a brief introduction of their gift shops and special products using Chinese; then, attach the link of their English official website page of gift shops to allow people who understand English well to further explore those products.

As far as review of past activities, Chinese museums mention them frequently to show audiences what they could do at the museums. Furthermore, this sort of information can be used

as a tool to promote museums' coming activities and events to potential museum-goers. As a result, the thesis researcher suggests American museums to include this kind of information on their WeChat accounts. They can include some pictures taken during the activities to make the contents more interesting and attractive.

### **How would American museums' WeChat affect you?**

If American museums have WeChat, how would that affect their potential Chinese audiences?

Knowing about the answers of this question would be helpful to understand people's thoughts about the museums' WeChat sites. In the participants' minds, to follow American museums' WeChat sites would be very meaningful. For instance, American museums' WeChat sites could help them to know about those museums and their collections (80.4%), as well as their new exhibitions and events (62.1%), so that they can gain better understanding of those museums, and to decide which museums they would like to visit while traveling to the U.S. Also, some participants pointed out that, with the help of American museums' WeChat information, they would be able to get prepared and know what they could expect to see before actually visiting the museums. For those participants who might not be able to visit the museums physically, they said

that information on American museums' WeChat sites would allow them to explore the museum's collections and exhibitions online (55.8%), which would satisfy their curiosity and eager to lean the museums in the U.S. Some participants also mentioned that, if they could not visit the museums in the U.S. physically, they would love to share their contents on WeChat sites with their children, and use those contents (such as object interpretation) to educate the second generation.

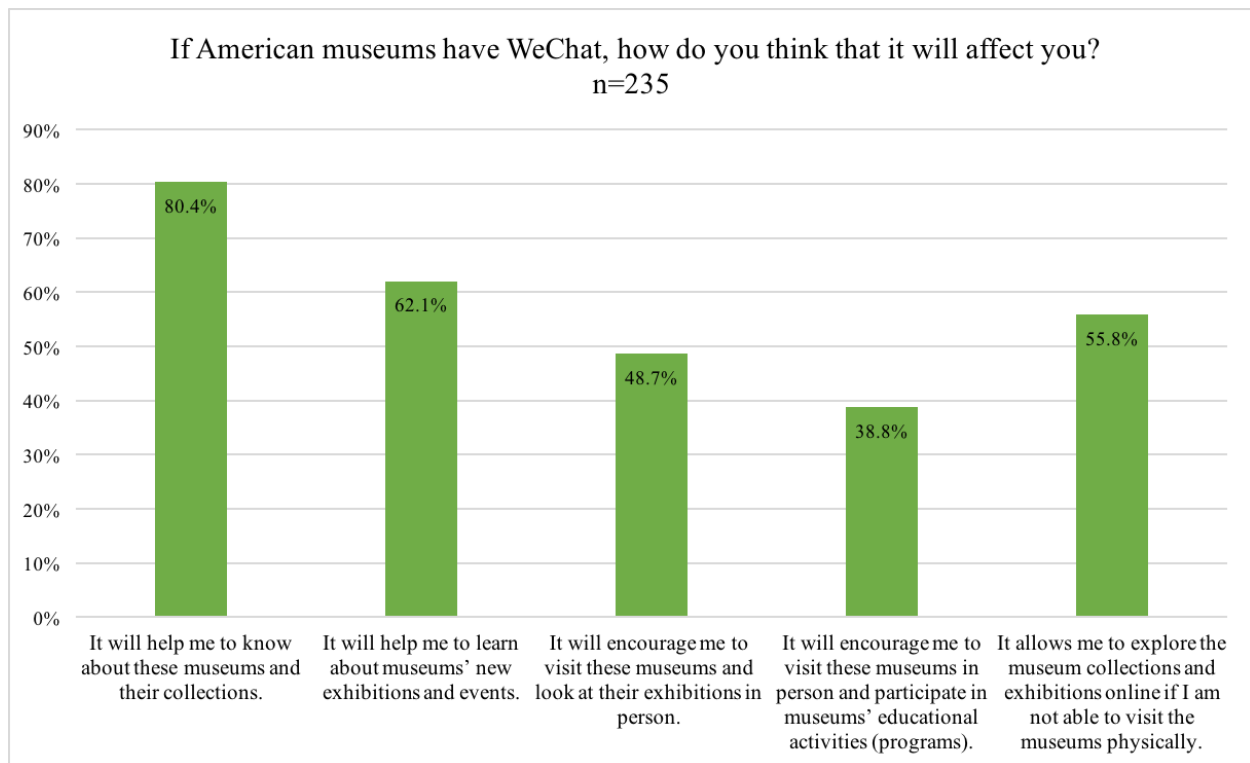


Figure 30

Furthermore, 48.7% of the population selected that American museums' WeChat sites will encourage them to visit these museums and look at their exhibitions in person. That is not a low



percentage, though this researcher hoped it to be higher. The main reason for this less than half percent might be distance. To be more specific, for those participants who do not visit the U.S frequently or occasionally, even though American museums' WeChat sites make them feel interested in visiting the museums, they might not have time or money to take a flight to the U.S.

Another reason might be that a majority of the participants do not know about American museums' WeChat accounts. Therefore, they would not know if the words and contents on American museums' WeChat sites would be attractive enough to encourage them to visit physically. That again reveals the urgency to promote American museums' WeChat to the Chinese.

Besides, only 38. 8% of the population selected that American museums' WeChat sites will encourage them to visit these museums in person and participate in museums' educational activities (programs). This researcher hopes that percentage would be higher. However, since the majority of participants would come to the U.S. for vacation, they might not want to stay at the museums for a long time. Instead, they would love to visit as many tourist attractions as possible. Knowing this, American museums should think about how to encourage people who might only stay at the museums for a short time to join their educational activities. In my opinion, some short-

time activities (in 40 minutes) could be highlighted on museums' WeChat sites to drive people's attention. Also, for marketing purposes, the museums could use words meaning "fast", and "fascinating" in their WeChat information to promote their educational activities to short-term visitors.

