

Running head: INTERNATIONAL NEWS ORGANIZATIONS' SNS USAGE IN CHINA: A
COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY OF THE USE OF RENREN

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comparative case study of the use of Renren

by

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PREFACE

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background and Relevance

Over the past decades, the advances in communication technology especially the emergence of internet has significantly influenced the way of communication and the information distribution. Internet offers a new model of communication that is more affordable, direct and interactive, to the public at large (Civille, 1997). In the first phase (Web 1.0) the public came to know the internet. The appearance of Web 2.0 applications, also known as the second phase of development, functioned as a network platform interactively connecting different web content and leveraging individuals' self service to reach out to the entire web (O'Reilly, 2007).

Among the web 2.0 features, the Social Networks Sites (SNSs) have recently acquired huge popularity. Many internet users, especially young people, have even integrated the SNSs into their daily lives. Popular SNSs such as Facebook, Myspace and Twitter have millions of users all over the world (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). On one hand, SNSs have provided a dynamic multimedia platform that enables users to share multimedia information and experiences, discuss, organize activities and events and interact with each other (Cachia, Compañó, & Costa, 2007; Constantinides & J. Fountain, 2008). On the other hand, SNSs have created a normative approach for companies and organizations to reach millions of internet users that they could not have reached through any other channel. Furthermore, according to Busack (2009), SNSs are among the most cost effective vehicles for understanding targets' behaviour and needs. Busack (2009) further stresses that the only way to keep a brand noted and to pass around related information is by using SNSs. Through its rapid growth in the past few years, SNSs have become a crucial tool in global marketing.

Along with the well-developed internet technology and the fast growing number of internet users within China, the Chinese internet market becomes one of the most attempting internet markets in the world. It at present has 420 million internet users, which is the largest number of internet users of a country in the world (CNNIC, 2010). More importantly, 97 percent of them are under 50 years old and 82.9 percent of users at least passed high school. In a recent Chinese national internet survey, it has even been indicated that the internet is an important information source for over 85 percent of internet. Additionally, 47.4 percent of the internet users consider the internet as their primary source to obtain news and other information (CNNIC, 2007).

Even though international SNSs such as Facebook and Twitter could not enter the Chinese market due to internet obstacles, SNSs gained popularity in China. A huge number of Chinese SNSs have been created in the past few years and there were 124 million stable users on Chinese SNSs by the end of 2009. Among all the SNSs, one of the most popular social websites in China is Renren.com, which is also known as Chinese Facebook. It at present has 120 million registered users and the majority of its users are highly educated university students (AppLeap & Great Wall Club, 2010). The gigantic amount of user with a highly educated background has built a huge and tempting marketing territory for nearly all the organizations and companies in the Chinese market.

International news organizations, as the worldwide information carriers, have been important vehicles for information distribution on a global scale and they have always tried to enter new markets to enhance their position in global communication even further. Therefore, with the intention to penetrate a new market and to explore its full potential, international news services such as Radio Netherlands Worldwide (RNW) and The Wall Street Journal (WSJ) have launched their online news services in Chinese. In the meantime, they have also established their account on Chinese SNSs. Renren, being one of the most popular SNSs in China, has become an inevitable social media channel for both news organizations to promote themselves.

Radio Netherlands Worldwide is an international organization based in the Netherlands that provides news and cultural information in more than ten languages to millions of people worldwide, via TV, radio and internet. The Wall Street Journal, on the other hand, is not only the top daily financial newspaper in the United States but also a global digital-news agency distributing mainly financial and economic news online in multiple languages.

RNW launched its Chinese online news services in 2008, while The Wall Street Journal launched its online Chinese edition (CWSJ) in 2002 (Dow Jones, 2008). As both news organizations only provide the Chinese news via the internet, the popularity of SNSs in China has provided an innovative approach for them, in trying to expand their market and increase the number of readers. SNSs have the potential to help the news organizations to reach a greater number of users from their target market as well as getting their images and news information rapidly across other potential users incurring limited expenses. As a result, Chinese SNSs are becoming a necessary tool for the organizations' marketers. It should therefore be no surprise that both RNW and CWSJ have created their accounts on Renren.

It is true that SNSs, as the number one online marketing tool nowadays, offer a connection with millions of potential consumers as well as provide great opportunities for organizations to directly communicate with their target group. After the rapid growth of SNSs worldwide, it is now indispensable for companies to use SNSs in the marketing process. SNSs do not only receive a lot of 'commercial' attention, but have also received considerable scientific attention, with various scholars writing about SNSs as a marketing tool.

Mangold and David (2009) claims that the tools and strategies for communicating with consumers have changed significantly with the emergence of the phenomenon known as social media. Moreover, a research by Cachia et al. (2007) indicates that companies use social media to detect new trends in their market and establish marketing strategies. A lot of marketing executives also publish guidance reports on the tactics for using SNSs or how to incorporate those websites into their marketing strategies (Evans & Bratto, 2008; Weinberg, 2009; Casteleyn et al., 2009; Thackeray & Neiger, 2009).

Nevertheless, there is limited academic research focusing on how marketers actually use SNSs as well as a pattern of SNS usage by different organizations in a certain country.

1.2 Research Questions

This report, focuses on the Chinese SNS environment to investigate how international media organizations are increasingly trying to make the best of the Chinese SNS "Renren" and how the Chinese internet polices influences their Renren usage.

The question that has been provoked here: *How do international media organizations use SNSs in China?*

For the two international news organizations mentioned before, RNW and WSJ, SNS-behaviour will be investigated. The research will focus on the presence and use of one of the most popular Chinese online social network—"Renren". The purpose is to find out how media organizations use SNSs in China and to uncover patterns for international media organization to make use of the Chinese SNSs.

The case study will describe RNW's and CWSJ's SNS-activities on Renren. It is interesting to note that the international news organizations created different accounts and have acquired large differences in popularity on Renren. RNW has built a personal account with approximate 500 friends. On the other hand, CWSJ has built a public page with an amount of 400 thousands friends. Therefore, in chapter two a categorization of SNS-activities will be proposed to investigate how Renren is used differently by these two media organizations and how that could influence the popularity of the organization.

Based on this categorization the first research question is:

-What kinds of SNS-activities are being used by RNW and WSJ in their respective SNS strategies?

Based on the categorization of SNS-activities RNW and WSJ will be compared. Through the activities on their Renren profile pages and resulting number of friends, I hope to be able to touch on the effectiveness of different SNS-strategies in China. This has resulted in the second research question:

-- What are differences and similarities in the way RNW and WSJ marketers use Renren?

Three of the SNS activity categories (see paragraph 2.32) can be observed through the analysis of organizations' SNS-activities on Renren. However the fourth category (Monitor) can not be fully observed. Therefore, e-mail interviews with respective marketers from both companies will be used to answer the third research question:

-- How do international media corporations monitor SNS-activity in China?

Furthermore, as the Chinese internet policy and the Chinese SNS regulation could influence the results from this research substantially, the email interview is also designed to cover the influence of the Chinese internet policy on the use of SNSs:

--How does Chinese internet policy influence the use of SNSs?

Followed by a systematic case study, this paper is trying to provide an overview on how Chinese SNSs are being used by international media organizations at present through analyzing their online behaviours on the Renren website. Former studies by other scholars on the online social

network especially Facebook usage will be used as a benchmark to describe the use of Renren. Furthermore, this paper will offer a qualitative comparison of the similarities and differences in Renren usage of the two organizations. Finally, the research encompasses an email survey with marketers from the two organizations to examine some exclusive aspects of using Renren. Whether the internet rules in China have increased the challenges for international media organizations and in what way the regulation of Renren has effected the international news organization.

1.3 Structure

In the second chapter (Theory and previous research), the report will elaborate on both academic and empirical SNS studies. Its aim is to provide an overview on how marketers use SNSs and to develop a framework for the activities and tactics that can be used for SNSs. A comparison of Facebook and Renren, important to increase the validity of the study, as well as the internet policy in China have also been included in Chapter two. The framework for SNS-usage, the Facebook-Renren comparison and the description of Chinese internet policy will all be used during subsequent analyses. Chapter three (Methodology) explains the case study methodology that has been used to conduct the study, while chapter four (Results) sets out the results of the study. Finally chapter five (Conclusions and Discussions, Drawbacks and Further suggestions) discusses the paper, its drawbacks and possibilities for further research.

2 Theory Review and Previous Research

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the relationship between SNSs, consumers and marketers will be discussed. This will go along with an extensive discussion of previous literature. Based on the theory discussion, a framework will be created consisting of four activities along with fourteen tactics that can be used by marketers on SNSs. It is important to note that a lot of previous research concerning Facebook could also apply to the biggest Chinese SNS: Renren. Therefore, in paragraph 2.4 and 2.5, similarities and differences between Renren and Facebook will be described in an attempt to increase the validity of the research design. Finally, China's internet policy especially its policy towards social media will be explicated in paragraph 2.6.

2.2 Social Network Sites

The concept "web 2.0" was brought up by O'Reilly in 2005. Initially, he used features such as Flickr, Bit Torrent, Napster, Wikipedia and blogging to define the Web 2.0 movement. As the list of applications kept growing, O'Reilly came up with the following general description of Web 2.0: "An interactive platform for collecting user-created content, harnessing collective intelligence and building communities" (O'Reilly, 2007). Among all the web 2.0 applications, SNSs or social media have the great power to create a sense of belonging and acceptance among its users. As a result, SNSs have perished a rapidly growing appeal over the last few years. Therefore, social network sites (SNSs) are among the most important features of the web 2.0 movement, consequently the subject is also attracting more and more academic attention. Boyd and Ellison (2007) have made the definitions that SNSs is web-based services where 1) users can build a profile within a bounded system, 2) generate a list of other users whom they share a connection, and 3) view and traverse their list of connection and those made by others with in the system. To make a definition from the angle of function, social network sites are web-based services allowing users to build personal profiles in order to exchange personal content, facilitate discussion, share networks, experiences and knowledge within a defined system (Constantinides & J.Fountain, 2007; Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Cachia et al. 2007).

In addition, Hueur (2007) points out that SNSs have the ability to modify personal relationships and the way in which we relate to the organizations that serve us. The rising importance of SNSs, thus, has a growing effect on all consumers. It affects the way people are socializing, entertaining, acknowledging and influencing their consuming decisions (Constantinides &

J.Fountain, 2007). Moreover, it has influence on the way organizations communicate with people. O'Reilly (2007) predicts that companies that are best capable of identifying their core consumers and to integrate their consumer data into a systematic user service will be the winner of the web 2.0 era. Therefore, SNSs are not only a collection of online and open-source applications but also a tool that can be used to increase internet user's experiences and market power in both business and social processes for organizations such as companies (Constantinides & J.Fountain, 2007).

As SNSs have become important in business and social communication, Safko and Brake (2009) specify that marketing on SNSs are all about enabling conversation. It is important to note that, other than many people might think, the conversation can only be influenced, not controlled (Safko & Brake, 2009: P4). Based on Safko and Brake's research, the communication can be shaped if a marketer is familiar with the basic social media tools and tactics and formulated a proper media strategy. Therefore, it is vital to start communication on SNSs from a market perspective and to find out how this communication can be enhanced.

The following paragraphs will extent on the relationship between SNSs and their increasing role in marketing.

2.3 Marketing and SNSs

2.31 SNS marketing and empowered consumers

According to Estabrook et al. (2007), people consider internet as the primary tool when they encounter some problems or need some information. The paper also point out that one third of Americans are most likely to turn to the internet at first, when they face a problem.

More generally speaking, SNSs enable people to create a personal account, display multimedia information, distribute the information and connect to their friends. Comparing to traditional media, users have the rights and freedom to produce and distribute information. Therefore, internet, especially the SNSs has empowered users to communicate with other people more efficiently and in a more interactive way. Moreover, SNSs appear to be profoundly embedded into internet users' daily life. It has become an important information source for internet users; transforming people's individual and group daily communication process (Constantinides & J.Fountain, 2007). It is highly likely that SNSs are influencing the way people think or behave

and has a strong impact on those users' consuming behaviour.

Therefore, SNSs are increasingly important to marketing professionals. One of the major changes is that users are both consumers and contributors on SNSs. Users not only play the role of information receivers but also play a role in information creation and sending on SNSs. They are the vital content contributors and they represent the power of the collective intelligence (O'Reilly, 2007; Evans, 2008; Constantinides & J.Fountain, 2007). The power in creating and sharing content on the online social network websites, as a consequence, has created a sense of belonging, or shared identity among users. This shared identity among SNS users has triggered a more reliable, credible and trustable marketing communication method: Word of Mouth (WOM)-communication (Brown et al, 2008). Brown et al. (2008) indicate that WOM is a consumer-dominated channel of marketing communication where the sender is independent of the seller. When the information sender separates from the seller, consumers consider the information to be more reliable and trustworthy. In addition, the bigger the number of independent news distributors is, the more reliable the content will be perceived. Therefore, when the number of empowered users, spreading positive or negative WOM on SNSs, increases, consumers are more likely to be affected.

In general, the empowerment of users on SNSs has turned users into co-developers of the Web 2.0, instead of the passive information receivers they have been before. The massive internet population plays a central role in the whole communication process on those websites (Thackeray & Neiger, 2009). O'Reilly (2007) indicates that social networks are actually becoming the key to market dominance in the web 2.0 era. The unprecedented customer empowerment has also greatly influenced the customers' behaviours and the power structures in the market. It gradually brings market power from producers or vendors towards customers. Under those circumstances, marketers must try to understand how to manage the relationship with the empowered users and how to positively influence the use of WOM information about products, brands and firms. Subsequently marketers need to be able to influence consumer behaviour both online and offline (Constantinides & J.Fountain, 2007; Brown et al. 2008).

2.32 SNS marketing and the marketers

The advent of SNSs has brought changes to marketing communication in various ways. In a matter of years SNSs have gone beyond being a promising tool for market communication. It is

safe to state that marketers are obliged to integrate SNSs in their marketing strategy nowadays. Therefore SNSs have changed the profession in some ways. The report has touched on this subject previously, below some of the most important changes for marketers are listed.

Firstly, it shifts the marketing power from marketers to consumers by enhancing the role of consumers, who can share experiences and opinions. As mentioned before, marketers have to treat consumers as co-workers because they are no longer in control.

Secondly, Weinberg (2009) indicates that marketing on SNSs is a process that empowers people to promote products, or services through online social channels and to communicate with and tap into a much larger community that may not have been available via traditional advertising channels. Thus, SNSs offer new opportunities for marketers to get - and stay in touch with different markets or specific target group, which they could not have connected with before.

Thirdly, SNSs are easy to use and inexpensive. In other words, it can reach a large crowd effectively. A lot of researchers have point out that marketing on SNSs is an inexpensive way for marketers to efficiently reach the largest crowd. According to a research by Thackeray et al. (2008), the financial cost of SNSs are minimal, considering the number of people that could receive your messages and the specific way in which SNSs allow you to target your audience (Constantinides & J.Fountain, 2007; Blackshaw, 2009). It is not hard to imagine that, in the coming years, SNS-marketing will be vital to be successful in business by saving marketers' budgets and time.

All these changes are likely to positively influence the marketers' decision making if they consider how to modify their business by utilizing SNSs.

Kotler and Keller (2007) specify that there are three major purposes for marketing: increase product awareness; persuade people to purchase the product and remind people that the product exists. Generally speaking, marketers build a market strategy for their product or service and try to use all their marketing tools to reach the purposes listed above. However, SNSs are a new territory and therefore relatively unknown to marketers. As noted before consumers are empowered and both consumers and marketers are senders and receivers of information. Next to the advantages that have been discussed before, this gives rise to some drawbacks and challenge.

First of all, few people participate in an online social network because they want to be sold something by someone. Most people only join the SNSs because they want to socialize with people instead of joining for commercial reasons. This kind of online relationship with customers is hard to manage because it leads SNS becoming a very subtle and sensitive market to promote or sell.

Secondly, it is harder to control product information and the public's opinion on SNSs compared to traditional marketing channels due to the user-generated-content. Users are those who share the product information and broadcast their feelings and attitudes towards the product. These opinions and feedbacks are hard to manage. It is nearly impossible to predict how people will comment about your product or your services or the organization on SNSs as well as how consumers will communicate with each other on the SNSs. Therefore, Safko and Brake (2009) describe the social media world as a jungle where marketers need to fight with each other to survive. Although the SNSs are hard to manage, it is hard for marketers to neglect the great potential in it.

