

# Public Relations between British Museum and Chinese Audience

## Compare the Layout and Content of the Homepage of the British Museum in Chinese and English

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**ABSTRACT:** In the era of new media, the external publicity of museums should also actively use new media thinking and new media tools. Web pages are one of the main new media tools for external publicity of museums today, or they can be called the "facade on the Internet" of museums. This paper attempts to understand the public relations between the British Museum and Chinese audiences through the comparison of the layout and content of the British Museum's Chinese and English homepage, including the perfection of its communication information, the frequency of maintaining the website, the aesthetics of the layout design, etc., in order to get a glimpse of the attitude of the British Museum towards Chinese audiences.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

As a social organization, the museum needs to actively provide cultural resources to the public. In this process, the external publicity of the museum is very important, that is, the active part of the museum in the public relations between the museum and its audience is an important link to play the role of the museum. Now global networks have become increasingly complex, diverse and integrated. In today's super Internet era, museums are also obviously integrated into this trend. New media, with its universality, convenience, timeliness and interactivity, has subverted the traditional propaganda thinking and has become the main tool of publicity in today's society. In the era of new media, the external publicity of museums should also actively use new media thinking and new media tools. Web pages are one of the main new media tools for external publicity of museums today, or they can be called the "facade on the Internet" of museums.

This paper attempts to understand the public relations between the British Museum and Chinese audiences through the comparison of the layout and content of the British Museum's Chinese and English homepage, including the perfection of its communication information, the frequency of maintaining the website, the aesthetics of the layout design, etc., in order to get a glimpse of the attitude of the British Museum towards Chinese audiences. Of course, the information obtained from the comparison of the layout and content of the British Museum's official website in Chinese and English is limited. This paper only analyzes the public relations between the British Museum

and Chinese audiences based on the comparison results. The "Chinese audiences" here are also limited to the Chinese audiences who have visited the British Museum. Those who have not even been to the British Museum but have clicked and seen the home page of its official website in Chinese or English are also within the scope of "Chinese audience" mentioned in this article, because they can be regarded as potential audiences - only those who want to know or simply appreciate the British Museum will visit its website.

### 2. PUBLIC RELATIONS IN MUSEUM

The term "public relations" first appeared in the 1807 congressional speech of American president Thomas Jefferson. It is translated from English "public relations", which refers to the communication and communication relationship between organizations and the public environment [1]. This paper adopts the current general definition of domestic academic circles, and believes that "public relations" refers to an activity or function that social organizations use means of communication to make themselves and the public understand and adapt to each other, and its purpose is to establish a well-organized social image [2]. In the context of museums, that is "museum public relations", in which the subject of public relations activities is the museum, a public welfare social organization, and the audience is the object of public relations activities. After using media and other means of communication and communication, it is the fundamental purpose to obtain the benign interaction between the subject and the image, and shape the good social image of

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the museum.

A large, comprehensive and internationally renowned museum is also a natural platform for public cultural diplomacy and international public relations activities [3]. As far as the British Museum is concerned, its exhibits and exhibition rooms divided by civilization form various parts of the museum. Through the "landing" long-term operation, it is entirely possible to achieve the goal of public cultural diplomacy and the purpose of international public relations to create a good image of the nation-state [4]. In combination with the above, the web page is the "facade on the Internet" of the museum, and China has a large number of potential visitors. Potential visitors here are those who browse the web page to show their intention, but have not yet acted. To sum up, we can know that the British museum must have its internal value that can be explored and pondered in the construction of its official website, as well as the experience that is worthy of our reference and learning.

### 3. THE LAYOUT AND CONTENT OF THE ENGLISH HOMEPAGE OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM

#### 3.1. Page layout

Before introducing the English homepage of the British Museum, the author wants to make his own evaluation criteria on whether the layout design is beautiful and whether the expression is complete in the web design, that is, a unified, balanced, coherent and echoing, segmentation, contrast and harmonious web layout design is better, on the contrary, it is not. Therefore, in the evaluation of its layout, we will consider whether these factors can be satisfied.

The overall background of the page is black, with eight bars from top to bottom. The first bar is divided into three parts: left, middle and right; The second and third bars are on the left, and the right side is occupied by four link boxes attached to a picture, but only about two-thirds of the four link boxes are displayed. Even if the display has been loaded, there is no change after refreshing.



Figure 1 Overall page background

The fourth bar is also on the left, and the picture links are mixed on the right.