## **Conclusion**

WeChat is one of the most popular social media platforms in China; almost all the participants in this research are using WeChat in their daily lives. WeChat cannot only be downloaded or accessed in China; it can also be downloaded in the U.S. to interact with WeChat users in China. Also, WeChat is available in other countries such as Italy, Thailand, Indonesia, and India. It is also usable in Africa.

Prior to conducting the survey, it was expected that WeChat would help American museums get a Chinese perspective and help them reach a broader group of Chinese visitors. After analyzing the results, this hypothesis was supported. It was expected that WeChat has been frequently used by people to learn about museums and their events. The data reveals that most of the participants who occasionally visit museums in China learn about the museums and their events from

museum's official WeChat sites. On the other hand, since WeChat is still a recently-imported social medium for American museums and it has not been fully developed by museums in the U.S, most of the participants did not know that some American museums already have WeChat accounts.

Although most of the participants could not name any American museum with WeChat account, the majority of them still claimed that if American museums had WeChat accounts, they would love to follow them, as well as sharing American museums WeChat accounts with family and friends. That means the idea of using WeChat to reach a broader group of Chinese audiences is reasonable.

It was assumed that Chinese people would show higher interest in visiting museums in China than visiting museums in the U.S, since traveling to the U.S. can be time-consuming and money-consuming. However, the data reveal that Chinese people have stronger interest in visiting American museums. A majority of respondents have either visited or plan to visit museums in the United States (either on line or in person). When asking why they would visit museums in the U.S., participants said that they prefer American museums' rich and distinctive collections. Besides, they are curious about Western culture. Among all the American museums that the Chinese have visited

(or plan to visit) physically, art museums are the most frequently-visited ones, following by natural history museums, history museums, as well as science and technology museums.

Just as this researcher had anticipated, the respondents showed different expectations of American museums' WeChat sites information. A majority of the respondents are interested in collection highlights. To be more specific, before actually going to the museums, people might want to take a look at the museum collections, so that they would know what the museums have, and what they shouldn't miss during museum visits. On the other hand, for those people who could not visit American museums physically, collection highlights would allow them to learn about the museum objects without going to the U.S. Moreover, for those who plan to visit the U.S. in future, they would mainly care about basic information which can help them to get prepared and make plans before actually visiting the museums, such as Museum hours and admission fee, Museum location and public transportation, as well as WeChat posts of coming exhibitions and events. On the other hand, for those people who might not be able to visit the museums physically, they tend to pay less attention to Museum hours and admission fee. Instead, they said they prefer to use American museums' WeChat sites as tools to explore those museums' collections and exhibitions.

It was expected that using WeChat can help American museums to better inform Chinese audiences about those museums well as their collections. The result matches this researcher's expectation. Indeed most of the respondents said that they would love to use WeChat as a tool to know about American museums and their collections. Besides, a large group of participants said that American museums' WeChat sites would allow them to get museum experience without actually visiting the U.S. Moreover, the researcher expected that using WeChat can attract more Chinese people to visit American museums physically. Slightly less than a half of the respondents' answers match the researcher's expectation. Since coming to the U.S would consume lots of time and money, people cannot visit American museums physically would be understandable. Although some of the participants' will not be able to visit American museums in person, the majority of participants claimed that WeChat can let them better learn about American museums, their collections, and events online. That means WeChat could still help American museums to reach and inform a broader group of online Chinese audiences.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Applicability to the Field**

#### **Applications:**

The findings in this thesis are meaningful to the museum field as they prove that WeChat can be a valuable tool for American museums to reach and inform a broader group of Chinese audiences. Also, the result of this thesis reveals Chinese people's expectations of American museums' WeChat which offer American museums a guideline about what should be highlighted on their WeChat sites.

The previous research already shows the continuous increase of Chinese visitors to the U.S. However, American museums have found it difficult to adapt to this increase, since they have a problem to reach Chinese audiences online. Museums in the U.S. need to find an appropriate social media tool to reach out to Chinese audiences, since American social media are blocked in China. The research proves that WeChat has been frequently used by Chinese people to learn about Chinese museums and thus seems the most suitable choice. Also, the research reveals that participants are eager to learn about American museums. Most importantly, most of participants

show strong willingness to use WeChat as a tool to learn about American museums, their collections, events, and exhibitions. As a result, all or at least most American museums should consider having WeChat accounts to better reach and inform Chinese audiences online.

Once American museums successfully apply for official WeChat accounts, what kinds of information should they highlight on their WeChat sites? This thesis reveals participants' expectations of American museums' WeChat sites. For example, for those who plan to visit the U.S. in the future, they would mainly care about practical information such as museum hours and admission fee, museum location and public transportation, as well as WeChat posts of coming exhibitions and events. On the other hand, for those people who might not be able to visit the museums physically, they tend to pay less attention to museum hours and admission fee. Instead, they would prefer to read information about museum collections and exhibitions. However, most of the participants show general interest in reading about collection highlights. Thus American museums should pay more attention to edit the contents of highlighted collections interpretations on their WeChat sites.

Moreover, based on the research, the thesis researcher has offered some suggestions about

WeChat management for American museums. For example, when the researcher read through the posts on some American museums' WeChat sites, the researcher found mistakes in the Chinese, both in grammar and in usage. This would tend to reduce Chinese people's interest in following American museums' WeChat accounts as most would expect the Chinese content to be presented in a competent and correct manner. American museums should pay more attention to the quality of the Chinese utilized in their materials they post on contents they put on WeChat.