Organizations (both profit and non-profit) start to recognize the power of web 2.0 social networks in marketing in recently years. With the advent of more advanced technologies and the subsequent emergence of a huge number of SNSs, there is an increased potential for social marketers to use the internet for their product or brand promotion (Thackeray et al. 2008). According to previous studies, SNSs have the potential to allow a company to easily spread their message to millions of users; offer the opportunity to deliver information faster and farther than other media; have the ability to send messages to a well defined and highly targeted audience; are able to create communication channels where people can directly or indirectly interact with organizations; allow marketers to direct engage their consumers in a creative process; leverage the online word-of-mouth advertising to its biggest benefit for marketers by influencing and shaping the communication (Thackeray & Neiger, 2009; Arnold, Lurie, Dickinson, Marsten & Becker, 2009; Mangold & Faulds, 2009; Thackeray, Neiger, Hanson & McKenzie, 2008; Busack, 2009:8; Evans, 2008; Mangold & Faulds, 2009).

With all the great potentials , SNSs connect the online and offline markets by bringing an extension in both online and offline word of mouth communication for a product, service or

organization. O'Reilly (2007) believes that the organizations and companies have the opportunity to beat competition by trying to get better at harnessing and integrating services provided to their customers with social media. Consequently, it is necessary for marketing managers to both think and act differently in order to include social media in their market strategy.

According to Thackeray and Neiger (2009), the first step for marketers to adapt to the new model of communication is to look at the users' motivation for creating or sharing information on SNSs. It is also important for marketers to know what kind of SNSs are used by consumers and which their preferred features are within the SNSs.

The next step is to use high quality and valid information in order to better communicate with the consumers. Marketers should prevent an overload of information and communicate with the consumers at their desired time with desired messages as well as in their preferred formats (Thackeray & Neiger, 2009). Moreover, marketers must learn how to continuously develop and measure the impact of SNS-communication by engaging more users and by monitoring online communication. Consumers are turning their back to 'old messages' while internet connects them with information which bypassed the organization or companies' expensive marketing communication strategies (Safko & Brake, 2009: 44). In general, marketers can not be directly in charge of SNS-conversations, but they are able to use certain tools and tactics to influence and shape the discussion in a manner that is consistent with the organization's mission and performance goals (Mangold & Faulds, 2009; Evans, 2008; Safko & Brake, 2009).

As a result, the organizations and companies' marketers make more and more use of SNSs in the marketing process. The question of how to develop an accurate strategy to influence and shape the communication in the SNSs has drawn a lot scientific and practical attention. As it described in the introduction of the relationship between marketers and SNSs, different scholars have developed their own strategy and tactics. By reviewing both previous academic and empirical studies on the usage of SNSs, I tried to find the common sense buried in those research. After closely reading, comparing and summarizing those research results, I was able to develop a list of the ways (tactics, table 2.1) to shape the communication in the SNSs and categorized those tactics according to the following four major activities:

1. Provide:

Providing basic information related to the organization is the starting point of online communication with your customers. Mangod and Faulds (2009) have mentioned that people are more likely to talk about a company or an organization when they feel familiar with that company. Therefore, there is a need to provide extra or in-depth information about the organization. However, marketers should be aware of the boundary between providing sufficient information and spamming customers. Besides providing desired information to customers, the information itself should always be truthful. If the communication on SNSs is not authentic, users will easily recognise this and quickly spread the word. Transparent and honest messages create accountability while false and deceptive information could bring damage to the organization. According to Lewis (2009), the success of SNS-marketing is largely determined by the following elements: transparency, honesty, relevance, value and commitment.

Information providence is obviously important to international news services. Companies such as RNW and WSJ should for example provide basic information such as news bulletins, that have previously only been available in hard-copy, to their online audiences to start the communication. Moreover, in-depth news reports and interviews could be shared as additional information to its user. Furthermore, extra information that is relevant to the organization itself should be provided in order to facilitate the communication.

2. Listen and engage:

Busack (2009) states that nothing exceeds starting a conversation on the social media. Web 2.0 has made marketing going from a one-way communication to two-way communications (Himmelspach, 2008). Therefore, the conversations could start from a customer to the organization, from the organization to customers and between customer-to-customer.

It is interesting to note that listening to the conversation from a customer to an organization through the SNSs could be key aspect to help marketers to re-value their offering in the market.

Constantinide and J.Fountain (2007) indicate that it is essential for marketers to be aware of the shift in market power and listen to their customers when they try to market on SNSs. According to Treadaway and Mari Smith's (2010: P 33) customers who are more

active online are likely to participate in multiple social networks and have a tremendous influence on other's opinions. As a result, Gillin (2007) stresses in his book that marketers must learn to listen to the influencers and enthusiasts on SNSs in order to gain a better understanding about customers. These influencers or enthusiasts are being called opinion leaders. Reaching and listening to opinion leaders is a major way to understand how SNSs function and to start market through social media.

Moreover, Busack (2009) states that social media brings the best opportunity to begin conversation with the consumers. The conversation on SNSs could be about a company, an organization or a service. As specified in paragraph 2.31 Word-of-Mouth (WOM) - communication, especially online and offline personal comments, are more influential than company-based promotion. Through WOM-communications users tend to have more loyalty to the products or the organization and are more ready to give positive or negative feedback (Thackeray et al. 2008; Mangod & Faulds, 2009).

Furthermore, it is important for marketers to actively engage people to talk with each other in online marketing. Instead of treating them as passive receivers in the traditional marketing process, marketers should evolve customers into the online communication process by allowing them to exchange experiences, advising them to give comments about the organization as well as interacting with the users in a direct and personalized way (Constantinides & J.Fountain, 2007; Thackeray & Neiger, 2009). SNSs also give way for some new and creative ways to engage customers with your company, such as organizing contests (Thackeray & Neiger, 2009).

3. Leverage:

As it mentioned in paragraph 2.32, organizations and companies could beat competition by better making use of social media. Thus, utilize the SNS-tactics could help marketers to leverage their business.

Generally speaking, special and original news attracts more attention. Keeping the content fresh and creative and broadcasting interesting and unique topics may have the privilege to attract more users on SNSs (Thackeray et al., 2008; Himmelspach, 2008).

Therefore, International news organizations may easily attract more attention by broadcasting uncommonly seen or non-mainstream news topics.

Next the increased flexibility also appears through the diversity of media-types that can

be used and uploaded. Marketing should leverage this privilege of SNSs by providing diverse content. Information can be posted with multimedia figures. Text, audio, videos, photos or other multimedia should be used to facilitate and enrich the communication. Finally, marketers can leverage the word-of-mouth marketing by creating a feeling of uniqueness with the user or in this case providing exclusiveness to user. A feeling of exclusiveness that can leave the customer a positive impression about the product or the organization. It generally means that a conversation started on SNSs should be designed around some privilege aspects to make customers feel important and special. Moreover, compared to traditional marketing channels, online channels have the advantage that all the features can easily be adjusted. An organization could therefore for example effortlessly customize an exclusive background of their SNS-pages (Martin, 2007). By providing these privileges to customers, the marketers could leverage the online communication by gathering attention for the company or product.

4. Monitor

The fourth and last SNS-activity discussed here is monitoring. According to Evans (2008), the outcome of SNS-marketing is measurable. However, because social networks are relatively new it is not always obvious how to measure, or monitor, the SNS-activity. Scholars have explicated several measurement frameworks. A former Forrester analyst Peter Kim summarized four SNS-tactic that marketers can monitor online promotion: attention, participation, influence and authority (Defren, 2008). Here, attention stands for the amount of traffic that has been driven to the SNS pages during a certain period of time (web metrics of SNS page visit); participation indicates the extent to which users are engaging by adding content to SNS features (wall posts or blog comments); influence means the size of the user base subscribed to an SNS-profile (fans of on Facebook page or followers on Twitter); authority suggests the extent to which sources of the information can be traced and are reliable (for example the quality of the links directing to SNS-content).

Besides this, online conversation has been considered an important measurement of online promotional activities (Evans, 2008). When marketers try to evaluate online marketing, some specific words or phrases referring to a company or an organization may leads to relate conversations resulted of promotion benefit for the organization. It is an important SNS-tactic for marketers to build sustainable relationships with users through SNSs (Thackeray & Neiger, 2009; Mangod & Faulds, 2009).

In conclusion, the four major SNS-activities of marketing on SNSs are summarized from the previous studies. Theoretically speaking, those activities should apply for all the organizations. In this paper, international news organizations' SNS-activity will be investigated. In order to increase the invalidity of the study, I have developed a table that categorized four major media organization's SNS-activities and related SNS-tactics. It based on the activities that have been found by other scholar and I developed it according to the nature for a media organization. The activities and tactics are listed in the table 2.1.

Table 2.1 : Media Organization's SNS-activities and SNS-tactics

Organization's activity	Media Organization's SNS Tactics
A Provide	A1) Provide news bulletins A2) Provide in-depth news report/articles A3) Provide relevant information about the organization
B Listen and Engage	B1) Conversation from Customers to Organizations (Listen) B2) Conversation from Organizations to Customers (Engage) B3) Conversation between Customers (Engage)
C Leverage	C1) Provide non-mainstream topics C2) Provide multimedia content C3) Provide customer exclusiveness
D Monitor	D1) Monitor attention D2) Monitor participation D3) Monitor influence D4) Monitor authority D5) Monitor conversation

2.4 The use of Facebook

Facebook has over 500 million active users worldwide and 50% of them is logging on to the website on a daily basis (Facebook, 2010). It has undoubtedly become the world's most popular online social network. More than that: it has become an important internet phenomenon and therefore provides a great opportunity for marketers. Facebook not only has given the power to people to share and select information but has also given marketers the ability to target users based on the information that users provide themselves, for example on their profiles. As Facebook continues to expand globally, it has also attracted a growing number of organizations from different industries. While many brands are at least present in the Facebook-network, a lot of them grasp the opportunity to use the social network to reach their marketing objectives.

Of course it has also attracted academic attention. As a result, more and more academic researches have been devoted to Facebook usage. Those scholars believe that marketers can engage and interact with the Facebook community, which they could not do through the traditional media. By interacting with consumers, they gain a fair chance to market their product or service and to discover a whole lot of advertising potential on the site (Bates, 2009; Holzner, 2008; Weinberg, 2009: P151). Many studies have, as a result, been published to offer guidance on how to use Facebook correctly in the business world (Holzner, 2008; Evans, 2008; Treadaway & Smith, 2010; All & Armstrong, 2009; Weinberg, 2009).

All and Armstrong (2009) have presented a number of ways to make good use of Facebook: creating a public page, add content, update status, ask the fans to donate their status, start a cause, use Facebook connect, promote an event, interact with fans on a daily basis. In the book "Facebook Marketing: An Hour a Day", Treadaway and Smith (2010) outline several correct procedures for a successful Facebook marketing. Creating a plan, establish your presence on pages and in groups, regularly maintain and update, utilizing Facebook-tactics, customize experiences via applications and finally measuring the analytics of Facebook use are the correct procedures. Correspondingly, Holzner (2008) highlights in his book that he considers: establishing a proper profile, creating Facebook groups, building a public page, organizing Facebook events, utilizing and monitoring Facebook advertisements, using the Facebook marketplace, maintaining networks, using and designing own applications as the best strategies for Facebook promotion.

All researchers simultaneously believe that building a public page, adding proper profile content, utilizing SNS-tactic (e.g. start a cause, customize experiences) to maintain and monitoring the Facebook usage are the best strategies to make good use of Facebook.

Among all the features can be used on Facebook, fan pages can be considered one of the most effective ways for companies to create their presence on Facebook. Everybody is free to create a fan page and there is no resection in the content or creator (Holzner, 2008:73). Basically, fan page can be used for all kinds of purposes including marketing purposes. However, Bates (2009) believes that using Facebook requires much more effort and diligence than building a fan page and waiting for people to join. The fan page has its fixed functions and it is important to learn how to make effective use of it.

Nevertheless, different businesses from different industries and places have different motivations and strategies to use Facebook. For instance, RNW and WSJ as two international news services may have their own strategy and tactics for Facebook marketing compared to companies from other business. Moreover, the local internet environment in China is likely to influence the organizations' SNS use, primarily due to the Chinese internet policies. Therefore, the research on SNS use is a specific study with respect to industry or business as well as the geographical region an organization operates in, in this case China.

It can be seen that Facebook is one of the popular SNSs in the world among internet users and marketers. Some researchers have investigated the page features of Facebook and the ways of using those features. Inspired by previous studies about the strategic use of Facebook by marketers, this study will push the academic field forward by illustrating both general facts and unique factors of the use of Chinese Facebook –Renren.com- by international organizations' marketers. The next paragraph will extensively introduce this Chinese SNS.

2.5 The use of Renren.com

It is well known that Facebook has celebrated a lot of successes in many countries. Nevertheless, the Chinese market is still an unreachable place for Facebook. Facebook has encountered many obstacles when it tried to launch in China. Even though Facebook has still been blocked within mainland China, the prevalence of SNSs has not been prevented to enter China. Renren.com, known as the Chinese Facebook, has currently collected over 130 million users and it has

become one of the most popular SNSs in China (Fan et al., 2010). Renren has been founded in 2005 and it was originally named Xiaonei, which means “on campus”. It started as Facebook-like website and it was initially built as an online community for Chinese college students, just like Facebook. As it grew enormously over a very short time frame, Xiaonei decided to expand its user-base. With the intention to reach a broader crowd such as young professionals, it has officially changed its name into “Renren”, meaning, and “people people” on 4 August 2009 (Schokora, 2009).

Renren, established as the Chinese version of Facebook, has created a Facebook-like web design. From the general website-design to the website-tabs and -functions, it has a lot of similarities compared to Facebook. In the following paragraphs, an explanation of all the Renren page features will be conducted to give a detailed view of the possible tools that can be used on Renren.

2.51 Homepage

Homepage is a general page when user enters Renren. It indicates the general page design of a SNS. Figure 2.2 shows the Renren-homepage when users register and enter Renren. Comparing to the general entering of Facebook (Figure 2.3), it can easily be noticed that Renren uses a very alike background colour and general interface design as Facebook does. Comparing figure 2.2 with figure 2.3, we find that both pages contain the typical blue banner on top of the page and white as their background colours. Underneath the blue banner, both homepages have been separated into three sections with comparable widths and lengths.

Moreover, Renren shares an equivalent function design as Facebook does. On the top-left side of the blue banner, the Renren-homepage positioned its logo. At the right side of the logo the website features some navigation buttons, such as: "Homepage", "Profile Page", "Friends", "Applications", "Message", "Search Bar" and "Account".

Facebook on the other hand, has the buttons: “Friends”, “Messages” and “Notifications” at the left side of its top banner. While the right side of the banner shows: “Home”, “Profile” and “Account”. There is a search-bar in-between (Figure 2.2: Homepage Facebook).

In the left-section of their respective homepages, both websites show the users’ name and their profile pictures. Underneath the profile are other buttons directing to functions. There are slight differences between the tabs that appear in this section. Renren has features such as "Diary",

"Photos", "Music", "Links", "Groups", "Status", "Public Homepage" and some popular games or applications in this section, while Facebook has "Welcome", "News feed", "Messages", "Events", "Friends", "Group", "Games", "Apps", "Photos", "Notes" and "Links".