Figure 2 Picture links are mixed

There are four columns of pictures in the fifth column, and the links are in the layout of the attached profile. However, starting from the second column, the pictures and links overlap with the pictures extending from the right side of the fourth column. This overlap is the content of the fifth column placed on the top layer, and the links can be accessed by clicking, but the part of the attached profile is not clearly displayed, which is almost integrated with the background; The layout of the sixth bar is similar to that of the fifth bar, except that a small part of the upper right side is blocked by the extended picture of the fourth bar, but it does not affect the picture and link of the sixth bar; The layout of the seventh column is similar to that of the fifth and sixth columns, but there are six columns; The eighth column is divided into left and right parts. Here are four kinds of conjectures about the above situation: first, the browser problem. Although the author uses Firefox browser, ie11 browser, IE8 browser, QQ browser and other PC browsers, as well as UC browser, which is a mobile browser, the viewing results are incomplete, pictures are superimposed on each other, and links are piled on pictures, it cannot be ruled out that other browsers may see complete pages with normal layout; The second is the problem of information interception. There may be pictures and words in this part of the web page that are contrary to the relevant laws and regulations of the people's Republic of China, resulting in the inability to display complete web page information within the territory of the people's Republic of China, resulting in chaotic page phenomena; Third, the British Museum's web page layout design is derelict, which may have such problems in the original design of its web page, but for some reason, the British Museum has neither found nor inspected and maintained it. According to the author's browsing, at least the British Museum has not inspected and maintained its web page in the past month; Fourth, the British Museum has adopted this overlapping design method to make its web page layout more artistic, but in terms of its confusion and ambiguity, this situation is the least likely. The English logo of the British Museum is placed on the left side of the first horizontal bar of the page, in which the word "the" deviates from the overall layout of the vertical column.



Figure 3 English logo of British Museum

According to the layout design, the design style of the English homepage of the British Museum tends to be concise, and the whole page is crisp and neat. It is mainly separated by horizontal bars to make a big classification difference, and each horizontal bar is supplemented by multiple vertical columns to make a small classification under the big classification. The overall black background has a quiet and mysterious feeling. Although some pictures show confusion, it can be seen that the exhibits, namely cultural relics, account for a large proportion of the page space, and the pictures explaining links account for a small proportion of the page space. As the home page of the museum website, its display and embodiment is still based on "objects", that is, collections. Its logo design is prominent but not abrupt, which is the highlight of the whole page. In general, the layout meets the conditions of unity, balance, coherence and echo, harmony and segmentation. In terms of contrast, although the stacking of pictures has a strong contrast effect, it is slightly chaotic, resulting in incomplete and unclear display of pictures and words, but the effect presented by the layout is in line with the overall image and temperament of the British Museum. To sum up, this is a home page layout with relatively successful design and clear expression. Therefore, in terms of layout, its publicity effect should be relatively outstanding.

### 3.2. Content

The content will be described in detail according to the layout. The first column is divided into three parts: left, middle and right. The logo of the British Museum is on the left, which includes eight links from left to right and from top to bottom, including "visiting, what's on, research, learning, membership, support us, about us and blog". On the far right is a search box with the words "British Museum Shop" under it, which is a link to the museum store; The second column is titled "free, open daily 10:00-17:30" and annotated with "Friday until 20:30". Under it, there are six links showing "getting here / plan your visit / groups / full opening hours / bag restrictions / exhibition and events", and at the bottom, there is a language selection. The title of the third column is "special exhibition", which means "special exhibition", and the description "find out what's on, book your tickets in advance or become a member today" is attached below. The title on the right side of the fourth column is "what's on", and the explanation "discover special exhibitions, displays and events at the museum" is attached below. Explain that the following two links are "exhibitions and

displays" and "events". The fifth horizontal column is only displayed completely in the left vertical column, and the remaining three vertical columns cannot be seen completely. The title of the left vertical column is "membership", which is explained as follows: "become a member and enjoy exclusive benefits only £ 64 with direct debit". The title of the first vertical column of the sixth horizontal bar from left to right is "blog", and the attached explanation is "thought promoting posts from curators, conservators, scientists and more, giving you a unique view from behind the scenes". At the end is the link "read the British Museum blog". The second column is titled "services", and the six links under it are "conferences and venue hire/corporate entertainment and events/filming/image licensing/press office/more Museum Services". The title and content of the third vertical column are "shop online" and "visit our online shop for unused gifts, beautiful jewelry, historical replicas and products inspired by cultures all over the world", with the link "visit the shop online" attached below. The seventh column has an overall title "event", a total of six columns, all of which are the layout of event name and time. On the left side of the eighth column, the title "E-newsletter sign up" is attached, including Facebook, YouTube, Tumblr, twitter and other platforms, indicating that the British Museum also has accounts for these platforms, and relevant information is published on them [5].