Also, to allow people who will manage American museums' WeChat to better understand Chinese people's reading habits, the research includes some Chinese museums' WeChat posts with comics as examples to show what Chinese people would like to see on museums' WeChat sites (See Appendix III). Besides, the research shows that the frequency of posting would affect Chinese people's willingness to continuously follow American museums' WeChat accounts. However, most of the American museums which already have WeChat accounts have not posted frequently enough to keep followers' attention. To better attract Chinese audiences, American museums should post at least four times a month (post frequency would be based on what kind of official WeChat account the museum has).



Besides, American museums should include the “buying tickets online” feature on their WeChat sites. They can link the “buying tickets online” feature on their WeChat sites back to their museums’ official website page of “buying tickets in advance”, which allow people to fill out their credit/debit card information and pay online through museums’ websites.

American Museums need to expand their online presence by using a wide variety of platforms including WeChat. WeChat would serve as a great online tool for museums in the U.S to reach and inform a broader group of Chinese audiences. Based on the data collected to learn about Chinese participants’ expectations of American museums’ WeChat sites, the researcher suggests that American museums should consider using WeChat as a long-distance learning tool (virtual education tool) to convey knowledge behind-the-scenes, as well as a marketing tool to promote themselves (such as museum history, coming exhibitions and events).

### **Best Practices:**

In summary, based on the collected data and the literature review, this researcher made a list

of features that American museums' WeChat sites should have. The ideal WeChat site of the American museum should . . .

- Be a combination of education and promotion tool.
- Exclude contents written in a direct marketing tone.
- Be updated in time, and have frequent posts.
- Have contents that are clear and interesting to match Chinese people's reading habits, and avoid grammatical errors.
- Have native Chinese speakers who work for the museum (either curators or educators from China, or museum interns, volunteers who are native Chinese speakers) participate in editing WeChat contents.
- Highlight the information about museum collections interpretation.
- Have information about the history of the museums.
- Have clear information about Museum hours and admission fee, Museum location and public transportation, Museum policies, Museum map, and dining in the museum.

- Include the “online audio tour (in Chinese)” feature.
- Include the “buying tickets online” feature.
- Include recommended self-guided tours of collection highlights. Example?

Include posts with interesting contents and illustrations which help to interpretive the history of the museum objects and the background of exhibitions and events. (For example of an ideal post about a coming event, please see Appendix IV.)

- Help museums to inform audiences who might not be able to visit the museum physically.
- Be well promoted. (American museums should mention their WeChat accounts in their promotion materials through attaching the QR code of the WeChat account. They can also mention their WeChat accounts on official websites, or in museums’ postcards)

Along with the above suggestions for American museums’ WeChat accounts, American museums can also consider working with the local convention and visitors center to better serve their Chinese audiences. For example, museums in the Philadelphia can make contact with the Philadelphia Convention & Visitors Bureau to get more information about Chinese visitors to the

U.S. The staff of the Philadelphia Convention & Visitors Bureau may also be able to offer the museums some directions of the management of their official WeChat accounts.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Implications for Further Research**

The research conducted for this thesis focused on Chinese people's experience and expectation of following American museums' WeChat accounts. Further research into the use of WeChat in the museum field should include interviews of museum people who are handling American museums' WeChat accounts. Some interview questions can be:

1. Who in the museum operates your WeChat account? Are they native Chinese speakers?
2. What level of engagement do you get with your WeChat account? How many people engage with it?
3. How do you decide what content to put there; is it similar to your Facebook?
4. How do your visitors use it prior to their visit as well as once they're in the building?
5. What challenges do you face with operating a WeChat account in the US?
6. What would you say is the biggest benefit to your museum of having a WeChat account?

7. If you applied for an official service account, did you work with Chinese institutions to apply for that account? Which institution in China did you work with to apply for that account?

The answers to the above questions would help American museums that plan to have WeChat accounts to understand what they should expect once they have official WeChat accounts. For example, by asking those questions, American museums would be able to learn about who should handle their WeChat accounts, and the challenges they might face with using WeChat.

An evaluation should also be administrated separately to people who have followed American museums' WeChat sites, and those who have not followed (or do not know about) American museums' WeChat sites to measure the effectiveness of following American museums' WeChat. The evaluation can also be designed to learn about the differences between Chinese people's knowledge about the American museums before they follow their WeChat accounts, and people's knowledge about the American museums after they follow their WeChat accounts.

Once American museums finish editing their WeChat sites, it would be beneficial to conduct a study on how Chinese audiences think about the WeChat content. The study should measure if the

content of American museums' WeChat sites is correct, clear, interesting, and useful to read for Chinese audiences. Further, to learn about Chinese audiences' preference for writing style, questions such as "Do you prefer long posts with academic knowledge, or short posts with fun facts" could be asked.

In summary, the thesis writer's original hypothesis that WeChat, an online platform easily available and extremely popular in China is the best tool for all American museums seeking to reach a Chinese audience has been confirmed in myriad ways. Even among those American museums which already utilize WeChat to varying extent, it has been shown that some of these museums could and should improve their management of such usage, whether in more frequent postings on the platform or in monitoring the quality of the material that is posted. To insure that this and other outreach to Chinese audiences, and for that matter all people that museums wish to welcome, it is important that personnel familiar with China or whichever region from which those people originate be brought into the museum's program facilitation.

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## Appendix II: Survey

### Survey for the Chinese (English Version)

To serve the Chinese audience better, many museums in the United States are considering opening and improving official WeChat accounts. We need your opinions to help us design our WeChat sites:

1. Do you use WeChat?

- a. Yes
- b. No

If no, why not? (If you don't use WeChat, you only need to fill out this one question)

2. How often do you visit museums in China? (Check one)

- a. More than 10 times a year.
- b. 6-10 times a year.
- c. 3-5 times a year.
- d. Less than 3 times a year.
- e. I have never been to any museums.

If you choose answer a, b, or c, please go to question 2.1. If you choose answer d or e, please go to question 2.2.