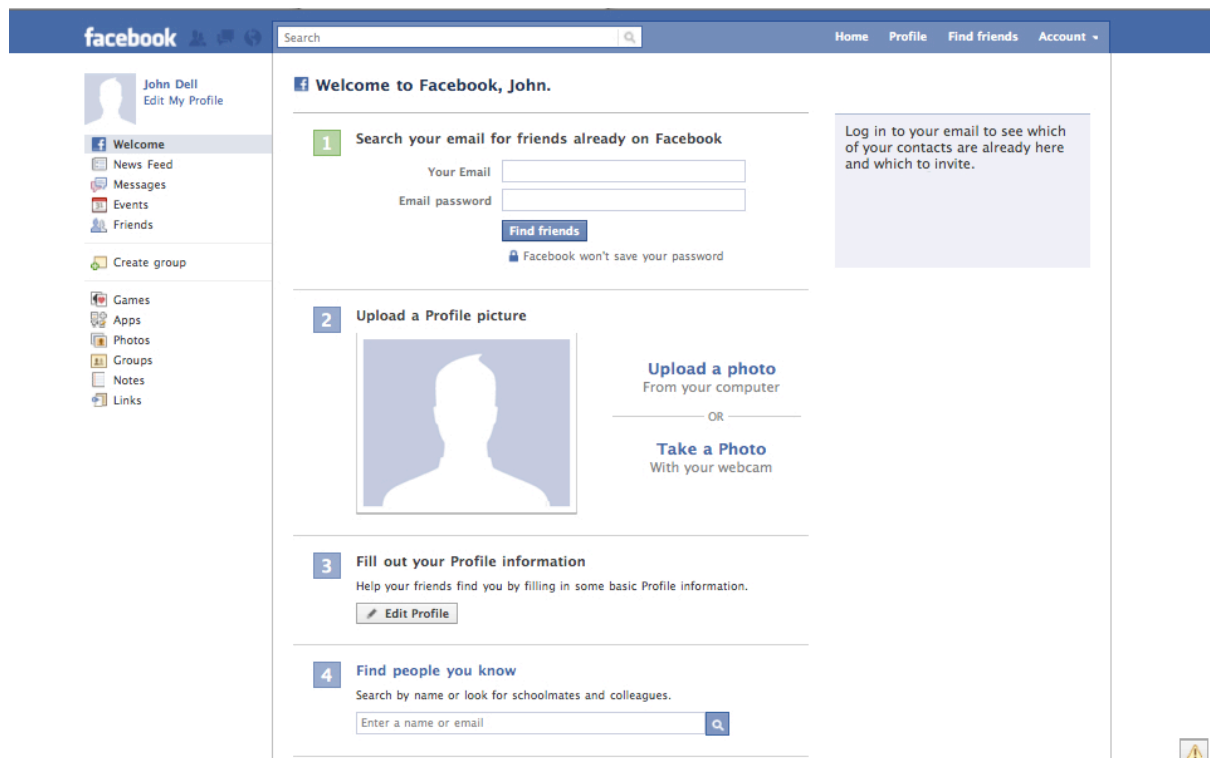
Finally, both websites provide a possibility to find new friends, in the right section of their websites. Another striking similarity can be found at the bottom of both pages, where both websites show "Online Friends" and provide a "Live Chat" functionality.

It can be seen that the page-design of the two websites are generally look alike and also shared a lot of similar functions. There are only limited differences in the functions of buttons. The homepage of Renren has more features than Facebook. For example, Renren has homepage-buttons such as "Music", "Links", "Diary" and numerous "Games". It suggests that Renren homepage focuses more on entertainment function such as gaming and listing to music. This could connect with the fact that entertainment is an important purpose for people to use internet in China.

Figure 2.2: Renren Homepage



Figure 2.3: Facebook Homepage



2.52 Profile Page

A Renren-profile page (Figure 2.4) is the default landing page (the first page a user sees when coming to a another user's account on Renren) of an individual Renren user.

It also has a lot of features in common with the Facebook (Figure 2.5). First, the profile page colour-scheme and design are equal. Just like Facebook, Renren uses blue and white as the main colours. Next the profile page of Renren consists of three sections, which are similar to the sections on Facebook. Third, the top menu, on the upper blue banner is identical.

However there are also some differences on the Renren profile page compared to Facebook. Those differences have been listed below. As the tools offered through profile pages are especially powerful tools for marketers, special attention has been paid to those differences. Only in this way it is possible to systematically investigate the use of Renren by the two media organizations.

Custom Profile page: One of the most popular and powerful features of Renren is the possibility for users to custom their own profile pages. Users can only use this function if they are registered as VIP users of Renren (Figure 2.6). Becoming a VIP user requires a membership

fee of 20 RMB per month (which is equivalent to \$2,95, www.x-rates.com, 1 August 2010). Users can only change the designed profile backgrounds and graphics after they have become a VIP user (Renren, 2010). Renren offers a wide range of profile page designs to VIP users from which they can choose. Alternatively VIP users can create an own profile page design, choosing their own background, colours and fonts to distinct themselves from other users.

The Profile Section: The Profile section reveals a user's full name and allows him or her to upload a profile picture. Individual users can add a short text or a link to introduce themselves. Those functions are identical to the functions available on Facebook. Same image or content should be filled across all SNSs. The consistent will help to build a more valuable account and develop a reputation and other user will be more receptive to the user's stories (Zarrella, 2009: 105).

The Wall: The wall is a significant tool on the Renren page that allows the user to publish a status updates, because many people log in social networks regularly just to read the status updates of their friends to stay up-to-date on their activities. It also lists out all the messages that are posted on Renren by a user such as a link, a diary, a photo or a video. ". Additionally, friends can leave a comment on or like the wall posts. Users and Renren-friends can also reply to those comments.

The features that have been described above are, again, pretty much similar to the features available on the Facebook-Wall. The only important difference is the possibility, which has been provided by Renren to show only a part of the messages (e.g. only showing news feeds from friends or only showing your own comments). Therefore it can be said that Renren is more 'organized' than Facebook. Though the basic functionality is the same.

The Info Section: An individual is required to fill out forms containing a series of questions such as age, location, education and interests when he applies for a Renren-account. Similar to Facebook, Renren's info section includes all the basic information of a user.

The Diary section: Renren has extended Facebook's "Note" function and calls it "Diary". Users can not only write texts in their diary but also post pictures, videos and adjust the colour and size of the characters in their diary. Those additional functionalities are not supported by Facebook's "Note" feature. Friends can also share the diary or comment on it after they read it. Basically, Renren, being an aggregator concerning this functionality, has combined Facebook's "Note" and

“blog” features into one "Diary" section. “Diary” section makes it possible to publish or share content integrating nearly all sorts of media sources. The possibility to utilizing multi-media resources seems to be a good thing for marketing.

The Photos Section: "Photo" section allows users to upload and share photos with their Renren friends. It is believed one of the most popular features of SNSs (Zarrella, 2009). Users are free to upload photos, add descriptions and tag friends in the photo. The "Photo" section includes a comment field, allowing users and their friends to discuss about a photo. The photo section of Renren and Facebook is entirely the same.

The Music section: This feature is newly added to Renren and therefore not used intensively. However it should be noted that Facebook does not include this function at the moment of writing.

The Renren "Music" feature offers a large amount of online digital music. Users can access, collect and organize their own music files in a database on the Renren page and share the music, or playlist, with their friends.

Online Friends & Live chat: Similar to Facebook, Renren has a function indicating which friends are online and allowing users to chat with each other. This function helps people to keep in touch with their friends as well as exchanging their opinions in real time.

Applications: Renren supports third-parties to create their own applications and share the applications with millions of users. Some applications extend existing social networking functionality by enhancing the public messaging system or by enabling users to play games with their friends. Even though an application requires technical resources, it allows people to actively interact with each other. In that way it offers a worthwhile addition to creative marketers to support their social media marketing campaigns (Zarrella, 2009: 65).

Messages: The message function on Renren allows to send messages from one user to another. It is noteworthy to highlight that messages are existed on both Facebook and Renren. However, messages are not allowed to be sent from one user to a group of users on Renren, while it is possible on Facebook.

In general, Renren set up more complex functionality in page than Facebook. It is like a hybrid

SNS, which tend to focus on one primary functionality but also wrap other social networking feature into its platform (Treadway & Smith, 2010: 29). For example, it developed the "Note" into "Dairy" which hybrid the functionality of blogs as well as provides more entertainment features such as "Customized profile page" and "Music". It can be seen that Renren not only focuses on the socializing but also offering entertainment opportunities for its users.

Figure 2.4: Renren Profile Page



Figure 2.5: Facebook Profile Page

The image shows a Facebook profile page for a user named John Dell. The profile is set to public. Key elements include:

- Header:** Facebook logo, search bar, and navigation links (Home, Profile, Find friends, Account).
- Profile Section:** Name "John Dell", birth date "Born on 02 January 1987", and options to add work and education information.
- Education and work:** A section with an "Edit" button and options to "Add your work information" and "Add your school information".
- Arts and entertainment:** A section with an "Edit" button and options to "Add music", "Add books", "Add films", "Add TV programmes", and "Add games".
- Basic Information:** A section with an "Edit" button showing "Gender: Male".
- Contact Information:** A section with an "Edit" button.
- Left Sidebar:** Options to "Upload a photo", "Take a photo", and navigation tabs for "Wall", "Info", "Photos", "Notes", and "Friends". Below are "Find friends" categories: "Best friends", "Colleagues", and "Classmates".
- Right Sidebar:** A "Sponsored" advertisement for "Vrienden delen alles" with a video thumbnail and a "Like" button. Below it is a "Chat (0)" indicator.

Figure 2.6 Renren VIP Profile Page

The image shows a Renren profile page for a user named 段舒婷 (Duan Shuting). Key elements include:

- Header:** User name "段舒婷", VIP status, and statistics like "17951人看过" and "48有人赞过".
- Navigation:** Tabs for "个人资料", "资料", "日志", and "相册".
- Profile Section:** Profile picture, "留言板" (Message Board), and "段舒婷的新鲜事" (Duan Shuting's Fresh News).
- 段舒婷的新鲜事:** A post about a friend's family and a quote from a friend.
- 段舒婷的特别好友:** A list of close friends with their profile pictures and names.
- 共同好友 (9):** A list of mutual friends with their profile pictures.
- 最近来访:** A list of recent visitors with their profile pictures.
- Left Sidebar:** "等级" (Level), "推荐好友给她" (Recommend friends to her), and "相册 (9)" (Albums).

2.53 Public Page

The Facebook fan page nowadays is one of the most popular tools for marketers to establish a corporate presence on Facebook. In that way they aim ultimately to keep consumers informed (Treadaway & Smith, 2010). A public page, similar to a fan page, is an important feature of Renren especially for organizations. It functions similarly to the fan page of Facebook. It also includes all the official announcements, links that have been posted from a company and the comments from its followers. However, there are also some differences between Renren's public page and Facebook's fan page.

First, fan pages are free to create by any user or organization for any purpose (Holzner, 2008). Though to create a public page Renren, a user must firstly go through a series complicated application procedures through the Renren-website. According to the public page regulations, as they are written on the Renren website, there is a daily limitation of 100 public page applications. More importantly, Renren states that it only approves public page applications from cultural groups, encyclopaedia groups or fan groups (Renren, 2010). The applicants will receive approval or rejection of their application by email after three working days. Only after the approval of the public page, the creator of the public page will be able to log in and the page will appear online (Renren, 2010). Therefore, every user is free to apply for a public page, but not all the applications will be approved. This policy could be resulted by the general internet policy in China. Internet companies and websites need to keep in control and censor the content on its website to prevent the appearance of sensitive information so that it will not be blocked from the Chinese internet censor system.

Instead of 'Liking' an organization or person as is customary on Facebook, through a Renren public page, users could add the organization as their friend. After that, all the updates and activities of the organization or person will appear on the users' homepage.

Moreover, unlike fan pages, the public page buttons and page background can be customized. Figure 2.7 shows, for instance, the public page of Adidas on Renren. It has its own background design with Adidas' Chinese 'face'—a Chinese pop star. The main background colour is dark grey, which makes the public page different from others. Figure 2.7 also shows that public pages have most features which are also available on a profile page such as: "Profile", "Status", "Info", "Photos", "Dairies", "Public Wall" and "Friends". Other than at the personal profile page, there

are features that are especially developed for public page users (e.g. organizations and artists). Features such as "Links" and "Videos" in the top section; "Company links" in the left section and the recent browsed public pages on the right side can only be seen on the public page.

The following lines introduce the unique features of the public page:

Links: Renren allows public page users to share all kind of links with its friends via the wall feature. This section keeps track of all the links that are posted by the public page owner, it may for example include a popular website, a song, a picture, a video or a blog.

Video: Marketers could upload all kinds of videos. Of course in this section the promotion or marketing videos that are relevant for the origination or company are expected.

Recent Browse Public Page: This application connects similar public pages by tracking record of the public pages that the creator of the public page has visited or clicked. Users can find out more about the public pages that connect to the current public page via this feature.

Generally speaking, Renren provides more features on public page for organizations to promote themselves. Page customized function and the possibility to build "Company Links" are assisting the organization or company to stand out among all the public pages and to do a better self-marketing.

Figure 2.7: Adidas Public Page on Renren



2.6 Internet Policy in China

In order to develop China as a complete and knowledge-based economy, the Chinese government has been the main force behind internet and technology development in China, since 1995 (Xiao, 2005). However, in the meantime the government fears that free speech combined with a free flow of information could harm both their political legitimacy and information control over the society. This has led to an internet policy that is widely considered to be one of the strictest and most complex policies in the world.

Among all the internet regulations, censorship regulations are the biggest concern of the Chinese government. One of China's most successful censorship tools is called: "The Golden Shield Project", also known as the "Internet Great Firewall of China". The tool effectively blocks content by preventing IP addresses from being routed through and consists of standard firewalls and proxy servers at the internet gateways.

Another method for censorship is prevention of certain keywords in the content of, for example search-engine results, that the government considers sensitive. These keywords normally relate to significant issues such as groups that have been banned by the Chinese Government, political ideologies that are considered unacceptable and historical events that the regime does not wish a discussion on (Clayton et al., 2006).

Publishers that possess a publishing license can only publish online content, for example online news. These licences are granted by the State Council Information (Congressional-Executive Committee on China, 1994). International news organizations that have not acquired a license may not be allowed to publish (certain) news items in China.

To extend this to social media, the regulations focus on content control on the blogs, social network sites or chat programs. Most of SNSs in China allow Chinese users to upload all kind of information as long as it is in line with the governmental policy. However, Chinese SNSs are also threatened to be shut down if prohibited content has been found on its website by the government censor-system. Therefore, most SNS build a self-censor system to prevent the situation.

For example, when a status updates is found by the Renren self-censor system containing sensitive words, a notice will appear on Renren to remind changing the words. The status updates will not be able to post until the prohibited words have been deleted.

Although unwanted content is filtered from social networking sites, it seems that internet users are able to use all tools and features that are available on social networks. It appears that the internet regulations created by the Chinese Government do not harm SNS-features that are also available overseas. According to the study of Renren pages, Renren-users are allowed to use the same features as Facebook-users do.

However, for international news organizations the situations seems different. As the major limitation comes from the exposure of certain sensitive information, international news organizations aiming at delivering objective international news suffer from the potential of website-blockage due to the internet policy. Especially considering the key-words-regulations. When any sensitive or undesired news is published on the international news organizations' webpage, the Chinese government will selectively block the website, making it inaccessible in China. For instance, International news organizations such as the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and Deutsche Welle (DW) tried to start their news service in Chinese and endeavour to march into the Chinese market. However, due to some sensitive political and cultural news on their websites, they have been blocked in mainland China shortly after they entered. Some media corporations such as Yahoo signed a self-regulation agreement with the Chinese government to build a filter for online Chinese content on their search engine (Zhang, 2006).

One of the cases chosen for this study is particularly interesting, as it seems that the news organization already suffered from the Chinese internet policy. It is still unclear whether these policies will have effect on the use of SNSs and to what extent. It is noteworthy that RNW does not have a public page on Renren. There are several possible explanations for that.

It is highly likely that RNW could not get approval from Renren to build a public page or corporate with Renren because RNW is an international news organization that does not hold a public license in China. It could be additionally sensitive that RNW's mission is to provide independent information to countries with an information deficit. Moreover RNW had already published a lot of delicate political and cultural news, before entering China and might therefore have had a bad track-record at the Chinese government.

As a consequence it is still difficult for international media organizations, to get their images passed and messages disseminated in the China via social media.

In the beginning of this Chapter 2, I gave an overview of what is social media and how it affects the way of people to communicate. People are no longer passive audience but active producers. Next I introduced the changes in marketing that has been brought by SNSs, especially the modification of relationship between consumers, marketers and SNS-marketing. SNS has empowered the consumers and marketers must treat them equally by listening, talking and engaging with them. After this, I elaborated and compared the functions of the page features of Facebook trying to describe the use of pages in detail. Finally, an introduction about the internet policy in China has been brought in to explain the possible effect of the policy on the SNSs. It seems like that the Chinese internet policy has limited influence on the functions of the SNSs. However, the content that appeared on the Chinese SNSs is high censored by the government and the website itself.

3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

With the increasing use of SNSs and continuous growing number of users, SNSs offer a great opportunity for companies and organizations to use new technologies to reach the public and promote the organization and its products. However, as an important communication medium for the public, it also brings a lot of challenges to media corporations, especially international news organizations. Nowadays, people no longer wait in front of a TV or for a morning newspaper to learn about the news. People turn more to the internet than to any other source of information or media (Seabrook et al., 2007). Therefore, especially for international news organizations it is important to incorporate new media into their marketing- and promotion plan. As a result, in order to complete the research, two international news organizations are picked to conduct a comparative case study, answering the question: How do international media organizations use SNSs in China?

3.2 Research Design

This comparative case study combines content analysis with an e-mail interview.