So far, the contents of the English homepage of the British Museum, except for the mixed parts of pictures and words, have been described. The visible contents are basically detailed and clear. According to it, it can be inferred that the unrecognizable parts should be some introductions of the museum's collections or exhibitions.

## 4. THE LAYOUT AND CONTENT OF THE CHINESE HOMEPAGE OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM

### 4.1. Page layout

The overall background of the page is black, and there are seven columns from top to bottom. The first column is divided into four vertical columns. The English logo and Chinese name of the British Museum are on the left, and "the" still protrudes outside the overall vertical layout; The second horizontal bar is divided into left and right parts. The pictures and links on the right are clearly displayed, and each link corresponds to the corresponding picture; The third horizontal column has titles on the leftmost side, which are divided into three vertical columns: left, middle and right; The layout of the fourth and fifth bars is similar to that of the third bar; The sixth horizontal bar has a title on the far left, which is divided into left and right parts, and the left part is divided into upper and lower columns, with a thinner column line that is different from the thick line of the big horizontal bar; The seventh column is a whole column.

In terms of the layout of the home page of Chinese web pages, there is no confusion and stacking. In the case of

complete display, the layout design is very good, with scattered words and pictures, overall harmony and perfect segmentation; The color system is cold, which echoes with some of the collection pictures displayed; The text is eye-catching, moderate in size, and highlights important information.

#### 4.2. Content

The four parts of the first column are the English logo and Chinese translation of the British Museum, the special sponsorship of UnionPay international and the UnionPay icon from left to right. The two columns of links from left to right and from top to bottom include: home page, museum introduction, museum collections, treasures of the town, Chinese cultural relics, tourism strategies, museum members, exhibitions and tickets, news trends, contact us. The British flag is at the top right, and there is an online store link below it; The title on the left of the second column is the introduction of the British Museum, The introduction is as follows "The British Museum, founded in 1753 and located in Russell Square in London, England, has more than 8 million collections, which is one of the largest and most famous museums in the world. The first collection of more than 71000 pieces was donated by Sir Hans Sloane when he died in 1753. The collections displayed in British archaeological monuments are the best preserved cultural relics. These collections span more than 2 million years of human history and are hosted by Britain and countries around the world Works of art and cultural relics that reflect ancient and modern culture. "

The four links on the right are "browse the British museum store page, buy gifts, replicas, books and other goods online", "become a member now", "explore the importance of faith" and "Rodin and ancient Greek art - about to be exhibited"; The title of the third horizontal column is the tourism strategy of the British Museum. The first vertical column from the left includes "opening hours free opening hours: 10:00-17:30 every day", with three links "extended opening hours to 20:30 on Friday, temporarily closed exhibition halls and specific opening hours", and the second vertical column includes "ride guide address: the British Museum Great Russell Street London wc1b 3DG", and a link "learn more about Ride Guide" under it, The last column is "making a visit plan", including three links: "multimedia tour guide equipment: interactive visit experience, free tour guides and lectures throughout the day, and special and free exhibitions". At the bottom right of this column, there is a link to "more tourism strategies"; The fourth column says "the treasure of the British Museum". From left to right, there are "Katebet mummy", "Parthenon Temple" and "Oxus treasure". In turn, it is introduced that "this is the mummy of an old woman, who is the singer of the 'God King' Amun. She plays the role of singing and playing music in the temple religious ceremonies.", "The famous Parthenon temple, built between 447 and 438 BC, is located in the middle of the Acropolis of Greece. It is the center of a magnificent building complex designed by the Athenian politician Perikles (who died in 429 BC)." And "this amazing model is one of the most famous collections in