2.1: I visit museums in China occasionally. I learn about these museums and their (programs) events from (Check all that apply):

- a. Museums' official Website
- b. Museums' official WeChat
- c. Museums' official Weibo
- d. Promotional materials (billboards, posters)
- e. Something else \_\_\_\_\_

2.2: I don't visit museums in China normally, because (Check all that apply):

- a. I am not interested in museum visiting.
  - b. I can explore museums' collections and exhibitions through their official WeChat.
  - c. I can explore museums' collections and exhibitions through their official Websites.
  - d. I can explore museums' collections and exhibitions through their official Weibo.
  - e. Something else \_\_\_\_\_
3. Have you visited or do you plan to visit any museums in the United States (either on line or in person) ?
- a. Yes
    - a.a I have visited (or plan to visit) museums in the United States online.
    - a.b I have visited (or plan to visit) museums in the United States during visiting the U.S.
  - b. No
- If planning to actually visit the U.S., which American museums have you visited or do you plan to visit? Why would you visit these museums in person?

4. Do you know that some museums in the United States already have WeChat accounts?
- a. Yes, I do.
  - b. No, I don't.
- If yes, please go to question 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3. If no, please go to question 5.

4.1 Please choose the following American museums' WeChat accounts that you know.

- a. The Metropolitan Museum of Art's WeChat account
- b. The Art Institute of Chicago's WeChat account
- c. Philadelphia Museum of Art's WeChat account
- d. Museum of Modern Art's WeChat account
- e. Asian Art Museum of San Francisco's WeChat account
- f. Other \_\_\_\_\_

4.2 How do you know about American museums' WeChat accounts?

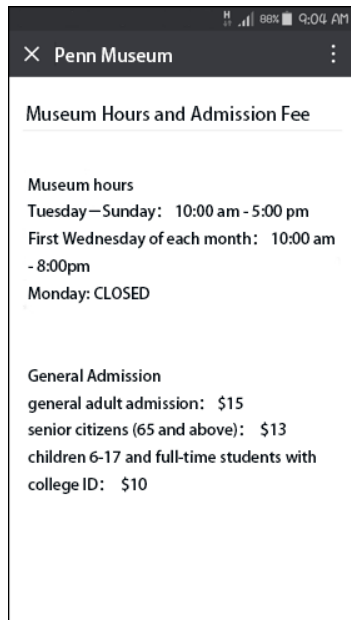
#### 4.3 Have you followed American museums' WeChat accounts?

- a. Yes
- b. No

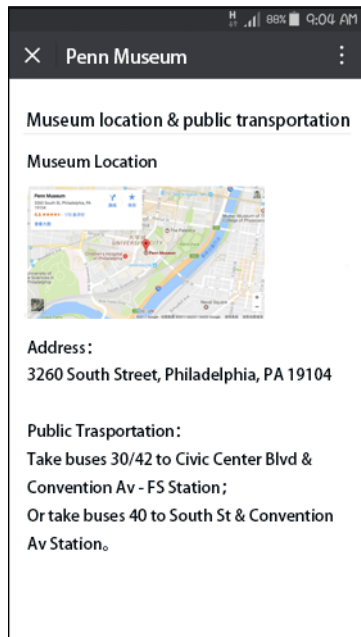
5. If museums in the United States had WeChat, would you follow them on WeChat? Why or why not?

6. What do you expect to see on American museums' WeChat accounts? (Choose as many as apply. See examples below.)

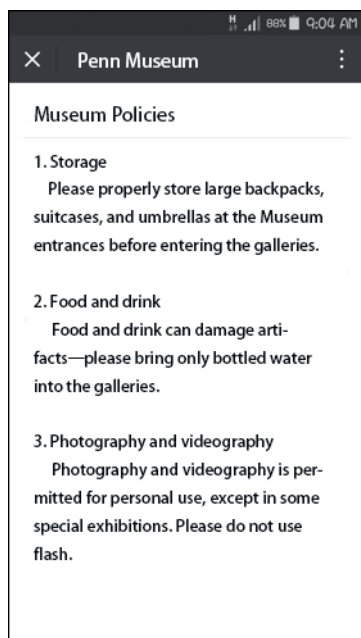
- a. Museum hours and admission fee



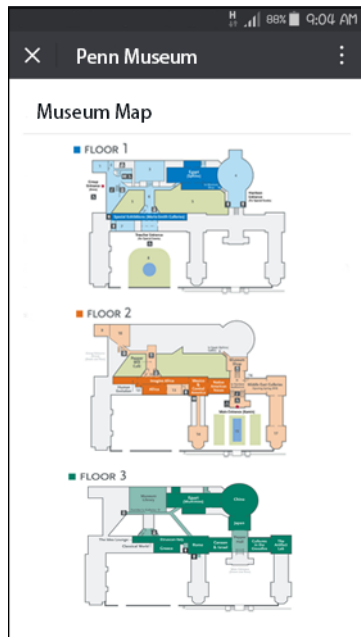
- b. Museum location and public transportation



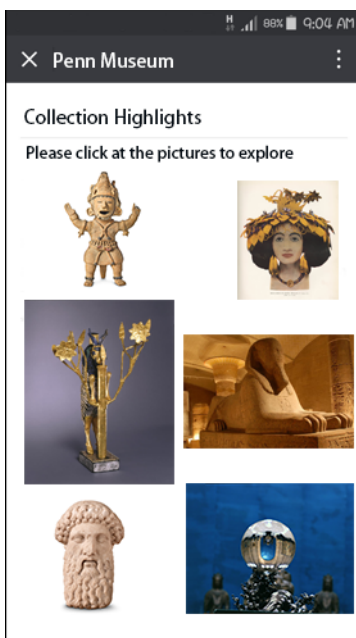
c. Museum policies



d. Museum map

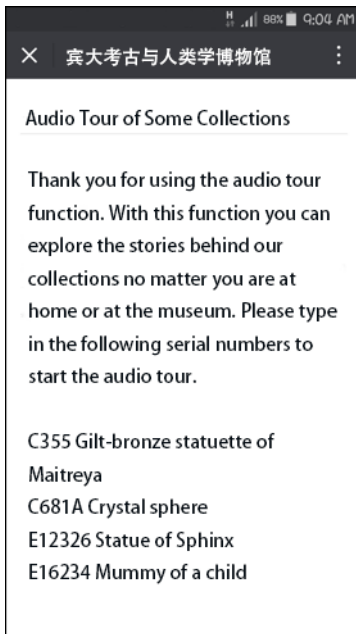


#### e. Collection Highlights



#### f. On-line audio tour





- g. Buying tickets online
- h. Contact the museum
- i. Dining in the museum
- j. Posts of coming exhibitions and events
- k. Posts of director and curator interviews (about exhibitions and collections)
- l. Posts about collections conservation
- m. Regular posts of object interpretation