Content analyses intend to exam the rich embedded meaning in Renren SNS page activities conducted by two international news organizations. Over a three-months period data will be categorized into three categories based on their content type. After that, all the data will be coded according to the SNS-activities and SNS-tactics summarized in chapter 2 (Table 2.1). During the data analysis procedures, two methods, textual analysis and quantitative analysis of qualitative data, will be used to explore the online activities of the two organizations. The first research question will be investigated via using those methods. As stated in chapter one, the question is: *What kinds of SNS-activities are being used by RNW and WSJ in their respective SNS strategies?*

The comparison analysis is also used to discover contrasts, similarities or patterns across the two cases (media organizations) and to answer the research question: *What are differences and similarities in the ways RNW and WSJ marketers use Renren?*

It is hard to find out how marketers monitor SNS-activities and how they are influenced by the Chinese internet policy, based on the content analysis of activities on Renren. Therefore in order

to investigate the third and fourth research questions: “*How do international media organizations monitor SNS activities in China?*” and “*How does Chinese internet policy influence the use of SNSs*”, an email interview with the two organizations’ marketing departments has been designed.

3.3 RNW Chinese and CWSJ

To answer the research question as has been stated in the previous paragraph two cases have been selected. (1) RNW is a Dutch international news service and (2) Wall Street Journal (WSJ). These two media companies will be introduced below.

3.31 Radio Netherlands Worldwide (RNW)

The first case RNW is a Holland based international news service. It launched its Chinese online news service at the beginning of 2008 and endeavours to grow in the Chinese market and attract more readers.

From March till July 2010, I did an internship in the Chinese marketing department. In order to promote the Chinese news services, RNW revised its marketing strategy during this first quarter of 2010. The company incorporated Chinese social media in its strategy. It did so by building its presence on Renren and other Chinese social media websites. Since then, RNW Chinese tries to use social media tools to increase its publicity without making huge investments. It has built an account on Renren to start its promotion. Although RNW Chinese also tried to open a public page, the company did not receive any further notification from Renren. Therefore, RNW Chinese has built a personal account and uses its profile page to promote. RNW Chinese is therefore a good example of a relatively new and unknown international news service company that is trying to leverage social media in the Chinese market to build a substantial brand. RNW.nl/chinese got approximately 36,000 page views during March 2010 (Google Analytics, April 2011).

In addition, I have closely worked with the RNW Chinese marketing department. Through my previous employment with the company I got access to all the data and contacts needed for the research, which is crucial for performing the e-mail interview.

These have been the reasons for choosing RNW as the first case for my study.

3.32 Chinese Wall Street Journal (CWSJ)

WSJ, as the second case that has been selected, is also an international news service offering global business news. Chinese WSJ.com, or CWSJ (<http://cn.wsj.com>) launched in January 2002. It is Wall Street Journal's online Chinese-language edition.

CWSJ.com has been re-designed and launched in December 2008, featuring enriched content and numerous features, which have made the website significantly user-friendlier.

It also created new blogs and forums to CWSJ.com visitors. Through those blogs and forums, visitors have been able to comment on economic news. Next, the re-design and launch of CWSJ went along with a launch at several Chinese online social networks. Renren took the most important role among those social media. The main goal of this new online strategy has been to increase the number of page views at CWSJ.com. This approach has been successful. CWSJ created a public page on Renren and it generated a lot of fans. Its monthly page views exceeded 16 million by October 2008 (Dow Jones, 2008) in addition the number of CWSJ-fans on Renren reached 400 thousand by early 2010 (Renren, 2010). Therefore, CWSJ, being an international news organization that has successfully launched in China, is a suitable case for conducting this comparative case study.

Finally, it is important to point out that WSJ and RNW are the only two international news services have their presence on Renren by the time I started the research. Therefore, the two organizations as pioneers that marched into Chinese SNSs have been selected.

To summarize, WSJ and RNW are both international news services that recently marched into the Chinese market. WSJ has entered few years in advance of RNW and is much more famous than RNW. In the meantime, both of them have created their own account on Renren and have been actively using it ever since.

Given the fact that the two international news organizations are among the most eager organizations and the pioneers in using social media, that are comparable in their activities but not in the success of those activities: the opportunity to review their strategies and to extend SNS-research in a highly interesting local context – the Chinese SNS-environment, is tempting.

3.4 The Comparative Case Study

Case study is best used when the topic under study is rather broad and depends on multiple sources of evidence instead of a singular course (Yin, 2003). Moreover, case studies should be considered when an intimate connection with an empirical situation exists that permits the development of a testable, relevant and valid theory (Eisenhardt, 1989).

The research at hand, on the use of SNSs in China, deals with a rather broad topic and is definitely a study that depends on a broad range of sources, instead of one. In addition, the paper focuses on connecting empirical data on Renren-usage to existing SNS-marketing theory and intends to develop the field, by extending it to the Chinese market. Therefore, case study is the suitable research method for this paper.

Moreover, Glesne (2010) describes that case study methodology is a research strategy through which various methodologies could be combined. It is suited for single as well as multiple cases. Though generally case studies tend to be most convincing if they are based on multiple sources of information.

This paper will use a comparative case study, which combines a content analysis of the use of Renren-features, with an e-mail interview. This qualitative-quantitative-approach has been designed to collect comprehensive evidence to be able to answer all research questions and to be able to manage different sources of information (Campbell, 2010:175). Furthermore, data that has been collected from the Renren pages will be coded and data from email interviews will be interpreted in detail to discover similarities and differences across the cases.

3.41 Content Analysis

3.41.1 Data collection

The data for content analyses will be collected from the organization's Renren-pages.

The data covers messages from the features that have been studied in the theory review (paragraph 2.5) on Renren. All the online activities during a three-month period, ranging from August 1st to November 1st 2010, will be collected.

There is a clear and interesting difference between the two cases, which worth consideration, before going on. Based on the previous introduction, RNW Chinese has created a normal user

account and therefore has a 'normal' profile page while CWSJ has its own public page. Based on my observation, there are much more on-going activities on CWSJ's public page RNW's profile page. The public page has also generated much more attention and than the normal profile page.

In the light of the theory study, the features that those two pages offer slightly differ from each other. Therefore, there will be some differences in the data that has been collected from the two pages. Data for the two cases will separately be collected from RNW's profile page and CWSJ's official public page. Nevertheless, no specific technique has been developed yet that adequately addresses the specific nature of social media-data (Casteleyn, Mottart & Rutten, 2009). Social media websites, as described in chapter two, contain all sorts of data, such as texts, pictures, audio and videos. Therefore, it is rather hard to collect and organize data from the SNS such as Renren.

In order guard the validity of the research, I have designed a systematic data collection approach, to be able to compare data from different natures in a legitimate manner and tried to stay unbiased during the coding process.

Firstly, a descriptive frame needs to be built. This requires an in detail and -depth data search on the Renren website. Therefore, data collection sources will depend on the type of features that exist on the profile- or pubic page of Renren.

Next, Frey et al. (1999) define that the types of text, in content analysis, can generally be divided into two categories: transcripts and outputs of communication. Here, all the data can be categorized in the outputs of communication genre, as communicators themselves produce all the messages. It can be seen that this category contains a great amount of data types: texts, pictures, status, videos and other forms of content. Therefore, the collected data from the computer-mediated SNS will be assigned to three research categories (Category I, II, III). The design of the categories depends on the type of texts and the profile and public page feature differences.

Table 3.1 lists all the functional features on Renren's profile page and public page. For example, the RNW profile page contains "Profile" "Info"" Diary" "Photos" "Music" "Applications" and the "Wall "section. All the activities on RNW's profile page, during the three months research period, that belong to these features will be collected. Any change in background or page

function that resulted by the customized page feature will also be point out. Next, the "Friends" section and the "Liked Public Page" as additional resources that can enrich the research result will also be connected. The data that will be generated according to the page feature will be listed one to then in the table.

The similar data collection will be done for CWSJ's public page. A large part of the data will come from features similar to the features used by RNW, such as the "Profile" "Info"" Diary" "Photos" "Wall" and the "customized page" section. The data of "Friends" section on the public page are also existed; therefore, the data from this feature will also be collected. However, there are fewer multi-media features on CWSJ's public page than on the profile page. The CWSJ marketer does not use the "Company Links" "Music" and "Applications" features and all these features did not appear on the public page. Therefore, data of CWSJ's public page comes from 8 features of the page that listed from one to eight in table 3.1.

The table underneath independently listed all the features of the two pages that needed for the data collection. The categories are designed based on the content type and whether the two pages commonly use the features that used in the data collection.

Table 3.1: The Feature List

	RNW (Profile Page)	WSJ (Public Page)
Category I- data (Text messages)	1. Profile Section	1.Profile Section
	2. Info Section	2.Company Info
	3.Customized page feature (described in text)	3.Customized page feature (described in text)
Category II -data (Multimedia Content)	4.The Wall Content (Status, Links, Comment and Reacts)	4.The Wall Content (Status, Shared Links, Comment and Reacts)
	5.Diary	5.Diary
	6.Photo	6.Photo
	7 Videos	7 Videos
Category III -data (Multimedia Content)	8. Friends Section	8.Friends Section
	9.Music	
	10.Application	
	11.Liked Public Page	

Due to the reason that there will be a great amount of data be collected as well as the genre of the data are complex, the coding sheet and coding procedure are also described in below.

The coding sheet (table 3.2) was designed based on the four major SNS-activities and ten SNS-tactics that summarized in the theory review (table 2.1). It contains five sectors and fourteen variables. Each variable has been assigned a clear definition. The message type, message title, length and the content will be accordingly observed.

The first sector is the general information of the message, which requires giving each message an ID number, to look at who and when the message has been posted and lastly the type of the message. All these information will be easily recognized as it is in front of each message title. For example, seven types of message will be collected from the organization's Renren-wall. Those are: status updates, links, comments, reacts, diaries, photos and videos. Each message that is collected for the purpose of this research will be labelled one to seven, indicating its type. The distinction between the different types of messages on Renren's wall can be recognized through the format of the message on a wall. The seven different formats are set out

in the coding book (Appendix1). Starting from the second sector, the coder needs to closely evaluate the message length, headline and text. The next section is to code a message belong with which SNS-activity or SNS-tactic.

After the general information has been coded, the SNS-tactics will be coded based on the message title, length and content.

The title of the message will be observed to find whether the message provided normal news topics, non-mainstream news or company information. If the message title is ambiguous, all the text or the full text on another website will be browsed. An "undecided" category has also been designed for the coding. However, this category will not be used until it is really hard to make a coding decision.

Next, the length will be judged based on word count. It is used to code whether the message is news bulletins or a report. Regarding the coding of the content, I examine whether the message contained multimedia or provided customer exclusiveness. Finally, all the messages coded as 'react' of the organization will be also accordingly coded as 'monitor conversation'.

Generally speaking, based on the observation order described above if a message contains a certain OSN-tactic, it will be coded as "Yes" otherwise the message is coded as "No". For example, if a message contains news and the length is less than 500 words, it will be coded as "Yes". If the message is not containing any news or the length is longer than 500 words, coded it as "No". There will be two choices to put in the coding sheet: 0=No, 1=Yes. The specific instructions to code each variable can be find in the code book (Appendix1). An independent coder was asked to evaluate whether all variables are encoded in the same way by all coders. The results were calculated using Kappa statistic method. Between independent coder's data and the researcher's coded data, kappa values which ranged from 0.540-1 were obtained. In general, a kappa statistic greater than 0.75 was considered as excellent match beyond chance; 0.4-0.75, fair to good match; and less than 0.4, poor match (Fleiss, 1981). These results suggest that this research's code sheet reliability in general is rather high. Only two variables 'Provide non-mainstream topics' and 'Provide customer exclusiveness' are in the fair range, owning kappa value 0.70 and 0.540 respectively.

Table 3.2 The Coding Sheet

Sector Name	Length	Description	Valid Values/Definitions
Message ID	5	Every message that has been collected processing an ID number.	Valid value range: 0 - 9999
Date	8	The date that message was posted.	MM-DD-YYYY format Valid value range: Aug-01-2010 – Nov-01-2010
Message Type	1	All messages collected from “Renren-Wall” belonging to which message format.	1-Status 2-Links 3-Comments 4-React 5-Diaries 6-Photos 7-Vdieos
Post By		Which party posts the message on the Renren page?	1-Renren user from RNW's profile page 2-RNW 3-Renren user from WCSJ 's public page 4-WCSJ
<i>OSN-activity Provide</i>			
1-Provide news bulletins	1	A Message used the OSN-tactic “provide news bulletins” (<500 words)	0- None 1-Yes
2-Provide in-depth news reports/articles	1	A Message used the OSN-tactic “provide in-depth news reports/articles” (>500 words)	0- None 1-Yes
3-Provide relevant information about the organization	1	A Message used the OSN-tactic “provide relevant information about the organization”	0- None 1-Yes
<i>OSN-activity Listen and Engage</i>			
1-Conversation from Customers to Organizations (Listen)	1	A Message that is a “Conversation” starting from a customer to an organization.	0- None 1-Yes
2-Conversation from Organizations to Customers (Engage)	1	A Message that is a “Conversation” starting from an organization to a customer.	0- None 1-Yes
3-Conversation between Customers (Engage)	1	A Message that is a “Conversation” between customers.	0- None 1-Yes
<i>OSN-activity Leverage</i>			
1-Provide non-mainstream topics		A Message includes the topic that is considered as taboo topic.	0- None 1-Yes 2- Undecided
2-Provide multimedia content		A Message includes multimedia content.	0- None 1-Yes
3-Provide customer exclusiveness		A message provides extra information that could not be retrieved from the organizations' official website or offers direct communication from the editors or other employee.	0- None 1-Yes 2- Undecided
<i>OSN-activity Monitor</i>			
Monitor conversation	1	The message that is a “React” from an organization to a customer.	0-None 1-Yes

3.41.2 Data Analysis

As the information has been systematically collected, the next step is to make sense of the data. Content analysis as used here is one of the major methodologies in mass communication research used to identify, enumerate and analyze specific messages or message characteristics embedded in text (Frey et al., 1999). It is commonly used to describe and interpret characteristics of recorded or visual messages that can be written in documents and electronic documents (Frey et al., 1999). Therefore, due to different types of messages, including bare text and all kind of electronic messages, that have been collected, it is hard to conduct the content analysis through a single method. The analyses in this paper, thus, are a blend of qualitative and quantitative methods. The approach created in the way that combines traditional data interpretation and description on the basis of objective observation and the quantitative analysis of qualitative data.

Accordingly, category I data will be translated and described. Because Renren is a Chinese website, the text from the "Info" and "Profile" section are all written in Chinese. This part of data will be translated from Chinese to English to overcome to the language barriers. After it has been interpreted, the text will be normatively described to identify the similarities and differences in the introduction of the two media organization. The description will use narrative approaches to focus on major themes and stories contained in the texts (Frey et al., 1999). Special attention will be paid to the length of text. Next it will be indicated if the company introduction at Renren is identical to the company introduction at the company's own website. For the customized page features, the descriptions will mainly focus on interpreting the background design and the layout of the two organization's Renren pages. Those will be extensively described.

Secondly, to perform content analysis, the research aims to quantify qualitative data. Therefore category II will be coded. By systematically searching and counting data from those categories, specific observable actions and data characteristics will be identified and categorized. In this way the data will be summarized and interpreted. Moreover the research aims to explore data patterns and interpret their meaning (Yin, 2003).

After systematically coding the messages, statistic methods will be used to evaluate the correlation between the data and the SNSs activities. The use of Renren by the two organizations will be described separately, then the comparison study will conducted on the use of Renren pages by the two organizations. This concept, borrowed from ground theory, is perfectly suited

to look for certain themes and patterns in the data (Glesne, 2010). It is also important to note that there must first be an analytic strategy to lead to conclusions. This is used to help to sum up what features have been used by the organizations and what the similarities and differences in the usage of the developed tactics and activities.

This method, for example, allows finding out which activity and which tactic (from table 3.2) has been used most by the marketers from the two media organizations. It can also be found out which features on Renren are most popular to the marketers. Finally the approach allows identifying main differences in SNS-usage and communication to Renren 'friends'. Potentially, the results could even be linked to the number of friends, those the two organizations have on their respective Renren pages.

Therefore, quantitative analysis of qualitative data will be used, to explore the data. This content analysis will contain: 1) calculation of the frequency of page feature usage; 2) a figure telling which feature has been used most in each SNS-activity; 3) the proportion of each SNS-activity within the organization's SNS usage 4) a general figure which indication the connection between the SNS-activity and SNS tactics and (5) the use of Renren page by its friends.