the Oxus treasure, dating back to about the 5th-4th century BC." At the bottom right of the end, there is a link to "more town museum collections"; The theme of the fifth column is the Chinese cultural relics of the British Museum. Here are three listed, from left to right, "Xishan thatched cottage", "Sakyamuni gilded bronze statue" and "great Vader vase". Their brief introductions are "this scroll is called Xishan thatched cottage". It depicts the landscape in the twilight. The river bank and green mountains are rolling. ", "This historic statue of Sakyamuni, with its complex design and metal casting technology, highlights the integration of Central Plains Buddhism and Tibetan Buddhism." And "this pair of vases is one of the most important blue and white porcelain samples in existence, and it is also the most famous porcelain vase in the world." There is still a link at the bottom right, which is "more Chinese cultural relics"; The sixth column is the title of "special exhibition", which explains that "to visit the special exhibition, you need to book tickets in advance or become a member immediately." Under the "view more" link, there are three exhibition announcements on the left side of the bar - "charming life in Greece, March 8-july 15, 2018", "coins and medals, March 22-september 30, 2018" and "Rodin and ancient Greek art, April 26-july 29, 2018". On the right side are four collection pictures with names, from left to right, from top to bottom, "Edo head Ivory pedestal, cast bronze, Benin City, Nigeria", "Lewis chess pieces", "Rosetta stone tablet" and "Turquoise two headed snake puzzle", below them is the link to "view the collection of the British Museum Online" and its explanation "search from the more than 3.5 million collections of the British Museum." [6]

To sum up, the Chinese homepage of the British Museum is basically introduced. At the same time, the content is more concerned about Chinese tourists and Chinese cultural relics. They want to use the relatively perfect tourism path planning and museum visit plan to make it more convenient for Chinese tourists to watch the exhibition, and use Chinese cultural relics to attract Chinese tourists to watch. Of course, they also need his member promotion.



Figure 4 Chinese version webpage of British Museum

## 5. COMPARISON AND INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC RELATIONS REFLECTED THEREIN

In terms of layout and content, of course, the author points

out the current situation of some browsers in Chinese Mainland. In this situation, the integrity of the Chinese homepage is higher than that of the English homepage. In addition, the Chinese page is similar to the English page, mainly because of the difference in content. The richness and detail of the content of the Chinese home page is far less than that of the English home page. The English homepage introduces activities such as museums and supporting museums, which are not available on the Chinese home page. But from another point of view, the Chinese homepage has prominent and obvious characteristics. Under the limited page, it is a wise move for the British Museum.

It can be seen that the British Museum pays enough attention to Chinese audiences, and also has an obvious intention to develop potential audiences. It can be said that the comparison between the Chinese and English homepage shows the author the benign international public relations relationship between the Chinese audience and the British Museum. Unlike the English homepage which covers too much insignificant content in a messy layout, the Chinese homepage directly presents what Chinese audiences are most interested in: the treasure of the museum, tourism routes, exhibition planning, and Chinese cultural relics. This design strategies of the museum webpage intend to improve online public relations of the British museum and its Chinese audience. In a sense, the webpage is successful in handling its international public relations with Chinese audience.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Public relations can be seen everywhere in modern society. It can determine the success or failure of products and the rise or fall of enterprises; For museums, the role of public relations is equally important. First of all, museum public relations is the main channel for the public to know about museums. The public's understanding of the museum has a gradual process from weak to profound. The public contacts the museum through listening, seeing, touching and other senses from various public relations methods of the museum, and finally forms a unique understanding of the museum [7]. The British Museum has shown considerable sincerity to Chinese audiences in the design and content arrangement of its Chinese website home page, which is enough to see that the British Museum is quite cautious and serious in dealing with public relations with Chinese audiences. The main body of public relations in museums includes not only the architecture, display and personnel of museums, but also the social public and publicity media they face. Therefore, its connotation also includes the construction of museums themselves, external publicity services and coordination of relations between all parties. The British Museum obviously pays enough attention to the publicity media, the public and the construction of the museum itself, which also makes it attract a large number of Chinese tourists every year.

Each culture has its own unique way of understanding the world. There are differences in cultures, but there is no difference between good and bad. An excellent museum

must be a place for cultural sharing across national boundaries. It should allow exhibits to cross the boundaries of time and space, showing the interconnection and commonalities between world civilizations. Only in this way can visitors from any country be touched and associated with them. It is probably because of this concept that the British Museum adheres to, that it appears to be both serious and flexible in dealing with public relations with Chinese audiences.

## AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Ruoyu Peng contributed to the conception of the study, contributed significantly to analysis and manuscript preparation, and performed the data analyses and wrote the manuscript.

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