7. What would you like to see added to the museums' WeChat sites?
  
8. If American museums have WeChat, how do you think that it will affect you? (Choose as many as apply)
  - a. It will help me to know about these museums and their collections.
  - b. It will help me to learn about museums' new exhibitions and events.
  - c. It will encourage me to visit these museums and look at their exhibitions in person.
  - d. It will encourage me to visit these museums in person and participate in museums' educational activities (programs).
  - e. It allows me to explore the museum collections and exhibitions online if I am not able to visit the museums physically.
  - f. Something else \_\_\_\_\_
  
9. Would you share American museums' WeChat accounts with your family and friends (people who you know)?

- a. Yes
- b. No

10. What is your age?

- a. 18-24
- b. 25-34
- c. 35-44
- d. 45-54
- e. 55-64
- f. 65-74
- g. 75+

11. What's your gender?

- a. Male
- b. Female

12. What is the highest level of education you have completed? (Choose one)

- a. Elementary school
- b. Middle school
- c. High school
- d. Associate degree
- e. Bachelor's degree
- f. Post-graduate degree
- g. Other \_\_\_\_\_
- h. Prefer not to answer

13. What is your Occupation? (Choose one)

- a. Private Enterprise
- b. Self- employed or Freelancer
- c. Student
- d. Public Sector

- e. Military/ Government
- f. Agriculture
- g. Job seeking
- h. Retired
- i. Homemaker
- j. Other \_\_\_\_\_
- k. Confidential

14. Which province do you come from? \_\_\_\_\_

15. Why would you travel to America?

- a. For vacation/ holiday
- b. For visiting friends/ relatives
- c. For business
- d. For convention
- e. For education
- f. Other reason \_\_\_\_\_

## Survey for the Chinese (Chinese Version)

为了更好地服务中国观众，很多美国的博物馆都在探索如何建立和完善它们的微信公众平台。我们需要您的意见和帮助，从而让美国的博物馆的微信公众平台能够更好地满足中国游客的需求（此问卷为不记名问卷）：

1. 你是否使用微信？

- a. 是
- b. 否

如果答案为否定，你不使用微信的原因是什么？（如果您不使用微信，您只需要回答此问题）

2. 你参观国内的博物馆的频率为？（单选题）

- a. 每年都会参观国内的博物馆 10 次以上
- b. 每年都会参观国内的博物馆 6-10 次
- c. 每年都会参观国内的博物馆 3-5 次
- d. 每年参观国内博物馆的次数少于 3 次
- e. 我从未参观过任何国内的博物馆

如果你选择了选项 a, b 或者 c, 请接着回答问题 2.1。如果你选择了答案 d 或者 e, 请接着回答问题 2.2。

问题 2.1: 我会时常参观国内的博物馆。我一般通过以下渠道了解这些博物馆以及它们的活动项目(多选题)：

- a. 博物馆的官网
- b. 博物馆的微信公众平台
- c. 博物馆的微博
- d. 博物馆的宣传材料（例如广告牌和海报）
- e. 其它\_\_\_\_\_

问题 2.2: 因为以下原因，我一般不会参观国内的博物馆（多选题）：

- a. 我对参观博物馆并不是很感兴趣。

- b. 我可以通过博物馆的微信公众平台探索 and 了解它们的藏品和展览。
- c. 我可以通过博物馆的官网探索 and 了解它们的藏品和展览。
- d. 我可以通过博物馆的微博探索 and 了解它们的藏品与展览。
- e. 其它原因\_\_\_\_\_

3. 你是否参观过（或者打算参观）美国的博物馆（线上参观或者到博物馆实际参观均可）？

- a. 是
  - a. a 我曾在线上参观过（或者打算在线上参观）美国的博物馆
  - a. b 我曾经实际参观过（或者打算实际参观）美国的博物馆

b. 否

如果前往美国，您实际参观过（或者打算参观）的美国博物馆有哪些？您参观这些博物馆的动因是？

4. 你是否知道有些美国的博物馆已经开通了微信公众号？

- a. 知道
- b. 不知道

如果您选择了选项 a，请回答问题 4.1 和 4.2 和 4.3。如果您选择了选项 b，请直接回答问题 5。

4.1 您知道下述哪些美国博物馆的微信公众号？（多选题）

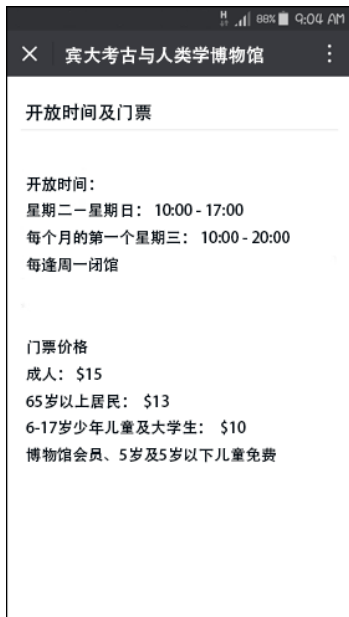
- a. 纽约大都会艺术博物馆（The Metropolitan Museum of Art）
- b. 芝加哥艺术博物馆（The Art Institute of Chicago）
- c. 费城艺术博物馆（Philadelphia Museum of Art）
- d. 纽约现代艺术博物馆（Museum of Modern Art）
- e. 旧金山亚洲艺术博物馆（Asian Art Museum of San Francisco）
- f. 其它\_\_\_\_\_