Moreover, Eisenhardt (1989) argues that the search for similarities between a seemingly different pair, and differences between a seemingly equal pair may lead to a more sophisticated understanding. It forces the researcher to look beyond expectations. That is one of the major reasons to include cross-case comparisons in this research. The second step of the analysis, as a result, is based on the static results from the first step of content analysis. A general description of the Renren usage by the two organizations will be provided. Similarities and differences between the three data categories and between the two media organizations will be listed. This comparison naturally uses quantitative figures. In this way we are able to objectively observe differences in Renren-usages between those two organizations.

Next, as there has not been a lot of research on this subject before, the nature of this research is also explorative. In chapter one some research questions have been formulated, but during the data analysis there will be space for subtle variations in relations between factors that have not been anticipated before.

Finally, three of the organizations' SNS-activities (table 3) can be observed through quantitative analyses on Renren pages. However the fourth category (monitor) cannot be entirely observed by content analysis. Therefore, an e-mail interview with RNW Chinese and the CWSJ-market-department are used to answer the third and fourth research question.

3.42 Email Interview

The final approach used in this research will be an email interview with the marketing department of both organizations. Email interviews, are used to get a more complete and insightful view of the subject under study and is a mainstay of data collection for qualitative studies (Frey et al., 1999). According to McCoy and Kerson (2006), email interviews have five advantages. First, email interviews could offer extensive and longitudinal communication with respondents. Second, it allows the respondents to complete the interview at their own convenience. Third, all the questions will be answered in written text, which can directly be used in the qualitative analysis. The fourth argument is that a respondent's anonymity could be guaranteed. Therefore they should feel less social pressure while answering the questions. Finally, geographical distances between the interviewer and respondent will never be an issue.

In this paper, email interviews are firstly used to gain some supplementary knowledge about how marketers monitor Renren activity based on their actual experiences and strategies. Next, the email interviews help to draw a conclusion on one of the research questions, namely: "how does Chinese internet policy influence the use of Renren".

The interview has originally been designed as a face-to-face interview to inquire the marketers' views and experiences on Renren. However, one of the major disadvantages of face-to-face interviews in China is obviously a geographical limitation. The CWSJ has its own office in China, so that the distance has made an interview hard to accomplish. Moreover, marketers will tend to avoid sensitive topics such as the influence of Chinese internet policy. An email interview partly overcomes this issue. It is designed to make marketers feel freer to answer the questions. Therefore it is expected that, using this approach it will be easier to collect the necessary information for the study.

Open questions, related to the research questions, will be used in the email interview. This gives the marketers the opportunity to answer the questions using their own words. The interviews will

be semi-structured and mainly focus on two major topics: how do the respondents monitor Renren and what is the influence of the Chinese Internet policy in using Renren. A detailed list of sub-questions will be presented to elicit the answers to those two research questions.

This is the topic list of the email interview:

What are opinions of the marketers on using social media in China?

How do marketers monitor the SNSs?

What are the Chinese internet regulations for international media organization?

What are the Chinese internet regulations for international media organization for using social media?

Referring to the research questions, the second and fourth topic will be focal questions and are considered as main issue during the interview. Therefore, particular questions will be designed in the email to elaborate these two topics.

Detailed question lists for topic 2:

What kind of communication or figures do marketers monitor on Renren? (Attention, Conversation, Participation, Influence, Authority)

Which features on Renren do marketers monitor?

What tools do they use to monitor?

What tactics do marketers' think are the most effective for monitoring?

Detailed questions lists for topic 4:

Whether there is any regulation for international media organizations to publish news on the Chinese social media?

Whether key word censorship influences the use of Renren?

Whether they consider being 'blocked in China' a danger to the use of Renren?

Is there any other Chinese internet policy influencing the use of Renren?

In this way marketers are given the opportunity to reflect on Renren usage, which could also be useful in reflection of the results from the current study. It is majorly used because the monitor function is hard to be reflected on through previous data analyses techniques. The same goes for the Chinese internet environment and its influence SNS-marketing. An e-mail interview with

marketers is the best solution to enhance the research results and to understand how marketers monitor online social networks, or whether they monitor the social network at all. Finally, an e-mail interview provides a perfect opportunity to test the research result's validity, by asking marketers to judge the results based on their empirical experience. Validity is one of the main issues to be solved when performing a case study (Yin, 1994).

4 Results

4.1 Introduction

After the data gathering and the email interview, this chapter will first (paragraph 4,2) elaborate on the general usage of the Renren page by both organizations. After that, the SNS-activities used by each organization will be described separately. These descriptions will be based on the results from the textual analysis of category II- data (see chapter 3) and the quantitative analyses of category I-data. Some of the Category III-data that has been collected during the data gathering process will also be set out in this paragraph to complete the description of organization's Renren usage. Next, along with the email interviews, paragraph 4.3 will explain the use of the monitor-tactic by the organization's marketers. Following the answers from the email interview, China's internet policy and its influence on the usage of Renren will be stressed in the paragraph 4.4. Finally, a comparison study of the use of Renren by the two organizations will be investigated in the final paragraph of this chapter.

4.2 *The use of Renren by the international media organizations*

All messages posted by RNW and CWSJ between August 1st, 2010 –Nov 1st, 2010, were collected. In total 8,628 (Figure 4.1) have been recorded. Most of those messages original from CWSJ's public page. Only 135 of the total amount of messages have been collected from RNW's profile page all the other messages come from CWSJ's public page. It is important to note that both messages from the organization itself and from its page users have been assembled. Among the collected messages, 74 messages were posted by RNW while 380 messages were posted by CWSJ (table 4.1). Apparently there is a great difference in the quantity of Renren-posts when comparing CWSJ's public page to RNW's profile page. It is important to clarify that this difference might hugely be caused by the difference in number of friends, between the two organizations. The friend section (belonging to category III) illustrates that RNW has 514 friends in its "Friends"-section while CWSJ has a total amount of 416.700 friends in the same section, by November 1st.2010 (RNW Profile Page, 2010; CWSJ Public Page, 2010). Several reasons could explain this huge difference in the number page friends: CWSJ, as an internationally well-known organization and therefore is larger than RNW in terms of size and reputation; Next CWSJ has launched its Renren-page earlier than RNW; CWSJ owns a public page. Such a page receives more exposure and can more easily be found than RNW's profile page.

Consequently CWSJ's Renren friends posted over 94 % percent of collected messages. The

connection between the huge number of friends and the amount of activity on an SNS, proves the fact that a larger number of Renren friends could just lead to more page activity. This size difference between the two organizations should not be overlooked during further analysis.

On the other hand the data indicates that the larger the number of friends, the smaller the relative amount of SNS-activity. To illustrate this: during the three months research period, 0,02 message have been posted per CWSJ friend, while over the same period an average RNW friend has posted over five times more messages (0,11).

Moreover to every CWSJ-post, CWSJ-friends posted 21,36 messages, while to every RNW-posts its friends posted 0,78. Of course, in absolute terms, a CWSJ-post has generated more attention (around 27,4 times), however that does not compensate for the difference in friends (CWSJ holds 810,7 times more friends than RNW does).

Table 4.1 SNS-Message posted by each party

	Frequency	Percent
RNW RENREN FRIENDS	58	0.7
RNW	74	0.9
CWSJ RENREN FRIENDS	8116	94.1
CWSJ	380	4.4
Total	8628	100

The research question that will be answered over the following paragraphs is: *How do international media organizations use SNSs in China?*

To answer this question, it is necessary to mention that the interview results indicating that marketers of the two organizations have different intentions in using Renren. RNW marketers is mainly aiming use Renren to attract new readers while the marketers of CWSJ focus on increase the amount of traffic and readership on its own page. Recognizing the different intentions of marketers, the research will pay attention to the (type of) messages that have been posted by the two organizations in order to find an answer to the research question: -what kind of SNS-activities and SNS-tactics have been used by RNW and CWSJ in their respective SNS-strategies? The use of SNS-activity that posted by friends will also be described. Next, the study is comparing the two pages' SNS-activity to find out if a connection exists between the organization's Renren usage and activity that might be triggered from page-users.

For that purpose, all the messages have been coded based on the coding schedule presented in Chapter 3. The schedule consists of five sectors and fourteen variables. The five sectors have

been designed to find out who posted the message and what kind of SNS-tactic has been used. Finally the coding schedule will show for what kind of purpose a message was posted.

In the next two paragraphs, category I -data will be described in detail. Then, statistic data will be reported on several topics to give an overview of how the two international news organization use Renren: (1) frequency of posts by the organizations within the research period, (2) frequency of feature usage by the two organizations, (3) the proportion of each SNS-activity within the organization's overall SNS-strategy (4) the relationship between the SNS-activity and SNS tactics and (5) the use of Renren page by its friends.

4.21 The use of Renren Profile page by RNW

Figure 4.2 presents RNW's profile page on Renren. Features from the three categories listed in table 3.1, are accordingly marked with number in this figure. The narrative description of the usage of the profile page is takes place in the sequence in which it has been listed in table 3.1.

In brief: RNW holds a normal Renren account. It did not upgrade to be a VIP member and alter the profile page design. The 135 page activities (74 posts by RNW, 58 posts by RNW Renren Friends) and 514 Renren friends suggest a low frequency of SNS-usage on the profile page.

Figure 4.2 RNW' Renren Profile page



★享受偷菜等游戏奖励 ★无留言限制 ★可添加特别好友
轻松完成, 免费成为**星级用户**

上传本人头像  提交时, 请使用 **真实姓名**

新动态: 获取简短域名, 与好友轻松分享。例: renren.com/lilei

荷广 RNW  (有2892人看过)  n天前 | 所有状态

7. Musk Section 2. Info Section 5. Diary Section 6. Photo Section

个人主页 音乐 资料 日记 相册

主页地址: www.renren.com/profile.do?id=314252119 编辑 发给好友



我的照片 我的大头贴

上传头像 制作大头贴

编辑我的资料

装扮主页

订阅我自己

等级 

所在城市: 荷兰

生日: 1985-1-1摩羯座

家乡: 北京 东城区

留言板 所有留言

4. Wall Section 留言

表情  颜色 

新鲜事 好友留言

 荷广 RNW 发表日志 荷兰王储威廉-亚历山大的漫漫成长之路

摘自 荷兰国际广播电台中文网 从啤酒王子到未来的国王威廉四世, 从金发小子到自信的水资源管理专家, 从狂热不羁的毛头小伙到充满爱心的三个女儿的父亲, 上周出版的《威廉-亚历山大: 未来的国王》照片集让我们看到了这一王位继承人生活的方方面面, 起起伏伏, 其间还配有辛辣的文字。这本集中的照片是编者从几十万张照片中挑选出来的, 奥兰治王子无疑是...

8小时前 收起回复 |  赞

添加回复

 荷广 RNW 发表日志 荷兰王储威廉-亚历山大的漫漫成长之路

摘自 荷兰国际广播电台中文网 从啤酒王子到未来的国王威廉四世, 从金发小子到自信的水资源管理专家, 从狂热不羁的毛头小伙到充满爱心的三个女儿的父亲, 上周出版的《威廉-亚历山大: 未来的国王》照片集让我们看到了这一王位继承人生活的方方面面, 起起伏伏, 其间还配有辛辣的文字。这本集中的照片是编者从几十万张照片中挑选出来的, 奥兰治王子无疑是荷兰上镜最多的人...

22小时前 收起回复 |  赞

 2个人觉得这很赞!

 万建彬 2010-12-02 16:45 nonsense 回复

添加回复

 荷广 RNW 发表日志 荷兰女王的肖像画

摘自 荷兰国际广播电台中文网 安迪·沃荷于1985年创作的荷兰女王贝娅特丽克丝肖像画本周二在阿姆斯特丹佳士得拍卖行拍得了40万9千欧元。然而, 贝娅特丽克丝-这位荷兰最受喜爱的女王-却从来没有为这幅画亲自担当过模特。但荷兰的多名艺术家却曾经有幸面对面地为女王画过肖像。在安迪·沃荷的画中, 贝娅特丽克丝宛如一位迪斯利皇后, 头戴王冠, 被一片粉色和紫色的霞...

1天前 收起回复 |  赞

 2个人觉得这很赞!

添加回复

 荷广 RNW 发表日志 中国人把荷兰商店里的奶粉买断了货

摘自 荷兰国际广播电台中文网 中国代购者在荷兰商店大举采购婴儿奶粉, 致使荷兰多处地方奶粉脱销, 很多荷兰的父母无法为自己的孩子买到奶粉。多个地方的商店已经采取了相关的应对措施。在荷兰的中国人经常被其国内的亲朋好友问到是否可以帮忙寄送婴儿奶粉回去, 而代购生意的人也对荷兰奶粉非常有兴趣。而荷兰两家主要的奶粉制造商-Nutri...

2天前 收起回复 |  赞

添加回复

 荷广 RNW 发表日志 阿姆斯特丹: 远离故乡之家

摘自 荷兰国际广播电台中文网 住在阿姆斯特丹的外籍员工约九万人, 占阿市人口的12%。为了对付人口老龄化问题, 阿姆斯特丹需要这些员工。阿姆斯特丹国际服务中心 (AIC) 的斯戴恩指出, 我们必须尽量满足这些人的要求, 让他们对这座城市产生归属感, 要让他们留下来。今年七月, AIC成立仪式上放映了电影《远大“前程”》, 影片里展示的阿姆斯特丹及其居民给...

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 荷广 RNW 发表日志 中国人把荷兰商店里的奶粉买断了货

摘自 荷兰国际广播电台中文网 中国代购者在荷兰商店大举采购婴儿奶粉, 致使荷兰多处地方奶粉脱销, 很多荷兰的父母无法为自己的孩子买到奶粉。多个地方的商

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 王逸君  张佩  赵勇

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我的应用 

在线好友 (20)  在线好友 (64)   平回顶部

4.21.1 Profile, Info and Customized Page (RNW)

RNW profile page is the default landing page which is the first page that a user sees when coming to the SNS page. From this page, RNW possesses a profile page on Renren that does not differ from a normal user account. Nevertheless, this 'personal account' serves as an account for the organization.

The profile section (Figure 4.3) provides some basic information about the organization. The official logo of RNW is used as the profile picture. Personal information such as the user's residence, date of birth and hometown that are required upon registering were filled in by RNW. As 'date of birth 1 Jan 1985 has been chosen, which does seem to be a random date (the organization has been established well before that date). Dongcheng district, Beijing is indicated as RNW's hometown and the location is filled in as Holland.

The profile section is important because it portrays the general image that will be displayed to the whole Renren community. Although the information of RNW has been filled, there seems to a lack of accuracy. For example, as emphasized before, there appears no connection between the date of birth and the organization's establishment.

Figure 4.3 RNW Profile Section



The figure shows the RNW profile section on Renren. At the top is the RNW logo, a globe with 'RNW' in the center. Below the logo is the title '1. Profile Section'. The profile information is displayed in a light blue box with the following details:

	向她打招呼
	发站内信
	送她礼物
Location	所在城市: 荷兰
Born on	生日: 1985 -1-1摩羯座
Hometown	家乡: 北京 东城区
Level	等级: 9级

The "info" section, as an information section, summarizes all the 'identity' information about RNW. Except the few points that have already been highlighted in the profile section, the info section includes education, company, interest, contact information and the preferred public pages of RNW. RNW filled Amsterdam University as its education. The Chinese name of RNW and the website link are used in the company and contact sector. The interests sector, unlike other short text in this section, is filled with a long paragraph of text that has been quoted below.

"We are the editors from RNW Chinese. A group of people with a youthful heart whom are

enthusiastic about news and the life guidance. Do not miss us if you are in China, because we will show you the real Netherlands and Europe. If you are ready to study or work in the Netherlands, please also do not miss us! Because we will help you to solve problems! If you already in the Netherlands, you can't miss us! You can find resonance and grow with us!

Radio Netherlands Worldwide provides news, background and cultural information to millions of people throughout the world via radio, television and the Internet. This is done from a Dutch-European perspective, in ten languages. Radio Netherlands Worldwide is one of the top five international broadcasters alongside the BBC, Voice of America, Radio France Internationale and Deutsche Welle. For more information, please visit the Netherlands and the world <http://www.rnw.nl/chinese>."

- from RNW Info Section

The text consists of two parts. The first part is an introduction on who the editors are, what they aim to do and what will do for the readers. The text has been written from a first person perspective and provides a lot of extra information about RNW that can not be found on its official website. As has been outlined in theory review, providing extra information about the organization could improve the effectiveness of SNS-marketing. By doing so people are more likely to pay attention to the company on an SNS (Mangod & Faulds, 2009). Providing company information, as one of the SNS-tactics y has clearly been used by RNW to facilitate the SNS-marketing. The paragraph of info text, provided by the RNW's marketers is likely to connect RNW marketers to its readers which could not be done via traditional media. The second part of the text is a general introduction to RNW, which can be directly found on RNW's Chinese website (RNW, 2011).

The last feature that will be introduced in this paragraph is the "Customized Page" feature.

This feature could be a great tool to distinguish your profile page from others. Promotion images or lines could, for example, be posted in the background. That cannot only strengthen Renren-friends' impression about the organization but it could also provide unique and interesting information, to the users. Although Renren provides the opportunity to customize the profile page, RNW did not upgrade to a VIP account to make use of this feature. The possible reason could be that Renren requires individual accounts registered with users' real name. RNW Chinese, as an organization's name, would not be seen as a "real" name. Thus, its account will not be approved the Renren to become a VIP account unless it changes owns a real personal name.

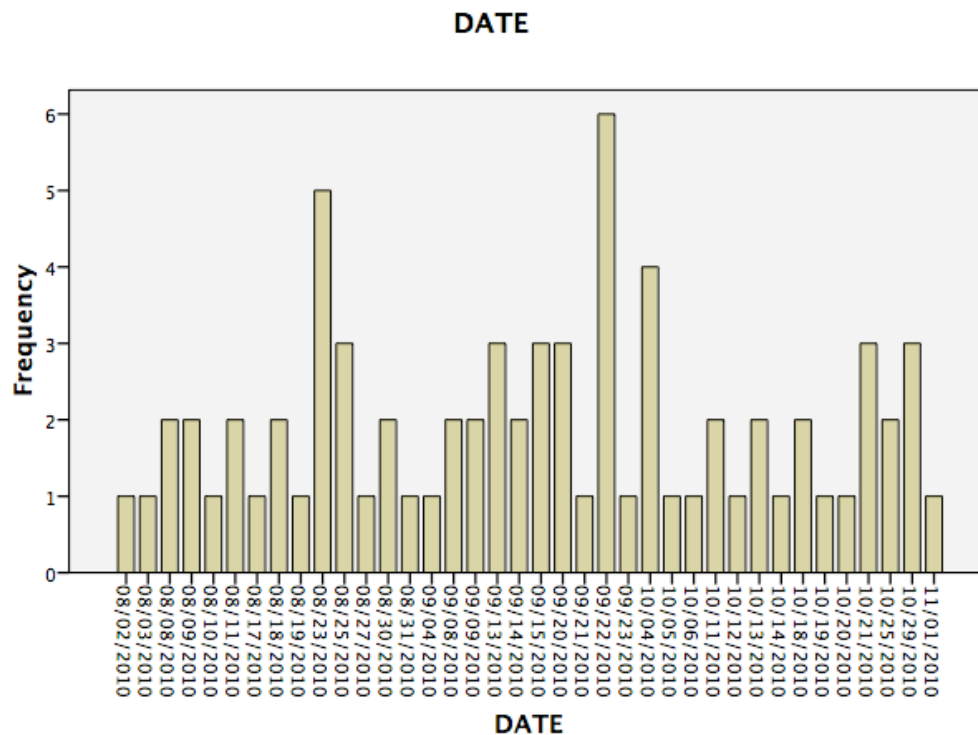
4.21.2 Wall, Diary, Photo and Video section (RNW)

In this paragraph, the analysis of all the messages posted by RNW in the four page sections (Wall, Diary, Photo and Video), holding category-II-data (six features: status, link, diary, photo, reacts, video) will be conducted. The results are all based on the content analysis of the collected messages. As has been mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, four types of descriptive statistics will be discussed: 1) frequency of posted message, 2) frequency of feature usage, 3) What percentage of messages belongs to what SNS-activity and within these SNS-activities: what SNS-tactic has been used most, 4) the relationship between feature and SNS-tactic usage. By doing so we aim to find out how frequent RNW uses Renren, what features they preferably use and how they use these features (e.g. what tactics do they use within the feature?).

Frequency of Posted Message

A total amount of 74 messages (Figure 4.1) has been posted by RNW over the three months test period. In other words: RNW has posted less than one message a day ($74/92 \approx 0,8$). Figure 4.4 shows the frequency of these messages by date. Based on the data, RNW marketers commonly post one message a day with the highest number of messages posted being only six. Next to that from time to time RNW did not post any message for several days. This indicates that RNW is not very active on its Renren profile page. Especially given their core-business (media), you could expect more 'news updates'.

Figure 4.4 The Frequency of RNW Posted Messages



Frequency of feature using

Table 4.5 presents the frequency with which each type of message has been posted. Based on the table, the frequency of each type of messages indicates that what types of feature are used by RNW on the profile page. Among all the SNS messages that were posted by RNW, 4 status updates, 2 links, 60 diaries, 7 react and 1 photo message were identified. With 81,1 percent from the messages being a diary message it is safe to state that the diary is the preferred feature by RNW ". The "Video" section, on the other hand, is not used at all. RNW marketers did not upload any video over the three-months test period. Apart from this, RNW marketers posted only little "react" and status-messages.

Table 4.5 The Frequency of RNW Feature Usage

Message Type	Frequency	Percent
Status	4	5.4
Link	2	2.7
Diary	60	81.1
Photo	1	1.4
React (RNW)	7	9.5

Video	0	0
Total	74	100

In general, it can be concluded that the “Diary” section is the most preferred SNS feature for RNW marketers. The Renren “Diary” section could integrate multimedia sources and can easily be shared with other users. These might be important reasons for RNW marketers to make use of the diary so often. However it can still be concluded that RNW leaves a lot of opportunities on Renren untouched.

Percentage of SNS-activity and SNS-tactics

Figure 4,6 illustrates frequencies with which RNW marketers use the SNS-activities and tactics, as they have been defined in chapter three. Based on the content analysis, ‘Leverage’ (47% usage) seems to be used most often, followed by ‘Provide’ (41%). The other two SNS-activities only appear in 7% (listen and engage) and 5% (monitor) of the cases. However, it should be noted that these two SNS-activities could not fully be investigated here. For the activity ‘Listen and Engage’ the two tactics ‘Conversation from customers to organizations’ and ‘Conversation between customers’ were still need to be taken into account to investigate the relation between the organizations’ Renren usage and Renren friends. As the two organizations has a huge differences in the number of user database, extra attention will be paid to this scale issue to decrease possible influences on result because of the quantity difference. Therefore, these two tactics will be discussed in paragraph 4.21.4 (the use of profile page by RNW’s Renren friends). On the other hand, the monitor-activity, as has been mentioned in the research design, could not completely be observed on the SNS itself. Therefore this activity will also be discussed separately (in paragraph 4.3).

Despite the fact above, some conclusions could still be drawn based on the data in Figure 4.6. Firstly, when RNW marketers use the ‘Provide’ activity, they most often provide in-depth reports and articles (36% of the cases) to users. They also offer some extra information about the company (7% of the cases) but barely publish any news bulletins (1%). Secondly, RNW's marketers frequently provide multi-media content, with their messages (28% of the cases). Apart from this, they also pay some attention to provide non-mainstream topics (12% of the cases) and exclusiveness (7% of the cases) to Renren users. It should be remarked that multi-media content differs from the message types ‘Video’ and ‘Picture’ as multi-media content could be included in other type of messages. For example, a diary-message could provide in-depth articles contained

with multimedia information such as pictures or videos. The next paragraph will give a more in-depth view on the use of these SNS-tactics.

Table 4.6 RNW's SNS-activity and SNS-tactic Usage

SNS-Activity	SNS-Tactic	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent (per activity)
Provide	Provide news bulletins	2	1	
	Provide in-depth reports/articles	59	36	
	Provide company information	7	4	41
Listen and Engage	Conversation from organizations to customers	11	7	7
Leverage	Provide non-mainstream topics	19	12	
	Provide multi-media content	46	28	
	Provide customer exclusiveness	11	7	47
Monitor	Monitor conversation	8	5	5
Total		163	100	100

The Relationship Between the Use of Feature and SNS-tactic (RNW)

As each message was coded with one or more SNS-tactics, table 4.7 offers a detailed view of the frequency that each SNS-tactic is associated with all the message types in order to find out the correlation between the feature using and with the SNS-tactics. According to table 4.5, there are only four status updates are being used by RNW. Combing data from figure 4.5 and 4.7, the four status updates turn out to be used to directly communicate with Renren user. Two of the status updates provide news bulletins and the other two provide information about the organization. RNW marketers also use 'React' to directly talk to users (all 7 reacts were coded as conversation from organizations to customers) and provide them exclusiveness (6 out of 7 Reacts are providing customer exclusiveness). Additional, the two links that have been posted are both providing exclusiveness and the photo that has been upload as multimedia content offers non-mainstream news.

Next, it is noteworthy that 59 out of 60 dairies posted by RNW are used to provide in-depth reports and articles. As an international media organization, it is not hard to imagine that posting in-depth dairies is a main strategy of RNW marketers on Renren. Besides, 43 out of 60 dairies

are including multi-media content. Therefore, in order to attract more readers, multi-media content such as picture or videos could be intentionally added into diaries to make it more vivid for the reader. Meanwhile, provide non-mainstream information is coded based on the topic of each message. It can be seen that those non-mainstream or can be also called taboo topics are mostly posted as diary content (15 from the 19 non-mainstream topics). However based on table 4.5 (stating that 81,1 percent of RNW's messages is a diary message), this number is not surprising.

Table 4.7 The Relationship of RNW's Feature and SNS-tactic use

SNS-Activity	SNS-Tactic	Status	Link	Diary	React	Photo	Total
Provide	Provide news bulletins	2	0	0	0	0	2
	Provide in-depth reports/articles	0	0	59	0	0	59
	Provide company information	2	1	1	3	0	7
Listen and Engage	Conversation from organizations to customers	4	0	0	7	0	11
	Provide non-mainstream topics	2	1	15	0	1	19
Leverage	Provide multi-media content	1	1	43	0	1	46
	Provide customer exclusiveness	2	2	1	6	0	11
Monitor	Monitor conversation	2	0	0	6	0	8

4.21.3 Music, Applications, Liked Public Page (RNW)

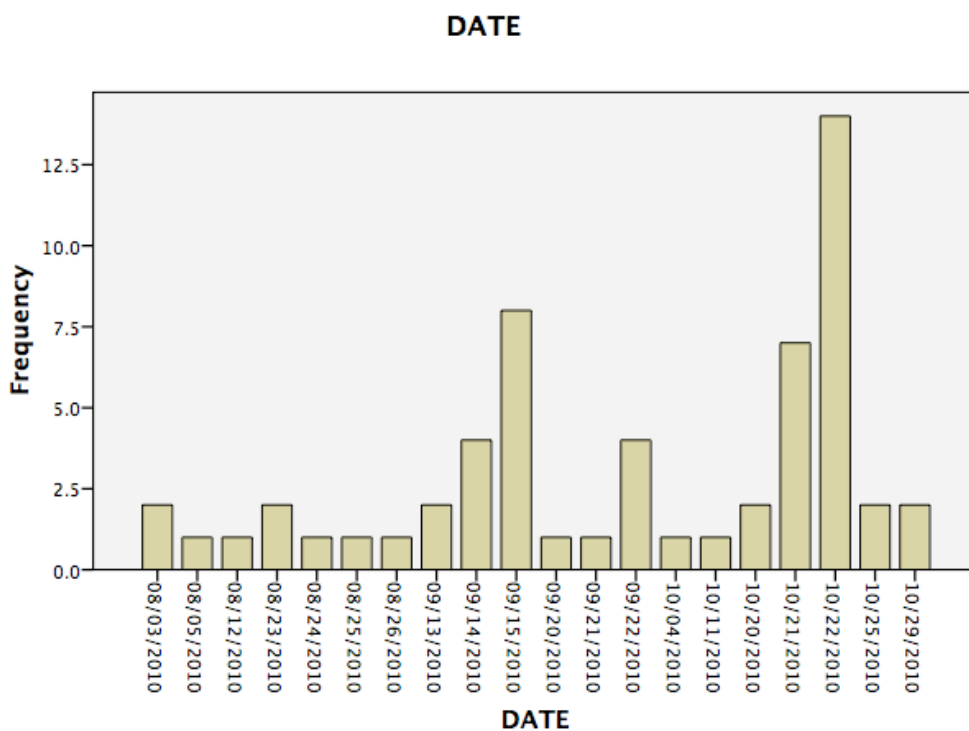
RNW has a music section on the profile page, but the marketers did not make use of it. As an international news organization, it is likely that none of their news items fit this section. RNW did neither use any application. However, it received a virtual gift in the gift section. Friends normally send out the gifts and gifts are not free. Users have to pay to send a gift.

RNW has 'Liked' four public pages: KNVB (Netherlands national football team), Greenpeace Chinese, Wall Street Journal Chinese and Global Times (Chinese news organization). The four public pages are more or less connected to RNW. KNVB is beloved by Chinese soccer fans and Dutch media reports a lot about soccer. RNW journalists may also concern about the global and Chinese environmental issues and thus, rather focus on Greenpeace. The other two pages are considered as the most popular public pages in the news genre from which one is a Chinese news organization and the other is an international news organization. RNW marketers may add these popular pages to look at how to make use of their public page and follow their news updates.

4.21.4 The Use of Profile Page by Renren Friends (RNW)

RNW's Renren friends have posted 58 messages (table 4.1) on its profile page which is an average of 0.62 ($58/92 \approx 0.62$) message per day. Figure 4.8 indicates that Renren friends posted those messages irregularly. There is no pattern in term of message posting frequency. It worth to mention that it can be seen from figure 4.8 sometimes there is any message for half month (August 27 –Sept 12, 2010) and sometimes there is more than 13 messages posted in one day (October 22,2010).

Figure4.8 The frequency of RNW's Renren friends message post



Among all these messages, 79.3% (table4.9) of the friends' activity is "comments" and 20.7 %(table 4.9) is "React. It also can be seen from table 4.9 that all the user messages associated with the two tactic 'conversation from customers to organizations' 'conversation between customers' belonged with the SNS-activity 'Listen and Provide'. There is a trend that 'comment' used by friends to comment on the RNW itself or its relatively posts. Some discussion also existed among friends based on there 12 reacts reply to other users' comment. Meanwhile, the 'react' is only by user to react to other user's comment. As there is no reaction used the tactic

'conversation from customer to the organization', it indicates that customer did not react o any organization's comment.

Table 4.9 Message type and use of SNS-tactics by RNW Renren Friends

Message Type	Frequency	Percent	SNS-tactics	
			Conversation between customers	Conversation from customers to organizations
Comments	46	79.3	0	46
React	12	20.7	12	0
Total	58	100	12	46

To sum up, RNW marketers are present at Renren through a simple profile page. They do make use of some of the features on the page. However, many features have not been used very actively illustrated by the low frequency of posts. The diary feature is the most frequently used feature by RNW to attract new readers. Many messages have been posted to provide in-depth opinions on news events or to attract attention to the non-mainstream topics. Providing in-depth opinions and attracting attention through non-mainstream topics in China can thus be considered as RNW's main strategy. Apart from this, RNW has not actively been using other SNS-tactics. Meanwhile, RNW's Renren users give their comments or reacts irregularly. There are however, a lot of comments or reacts posted by the users, proved by the high frequency on the variable: 'conversation between user to organization'.

4.22 The use of Renren by CWSJ

CWSJ's use of their public Renren page will be described in a narrative way, following the same method that has been used for RNW. Next, the use of SNS-activities and SNS-tactics by CWSJ's Renren friends will be presented. Moreover, CWSJ's use of the different Renren features will be stressed, through the results of the content analysis. Figure 4.10 presents the public page of CWSJ. The SNS-features listed in table 3.1 are again marked. At the moment of data collection, CWSJ had its own official pubic page holding 416,700 friends (CWS Public page, 2010). An advantage that CWSJ enjoys by holding this public page is that it can easily be looked up by other users, through the Renren public page section.

Within the three-months research period, there 380 messages (Table 4.1) have been posted by CWSJ and 8,116 messages were posted by the CWSJ's Renren friends. Based on this data, there is inevitable a lot of activity on CWSJ's public page.