4.2 您是如何得知上述美国博物馆的微信公众号的？

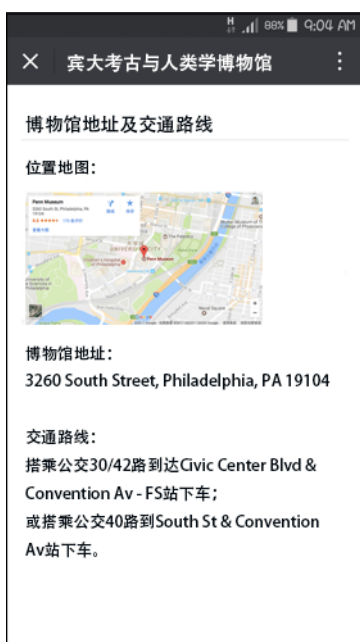
4.3 你是否关注了上述美国博物馆的微信号？

- a. 关注了
- b. 没有关注

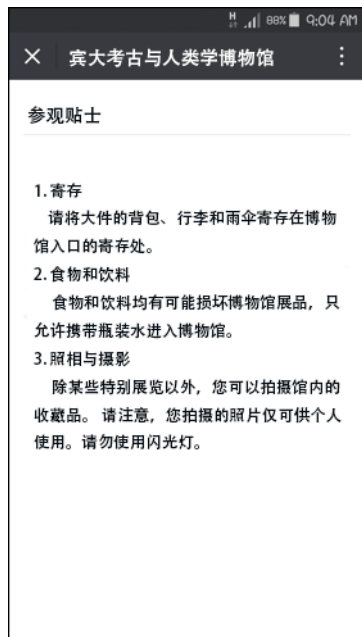
5. 如果美国的博物馆开通了微信公众号，你会不会关注它们？为什么？
6. 以宾夕法尼亚大学考古与人类学博物馆的微信公众平台为例，你希望在美国博物馆的微信公众平台上获取以下哪些信息（多选题）：
- a. 博物馆开放时间以及门票



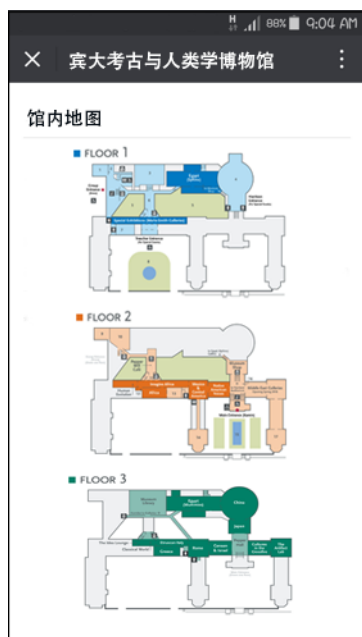
- b. 博物馆地址以及公共交通路线



## c. 参访贴士



## d. 馆内地图

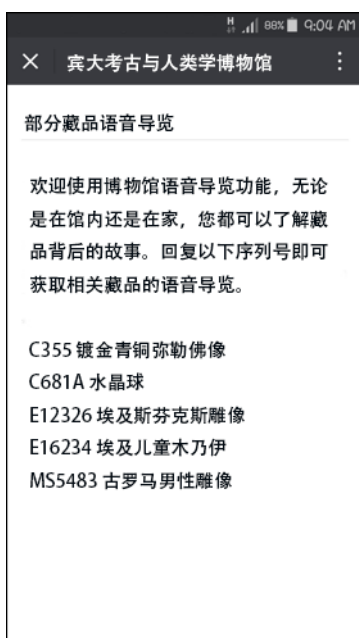


## e. 馆藏精品及其解析





#### f. 在线语音导览



#### g. 线上购票

#### h. 联系博物馆 (在线咨询帮助)

#### i. 馆内就餐

#### j. 关于近期展览和活动的推送文章

#### k. 关于馆长和策展人采访的推送文章 (采访内容关于藏品和展览)

- l. 关于藏品修复的推送文章
- m. 关于展品介绍的推送文章



7. 除上述内容以外，你还希望在美国的博物馆的微信公众平台上获取哪些信息？
  
8. 如果美国的博物馆开通了微信公众平台，您觉得这将会对您产生如下哪些影响？（多选题）
  - a. 有助于我了解这些美国的博物馆以及它们的收藏。
  - b. 有助于我了解这些博物馆的最新展览和活动。
  - c. 会让我更想亲自去参观这些博物馆和它们的展览。
  - d. 会让我更想亲自去参观这些博物馆并参与它们的教育活动和项目。
  - e. 如果我无法亲自前往美国的博物馆，博物馆的微信平台让我能够从微信上直接探索博物馆的藏品和展览。
  - f. 其它\_\_\_\_\_
  