Figure 4.10 The Public Page of CWSJ

The screenshot shows the public page of The Wall Street Journal's Chinese website on Weibo. The page is annotated with several numbered sections:

- 1. Profile Section:** Located on the left, it displays the CWSJ logo, website URL (cn.WSJ.com), and basic information like creation time (2002-1-1).
- 2. Info Section:** Located at the top left, it shows the page title and navigation tabs like '公共主页', '资料', '状态', '相册', '日志', and '分享'.
- 3. Customized page features:** A label pointing to the top navigation area.
- 4.1. Status:** Points to the main content area where news articles are listed with titles and brief summaries.
- 4.2. Shared Links:** Points to the '分享链接' (Share Link) section of each article.
- 4.3. Comments & Reacts:** Points to the '评论' (Comments) section of each article.
- 4.4. Shared Links:** Points to the '分享' (Share) button at the bottom of each article.
- 5. Diary Section:** Points to the '日志' (Diary) tab on the left sidebar.
- 6. Photo Section:** Points to the '相册' (Album) tab on the left sidebar.
- 7. Friends Section:** Points to the '好友' (Friends) section on the right sidebar, showing a list of users.
- 8. Recent Browse Public Page:** Points to the '我最近浏览的公共主页' (Public Pages I Recently Browsed) section on the right sidebar.

The main content area features several news articles with titles such as '国际刑警组织在一份声明中说...' and '《华尔街日报》中文网...', each accompanied by a small image and a '评论' (Comments) count.

4.22.1 Profile, Info and Customized Page (CWSJ)

CWSJ uses its logo as profile picture, just like RNW, but it added its Chinese name below (figure 4.11). Underneath the picture, there is a short story to introduce CWSJ. Freely translated from mandarin to English the story is saying: ‘CWSJ (<http://cn.wsj.com>) provides online publications in the Chinese language. It is operating as a Dow Jones company. CWSJ can rely on the abundant resources from the Wall Street Journal. It is aiming to provide Chinese readers indispensable news and analysis of business developments, globally’.

Additionally, basic profile information states: “Type: online media” “Created: January 1st, 2002”. Renren users can, thus, use the profile section to take note of company basics. It presents a short company overview.

Figure 4.11 Profile section of CWSJ



CWSJ’s info section is direct and simple. Except for basic information also appears in the profile section, a short company introduction of Dow Jones has been added and its website-link is stated. CWSJ’s profile section and info section are both characterized by short texts. The content in these sections gives an understandable and accessible view about the organization’s mission. However, the information is only basic company information, there is no additional information provided, like has been done by RNW.

As CWSJ created a public page, CWSJ’s marketers can customize the page without upgrading the account. The page background has been designed using black and grey color, to fit CWSJ’s logo (Figure 4.10). Moreover the design is similar to the design of CWSJ’s official page (CWSJ, 2011). As a public page should be a unique experience where users become deeper connected to an organization or a brand (Zarrella, 2009), CWSJ’s public page sets a great example. The page design is giving users an exclusive experience and is well connected to its official news page.

Regarding the use of Renren features, CWSJ deleted the “Video” feature, that is supposed to appear in the upper sections of a public page. Seemingly, multimedia resources, such as video, are not used as stand alone messages. However multimedia could be part of another messages as

will be showed in paragraph 4.22.2. Interestingly, the same has been concluded for RNW.

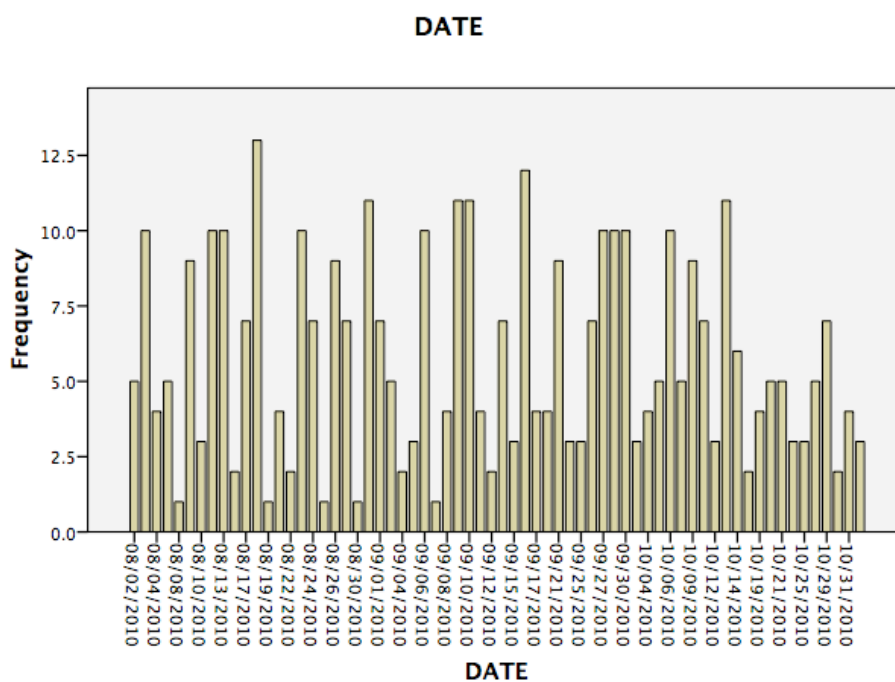
4.22.2 Wall Content, Diary and Photo (CWSJ)

In this paragraph, the results of the coding process for CWSJ will be presented. The same sequence of analyses will be used, as has been done for RNW. Four types of result will be listed to portray the use of Renren by CWSJ: 1) frequency of posted message by CWSJ, 2) frequency of feature usage by CWSJ, 3) percentage of messages that belongs to an SNS-activity and SNS-tactic, 4) the relationship between features and SNS-tactics used by CWSJ

Frequency of posted message

CWSJ posted more than 4 messages ($380/92 \approx 4.1$) per day. According to the data in figure 4.11, RNW marketers frequently posted more than 13 messages per day. A clear trend can be distinguished, looking at the day-by-day posting frequencies. Every two or three days, there is a day at which more than 10 messages are posted while, 2 to 3 messages have been posted by CWSJ, on other days.

Figure 4.11 Frequency of posted message by CWSJ



Frequency of feature usage

Among all the messages, posted by CWSJ, 86 % (Table 4.12) is a link. 8. 7% of the messages are diaries and in less than 5% of the cases CWSJ reacts to its reader. CWSJ marketers only posted one status update and one picture. The focus of CWSJ marketers is clearly on sharing links. Apart from this, it also posted some diaries. These two features cover 94.8% of the messages posted by CWSJ.

Table 4.12 The Frequency of CWSJ Feature Usage

Message Type	Frequency	Percent
Status	1	0.3
Link	327	86.1
Diary	33	8.7
Photo	1	0.3
React	18	4.7
Video	0	0
Total	380	100

SNS-activity and SNS-tactic usage by CWSJ

Through table 4.13, we find out that the most frequently used SNS-activity by CWSJ is 'Provide'. This SNS-activity covers over 53.5% of all the CWSJ's messages. The SNS-activity 'Leverage' includes 34% of SNS-messages by CWSJ. Making that the second most frequently used activity. In paragraph 4.12.2, it has already been stated that more data needs to be added in order to fully investigate the use of SNS-activities. As a result, the use of SNS-activities will also be described later, in the comparison study, and the paragraph 'Monitor'.

The most frequently used tactics by CWSJ marketers are "provide in-depth reports and articles" and "provide multi-media content". Followed by these, CWSJ offered users 108 messages containing news bulletins. 51 Messages are about non-mainstream topics. The other tactics were not used very frequently by CWSJ.

Table 4.13 CWSJ's SNS-activity and SNS-tactic Usage

SNS-Activity	SNS-Tactic	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent (per activity)
Provide	Provide news bulletins	108	15	
	Provide in-depth reports/articles	252	35.5	
	Provide company information	19	3	53.5
Listen and Engage	Conversation from organizations to customers	19	3	3
Leverage	Provide non-mainstream topics	51	7	
	Provide multi-media content	221	31	
	Provide customer exclusiveness	19	3	41
Monitor	Monitor Conversation	18	2.5	2.5
Total		707	100	100

The relationship Between Feature and SNS-tactic Usage by CWSJ

According to table 4.12, only one status update has been posted by CWSJ. According to table 4.14, this status update provides 'company information' and 'exclusiveness (launch mobile page and answer friends' questions about the organization)' to users. Similarly, CWSJ marketers only uploaded one picture in the 'photo-feature' within the three-months test period. This picture contained short news, on a non-mainstream topic.

Combing table 4.12 and table 4.14, we can also see that the most frequently used feature by CWSJ is 'links' (86%). One third of these links, direct to 'news bulletins' and the other two third of the messages direct to 'in-depth reports and articles'. It is not surprising that CWSJ as a news organization provided these messages. However, It is noteworthy that all the links posted by CWSJ, direct to CWSJ's official website. The content of the links are most of time CWSJ's news articles and sometimes news photos or short videos. Of course it is highly likely that CWSJ marketers are mainly aiming to post links on Renren to attract more readers to the official website and increase traffic. Besides that, 12 percent ($40/327 \approx 0.12$) of the links provide non-mainstream topics and approximately 64 percent ($208/327 \approx 0.636$) of the links connect to multi-

media content.

Table 4.14 also shows that 8.7 percent (33) of the messages are posted in the dairy section. Furthermore table 4.14 proves that the diary section has been used what it has been meant for by Renren: 96 percent ($32/33 \approx 0.96$) of the diary messages include in-depth reports or articles. Among all the dairies, around 30% ($10/33 \approx 0.30$) contains non-mainstream topics and 36% ($12/33 \approx 0.36$) also includes multi-media content.

Reacts, according to the data in table 4.14, were majorly used to provide company information to users and to provide customer privileges. In fact 'reacts' are posted by the organization to offer information about the organization itself, which may help the organization to solve the questions or offer benefits to its customers.

Table 4.14 The relationship between feature and SNS-tactic usage by CWSJ

SNS-Activity	SNS-Tactic	Status	Link	Diary	React	Photo	Total
	Provide news bulletins	0	106	1	0	1	108
	Provide in-depth reports/articles	0	220	32	0	0	252
Provide	Provide company information	1	0	0	18	0	19
Listen and Engage	Conversation from organizations to customers	1	0	0	18	0	19
	Provide non-mainstream topics	0	40	10	0	1	51
	Provide multi-media content	0	208	12	0	1	221
Leverage	Provide customer exclusiveness	1	0	0	18	0	19
Monitor	Monitor Conversation	0	0	0	18	0	18

4.22.3 The Use of Public Page by Renren Friends (CWSJ)

The introduction of this chapter has stated that 8,116 messages posted by CWSJ's Renren friends. During the three-months research period, approximately 88 ($8116/92 \approx 88.2$) messages were posted by CWSJ's Renren friends per day. It interesting to note that a frequency-pattern in CWSJ's friend message post can be recognized. Every three days, there is a high frequency in postings. Combing the date from figure 4.11 and 4.15, it seems that, in accordance with intuition: the more messages CWSJ posts the more messages will be posted by its Renren friends.

Figure 4.15 Figure 4.11 Frequency of posted message by CWSJ

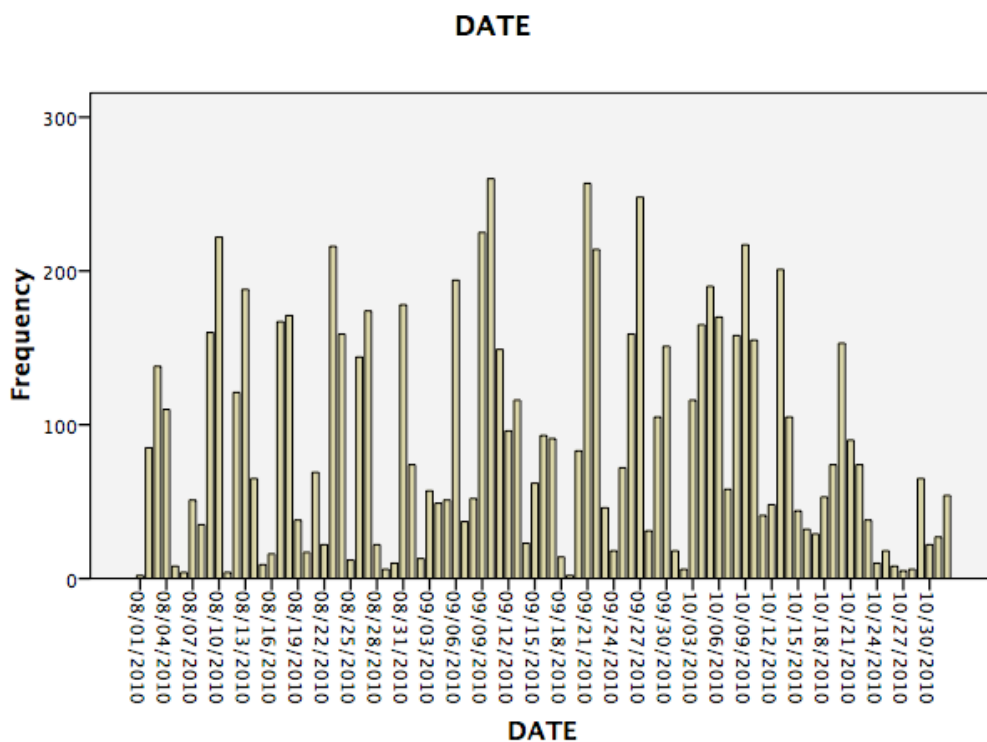


Table 4.16 indicates that 74% of CWSJ Renren friends' posts are belonging to comments and the rest are 'react'-messages.

It is interesting to note that CWSJ's Renren friends posted 6,004 comments and there are also 2,112 reacts posted to respond to these comments. This indicates that there are a lot 'conversations' going on among the friends on CWSJ's public page. Besides that, 2 friends' reacts were labeled as 'react to organizations' react. It suggests that there is more than one message conversation existed between CWSJ and its friends.

Table 4.16 Message type and use of SNS-tactics by CWSJ Renren Friends

Message Type	Frequency	Percent	SNS-tactics	
			Conversation between customers	Conversation from customers to organizations
Comments	6004	74	0	6004
React	2112	26	2110	2
Total	8116	100	2010	6006

To conclude, CWSJ designed a public page with an identical design as its official page. Next the page has an understandable page structure and company introduction. CWSJ marketers used nearly all the features on the Renren public page except for the 'Video' feature but only two features have been frequently using. With the intention to drive more people to its official website, CWSJ marketers seem to prefer to share links to bulletin news or in-depth articles on their official page. This could therefore be considered as their main strategy on the Renren public page. By doing so, CWSJ marketers may successfully connect social networks and their official news website, which could possibly generate a great amount of traffic to the website. Posting diaries, on the other hand, is the second most used activity. A great amount of messages also included non-mainstream topics and multi-media information. The huge amount of friends on the public page accommodates a high frequency of user SNS-activity on CWSJ's public page. In line with intuition, the number of messages posted by friends seemed to increase with the number of messages by CWSJ itself. Following this, it seems that the involvement with the organization can be increased by actively using the SNS yourself. A discussion between the organization and its friends has also been proved to be quite extensive.

4.3 Monitor

This paragraph is to answer the research question: How do international media corporations monitor SNS-activity in China? Monitor, as an important SNS-activity, has been investigated through the content analysis and the email interview.

In the content analysis, if the organization posted a 'react' message, it suggests that marketers have read the user's comments on its page and replied to it. Thus, the SNS-tactic 'monitor conversation' can be investigated through the message that coded as "organizations' react to a

customer". As a result, 7 'reacts' (table 4.5) were founded on RNW' profile page and 18 'reacts' (table 4.11) were collected from CWSJ's profile page. The difference in the number of friends makes it is hard to tell that to what extent the organization monitors Renren comments. Thus, I compared the number of organizations' reacts message to the number of users' comments. The result form table 4.18 indicates a 'monitor rate' for the two organizations. By looking at the percentage, RNW (15%) actually has a higher monitor rate than CWSJ (0.2%). The amount of the comment may need to be taken into consideration. Small amount of comment is easy to be read through while a huge amount of comments could be very time consuming to read and monitor it completely.

Table 4.17 Originations' monitoring rate

Organization	Frequency of react	Frequency of User's Comment	Percent of React Rate
RNW	7	46	0.152
CWSJ	18	6004	0.002

Email interviews provides some additional information on how do marketers monitor on Renren. The interview results indicate that it is no doubt that both organization marketers are monitoring their Renren page but there is no regularity or certain method to monitor. Most of times, the markers only look at certain features or figures from time to time or when they are not busy with other work.