9. 您是否愿意和您的亲友分享美国博物馆的微信公众号？
  - a. 愿意

b. 不愿意

10. 您的年龄层是？

a. 18-24

b. 25-34

c. 35-44

d. 45-54

e. 55-64

f. 65-74

g. 75+

11. 您的性别是

a. 男性

b. 女性

12. 您的受教育程度是？

a. 小学

b. 中学

c. 高中

d. 专科

e. 本科

f. 硕士或以上学历

g. 其它\_\_\_\_\_

h. 不便透露

13. 请问您的职业是？

a. 企业职员

b. 个体户或自由职业者

c. 学生

d. 事业单位员工

e. 军队或党政机关人员

- f. 务农
- g. 待业人员（有位置变换）
- h. 离退休人员
- i. 家庭主妇
- j. 其它 \_\_\_\_\_
- k. 不便透露

14. 请问您来自哪个省份 \_\_\_\_\_

15. 请问您前往美国的原因是？（单选题）

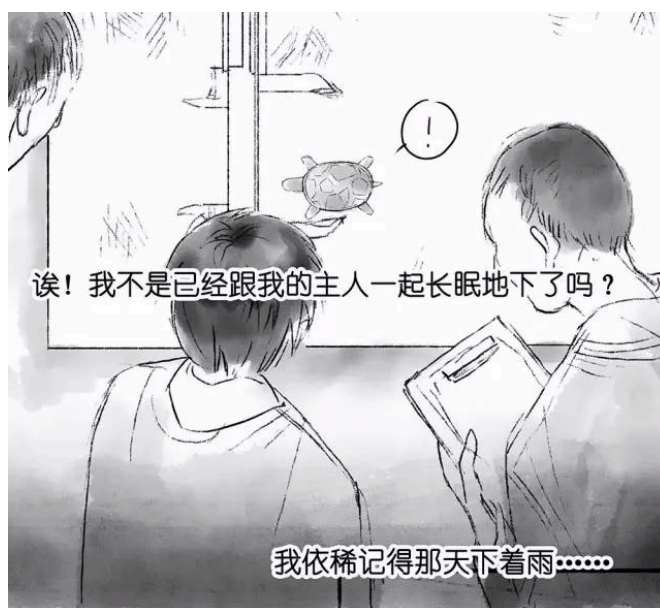
- a. 为了享受节假日
- b. 为了探访亲人或朋友
- c. 因为生意需要
- d. 因为会议需要
- e. 因为受教育需要
- f. 其它原因\_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix III

### The Comic about a Coming Exhibition in Guangdong Museum's WeChat Post

**Exhibition background:** 40 years ago, Chinese archeologists discovered a Shang Dynasty tomb—Fuhao Tomb. About 1928 pieces of ancient objects were discovered in this tomb. In 2017 the Guangdong Museum in Guangzhou works with the Institute of Archeology in Beijing and hold a special exhibition to display the objects discovered in the Fuhao Tomb. The Guangdong Museum picked up hundreds of oracle bones, and beautiful Jades from the Fuhao Tomb to put in the exhibition. The exhibition aimed to let visitors understand the life of a fabulous Chinese queen—Fuhao, and the culture of the Shang Dynasty.

Oracle bones were usually created from cattle shoulder blades and the underside of turtle shells. The turtle character in this comic was designed to represent one of the oracle bone discovered in the Fuhao Tomb. The turtle character talks about the story of the discovery of the tomb, and his journey of traveling from the tomb to the Institute of Archeology in Beijing, then to the Guangdong Museum in Guangzhou. (The pictures below are copies of parts of the comic.)

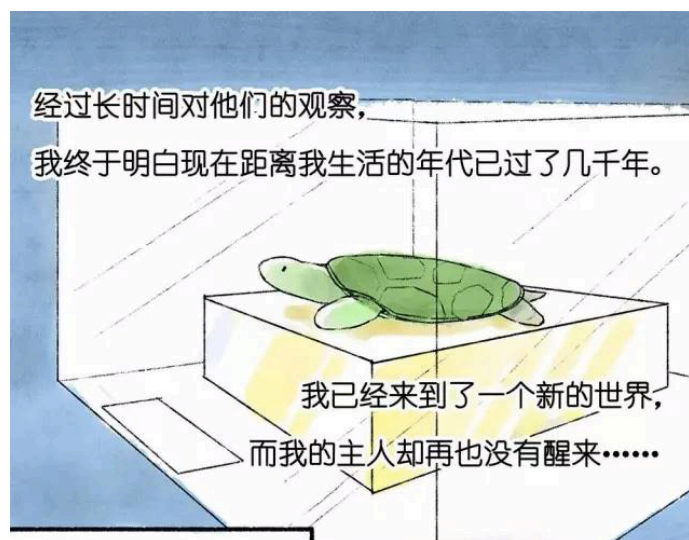


“My name is Turtle. I had been buried with my owner in her tomb for thousands of years until some Chinese archeologists found me.”

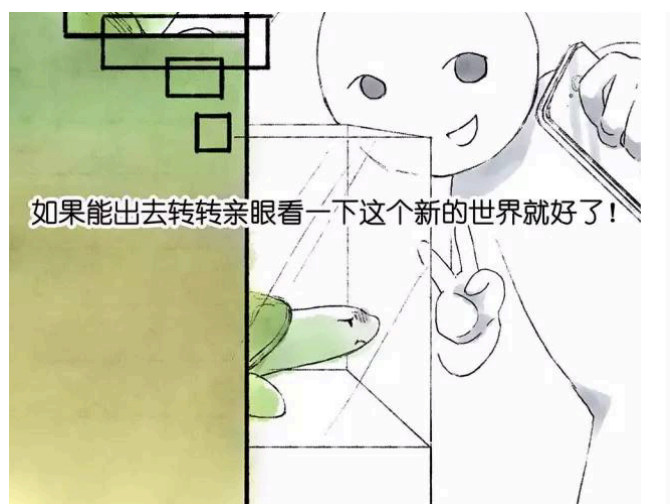
”



“My owner was called Fuhao. She was a Chinese queen and the most beautiful lady in the world.”



“The archeologists took me out of the tomb. After my long-time observation, I realized that the world has been changing. My owner will never wake up.”

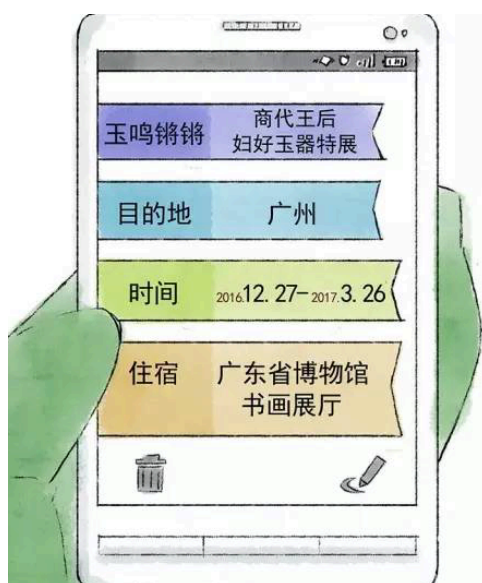


“I want to go outside and explore the new world.”





“First, I went to Beijing.”

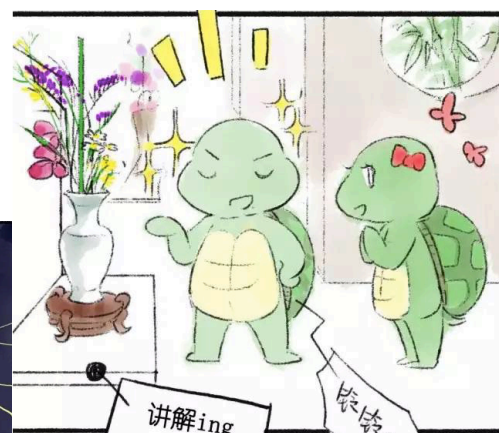
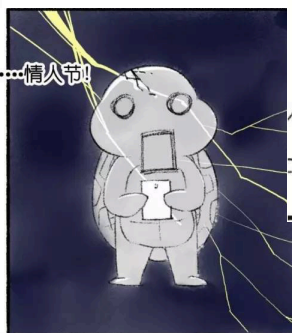


这次我可要好好看一下。

“Now, I am in Guangzhou. If you want to meet me, please come to the Guangdong Museum during December 27, 2016 and March 26, 2017.”



情.....情人节!



## Appendix IV

### Example of Post About a Coming Event

(The contents are edited by the thesis researcher based on a real event at the Penn Museum)

#### [Event] The Sip of the Past—Rediscovered and Recreated Ancient Brews

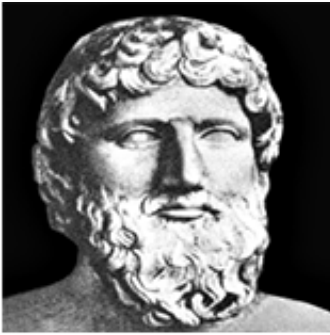
2017-10-20 The Penn Museum



Are you a beer lover? Do you know about the history of beer? Are you curious about the taste of the ancient beer? Yes?! Here is a chance for you to take a sip of the ancient ale! Dr. Pat McGovern, author of "Ancient Brews: Rediscovered and Re-created," pairs up with Sam Calagione, Founder and President of Dogfish Head (an American brewing company), for an evening of talk and tastings at the Penn Museum. Grab your tickets while they last!

Beer, one of the oldest fermented beverages, has been a popular drink since long time ago . . .





Plato  
(the Classical Greek philosopher)  
(427–347 B.C.E.)

He was a wise man who invented beer.



Thomas Jefferson  
(the third U.S. president)  
April 13, 1743 – July 4, 1826

Beer, if drunk in moderation, softens the temper, cheers the spirit and promotes health.

Wow! Even Plato loved beer! It seems like beer definitely has a long history! As an archeologist, Dr. Patrick has been spent a long time to dig into the history and recreation of this golden ale. Want to take a peek at Dr. Patrick's recreation journey? No problem!

### A Re-created Beverage Fit for a King

Dr. Patrick's adventures in ancient beer (extreme fermented beverage) discovery and making began with a tomb: The Midas Tumulus (Latin, "mound"), in central Turkey. Beginning in 1957 and up to the present, the Penn Museum has intensively explored and excavated Gordion, where Alexander the Great cut the Gordian Knot, the capital of the Phrygian kingdom of King Midas.



The Midas Tumulus



Midas—the King with Golden Touch

### Chemical Analyses Provides the Answer

Some 160 bronze vessels were found in the Midas Tumulus. They were used to serve up a very special beverage in the final farewell dinner to the king (Funerary feast).



Vats from the Midas Mound



Remains of the ancient beer

With the evidence of Chemical analyses, Dr. Patrick was able to identify the evaporated remains of an ancient beverage held in the bronze vessels buried in Midas's mound, and recreate the ancient beer.

## Want to know more? Join the event!

### [Event Time]

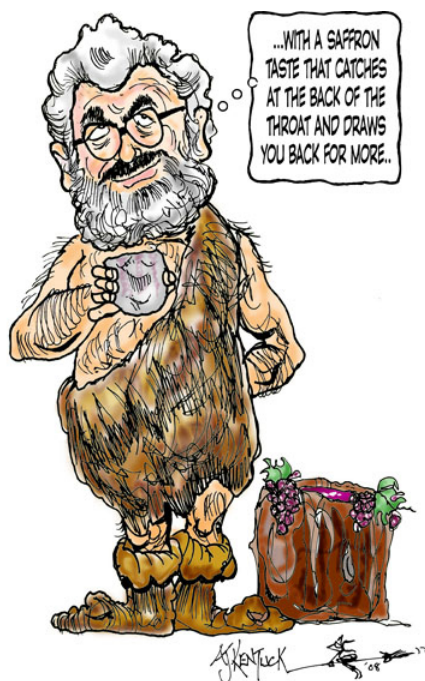
6pm-7pm, December 5.

### [Event Location]

China Gallery (3<sup>rd</sup> floor), the Pennsylvania Museum of Archeology and Anthropology

### [Target Audiences]

Guests must be 21 or older.



**Dr. Patrick is waiting for you at the Penn Museum!**

Please scan the code and follow our WeChat to get more visiting information