Even though, both organizations monitor certain features on their Renren page. RNW marketers focus on monitoring features such as comments from friends, diary section, friend section and application section. They explained they normally read all the comments from friends and reply to the comments based on the content. Correspondently, CWSJ marketers pay most attention on comments and diary section. They normally only read the comments on its wall or underneath a diary post. If the message is specifically address to the organization, they will rely it. However, they will not read all the comments underneath the links or other features because they don't have time or extra energy to read it all. However, CWSJ marketers sometimes pay attention on total amount discussion between customers under a link or a diary, so that they can find out what kind of topics will create more discussion among users.

Secondly, regarding to the five figures that mentioned by Defren (2008) to monitor on the SNSs, RNW marketers monitor the 'influence' 'attention' 'participation' standing for the number of

friend, the amount of page view on profile page (written on the profile page) and the number of comments. Besides this, RNW marketers pay attention to the amount of traffic that comes from Renren page to its official page.

CWSJ marketers on the other hands monitor the amount of comments between customers, the number of friends and the amount of comment that indicates the 'participation' and 'influence'. CWSJ marketers also explained that they would like to monitor the 'attention' on Renren which is web metrics of the public page visit, but unfortunately they are not able to access the data.

Among all the monitoring figures, RNW marketers consider the number of friends is the most effective figure for them. The user comments are also important but they hardly calculate the amount. CWSJ marketers believe that the amount of traffic drives from Renren page to its official page is the most essential indicator, followed by the number of friends. It is noteworthy that both organizations' marketers believe that the amount of friends is one of crucial indicator for them to monitor. Neither of the organization monitored the 'authority'. It is possible that it is not necessary to monitor the validity and quality of the links since the links are mostly to their official page.

Thirdly, both RNW and CWSJ marketers use Google analytics as a monitor tool. Apart from this, RNW marketers used another monitor tool named 'Site Stats (NL)' while CWSJ also use 'Omniture'. However, none of the tools were used directly to monitor the data on Renren. Those tools are used as a monitoring tool for the whole news website and marketers regularly check the source of the traffic to see the amount of traffic that comes from the Chinese social networks sites.

In conclusion, the content analysis and email interviews suggested that both RNW and CWSJ marketers monitor the 'participation' 'influence' and the 'conversation' and neither of the organization think 'authority' is necessary for them to check. RNW marketers also monitor the 'attention' on its profile page because it can be easily read the data on the Renren page. CWSJ marketers would like to monitor the 'attention' as well but suffered from no access to the figure. Besides, they all deem the amount of friend and the friend comments are two key indicators to test if they are popular on Renren. However, marketers of both organizations only observed but barely systematically calculate those figures. CWSJ marketers also pay certain attention to monitor the content of the post and the amount of comments. Both marketers also admitted that they use monitoring tools, but it only limited on the data on its official website. The entire

monitoring process on the Renren page are confined within marketers observation, there is no systematic statics analysis involved.

4.4 China's Internet Policy and the Use of Renren

Then internet policy in china, which is counted another important fact that could influence the marketers using Chinese social media, has been also investigated during the interview.

Marketers were firstly asked that what do they think of Chinese social media in general and whether there is any difference is making use of them comparing to more international SNSs. Marketers from RNW answered in the email interview that in terms of the function, Chinese SNSs are almost the same as the western SNSs. However, in terms of the kinds of social media, western SNSs have less types and the user group is more focus. There are more types of Chinese SNSs and the user base is rather scattering. They have to manage quite some SNS accounts instead of one or tow in order to reach their marketing goal. CWSJ also expressed that they think the functionality of Chinese SNSs is very good but it is less open than international SNSs.

Next, I investigated if the organization applied for a publishing license in China and I asked if there is any Chinese internet regulation to guide international media organizations to make use of the SNSs. RNW marketers said that they did apply for one and did know much about the license when CWSJ marketers pointed out they were not required to a publishing license as a foreign news media. Nevertheless, they can not guarantee that their websites is always available to the Chinese reader. When it comes to the regulation to use social media, both organizations' marketers indicate that they haven't heard anything so far. Therefore, there is no governmental regulations has been found to guide international news media to make use of Chinese SNSs. However, RNW marketers still stressed out that the key word censorship is influencing their use of Renren. There is a self-censorship system on Chinese SNSs. For example, when there some sensitive words in a diary that they are going to post, the system will automatically inform the organization that there is sensitive content in it and the diary will be required to re-edit. Thus, when the marketers posting messages, they are forced to circumvent those sensitive topics and words. Marketers of RNW also indicate that if their official page is going to be blocked, their SNS account probably will also not able to use anymore.

CWSJ marketers also admitted that they are influenced by censoring keyword, however, the marketer do not want to and do not feel comfortable to explain more about the influences. They

also answered because they have not been blocked so far, they will not be able to know whether the blocking of official page is influencing the use of their Renren public page.

The question, whether there are any other Chinese internet policies influencing the use of Renren is also addressed in the questionnaire. RNW marketers express that in general when RNW tries to use a Chinese SNS as an individual, there is a limitation on posting content. When RNW tries to incorporate with Chinese SNS as an organization, Chinese SNS companies normally will not accept the incorporation because RNW is identified as a foreign media organization broadcasting sensitive information. For instance, RNW marketers tried to apply for a public page and Renren did not refuse it. It turns out how the application procedure is very complex and a huge amount of documents need to be handed in first and then RNW has to wait for an approval. RNW marketers said that now they are in the stage of preparing documents but they still doubt whether they should hand in all the disclosed files to Renren. CWSJ also mentioned in the interview that they are suffered by news blackout (An agreement exists between the government and the media over the reporting of certain topics).

It can be concluded that there are many kinds of Chinese SNSs that could be used by international media organizations. When they make use of them, the functionality on the Chinese SNSs is as good as the popular international SNSs or sometimes even better. Only when it comes to the content and incorporation, both international news organizations have been influenced to some extent. The two organizations have encountered problems such as the posted content required to be adjusted, refusing incorporation at an organization level and some topics could not be reported. It is interesting to mention that even though international news organizations have to face those problems, it did not stop them from using the Chinese SNSs such as Renren. Both of the organizations chose to bear with those difficulties and continue to make use of it to promote.

4.5 The comparison of the use of Renren by two organizations

In this paragraph, a comparison study will be conducted to find the similarities and differences in the way the organizations make use of Renren. Statistical methods will be used to explore the results from the previous paragraphs, during which the Renren usage of both organizations has been described separately. The comparison of the Renren-usage will include all the aspects that are described in paragraphs 4.1 to 4.4, which resulted in five points. The five points are: 1) Use

of Renren page type 2) Renren-feature Usage 3) SNS-activity Usage on Renren 4) SNS-tactic usage on Renren 5) Renren Page-usage by Friends.

4.51 Use of Renren page type

It has been introduced at the beginning of this research that the two organizations have chosen a different kind of presence on Chinese SNS- Renren. RNW created a personal account having 514 Renren friends while CWSJ owns a public page processing 416,000 friends. According to the theory review on the use of Renren (paragraph 2.5), a personal account shares similar page functions with public page. However, compared to a public page, it is harder to add friends due to the bilateral friendship confirmation and less exposure. This means, a profile page usually has much less friends than a public page. Thus, except difference in acquaintances with the company, the type of page could also be an important reason resulted in the difference in the number of friend.

Apart from this, comparing the results of the interview research, it can be seen that both organizations tried to create a public page on Renren but only CWSJ succeeded. The reason why the two organizations have created different pages has been discovered during interview. Interview results suggest that the Chinese internet policies have a great influence on this outcome. Renren is very careful to cooperate with international organizations especially those international news agencies that unwelcomed by the Chinese government. In order to prevent the unwanted information appearing on Renren and the website will be blocked by the Chinese internet censor system, Renren not only created a complex applying procedure but also a self-censorship system. As RNW was unwilling to hand in all the documents and information that requested by Renren, it chose to build a profile page instead.

4.52 Renren-feature Usage

In this paragraph, the Renren-feature usage as described in the paragraph 4.1 and 4.2 will be compared. Due to their nature, three of those features will be compared qualitatively (Customized page, Profile, Info). Next, statistical methods will be used to compare the use of the six remaining Renren features.

In paragraph 4.21 it has been found that RNW registered a simple profile page without any customized feature while CWSJ successfully applied for and created a public page, that is perfectly coherent with their official website. In terms of self-introduction via the 'Profile' and 'Info' sections on Renren, RNW filled in limited and inaccurate information, however they have added some 'extra flavor' to their page by adding 'personal notes' to the information section. CWSJ on the other hand offered a well-structured company profile, with accurate information. Though the information on the page only reflects the content that is also available through the company website.

Next, the comparison of the feature-usage is based on the types of messages that have been posted on the Renren pages (Diary, Links, Photo, etc). Each type of message is connected to one feature. During the following paragraph the usages of different features will be compared, in a try to find an answer to the question: which features are most popular to RNW and CWSJ?

CWSJ is more actively posting messages on its public page than RNW on its profile page. That might not be surprising as CWSJ simply is a larger organization, which has more employees available to gather and post news articles. However, as RNW is, on average, posting less than one message per day (0,8), there is still a lot of room for improvement. In terms of feature usage, the pattern that appears in the frequencies of feature usage is different, however the way in which features are used seems quite similar. It became clear that both organizations concentrate on one or two features. This fact has been established through the histogram in appendix 2. Judging from this histogram, the strategies of RNW and CWSJ seem to be connected. A cross-tabulation has been used to judge if the feature usage significantly differs by organization.

RNW mostly uses the diary feature (60), while CWSJ's preferred feature turned out to be the link feature (327). The diary messages sent by RNW mostly contain in depth articles. In that sense the messages are similar to the messages posted by CWSJ. Links posted at the CWSJ public page mainly direct to in depth articles on their official website. A main reason can be found in the different purposes the companies strive for on Renren. Based on their own marketing intentions, the use that these two firms make of Renren-features makes sense. The

features used fit their purposes. The Chi-square value found of 2,369 ($p: 0,000$) indicates that the pattern of Renren-feature usage of both organizations is indeed similar. As described in the paragraph before: The other features are used far less. It seems like both organizations' marketers focus on using one feature and did not make use of others. However, we should be careful when drawing conclusions from this, as some sub-samples consist of less than five cases. A research into more organizations and strategies would be necessary to really be able to draw a conclusion. However this finding gives the indication that SNS-features are badly used. Both organizations use a strategy in which they neglect most of the possibilities that Renren offers. Upcoming research could for example focus on the effectiveness of such a strategy to be able to give hands on advise.

Table 4.18 Message Type Crosstabulation

		RNW	CWSJ	Total
Message Type	Status	4	1	5
	Links	2	327	329
	Diary	60	33	93
	Photo	1	1	2
	React	7	18	25
	Total	74	380	454

4.53 SNS-activity Usage

The SNS-activities usage on CWSJ's and Row's page shows different patterns. The results show that a huge difference exists in number of posted messages between RNW and CWSJ. To be able to compare activity-usage fairly, relative (percentages) instead of absolute numbers were used. In that way we try to reduce the huge influence of large numbers in the sample (e.g. CWSJ has many more friends and consequently messages than RNW does).

Paragraph 4.1 concludes that more than half of the messages (56%), posted on RNW's profile page, are posted by RNW itself, while CWSJ only posts 4% of the total amount of messages on its public page. In other words: friends of CWSJ post 96% of the messages that appear on CWSJ's public page. This suggests that the general SNS-activity performance on the two pages

is rather different. A Z-test has been used to test whether the difference is significant. Such turned out to be the case for all four of the SNS activities defined in chapter two (‘Provide’ $z=17.804$, $p<0.0002$, ‘Listen and Engage’, $z=-30.645$, $p<0.0002$, ‘Leverage’, $z=22.983$, $p<0.0002$), ‘Monitor’, $z=9.309$, $p<0.0002$). It can be said that, considering both the activity from the organization itself and from its friends: strategies are highly different. A main reason for this result can be found in the huge difference in amount of friends on both pages. Another reason could be the involvement of friends through the use of different strategies by the organization. Though such a topic is not in the scope of this research. Again it would be a nice starting point for upcoming research.

It might be more interesting and meaningful in this research, to take a closer look at the strategy and use of SNS-activities of the two organizations. What choices do they make when using Renren? It is likely that there is a connection between the organization’s SNS-activities usage and their page SNS-activity performance. For example, if marketers apply a correct strategy to use SNS-activities, SNS friends are possibly more active on the page and thus a higher page-activity will be measured and vice versa. During the coding process, it has been stressed, in chapter four, that 79 messages from RNW and 379 messages from CWSJ were coded as ‘Provide’. 11 RNW’s messages and 19 of CWSJ’s messages were coded as ‘Listen and Engage’. Moreover, 76 and 8 messages of RNW were respectively coded with ‘Leverage’ and ‘Monitor’. While the number for CWSJ are 291 and 18. It can be seen that the difference in most of numbers is still huge. Comparisons were therefore also conducted using relative instead of absolute.

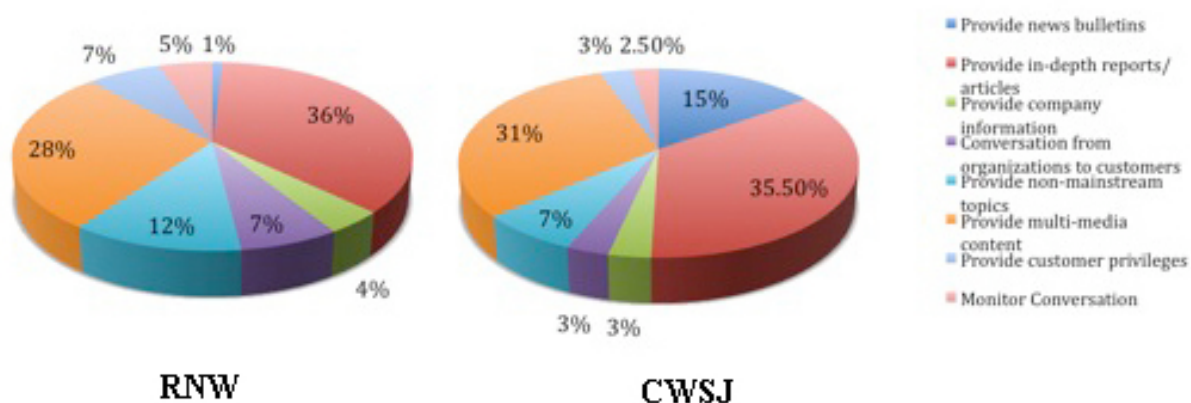
The Z-test results find a significant difference between the two organizations, in the use of the SNS-activity ‘Provide ($z=-2.738$, $p=0.0062$)’ and ‘Listen and Engage ($z=2.562$, $p=0.0104$)’ but not in the other two SNS-activities ‘Leverage ($z=1.274$, $p=0.2027$)’ and ‘Monitor ($z=1.597$, $p=0.1103$)’. Therefore, comparing the SNS-activity usage by the organizations, RNW uses a much smaller proportion of its messages to ‘Provide’ than CWSJ. This indicates that CWSJ might concentrate more on its core-business of providing (e.g. news-articles), while RNW concentrates more on another strategy. That has been confirmed looking at the comparison of the strategy: ‘Listen and Engage’. Apparently, RNW marketers are more willing to listen to their

friends and engage with them on the profile page. Next, it can be seen from the Z-test result that there is not much differentiation in use of 'Leverage' and 'Monitor'. Thus, it can be concluded that both organizations spend a similar amount of energy on their SNS-pages trying to leverage the SNS-usage. Accordingly, RNW and CWSJ are alike in the ways of monitoring their SNS-page and both organizations'. Later on in this report we will see that still a lot of improvement can be made regarding the monitoring of the pages.

4.54 SNS-tactic Usage

Figure 4.19 presents the proportions of SNS-tactics used by RNW and CWSJ. The figure shows that the two organizations have used similar tactics to get in touch with their Renren friends. As one message could contain more than one SNS-tactic, a message that has been coded with more than one SNS-tactic indicates that an organization is actively using (and maybe thinking about) the tactics available on Renren. More SNS-tactics using in one message, it can indicate a higher level of SNS-tactics has been applied in the message. As higher level of SNS-tactics usage might bring more interaction on the page, it is interesting to look at the level of SNS-tactic usage. The number of tactics used in one message has therefore been calculated by the 'level of SNS-tactics' variable. It has been calculated based on the total amount of SNS-tactics coded with each message. Following that a T-test has been applied to compare the means of RNW and CWSJ SNS-tactic usage. The result of this t-test ($T=6.431$, $Sig=0.012$) suggests that RNW more actively uses SNS-tactics in a message than CWSJ does (with means of respectively 2.20 and 1.86). This is again an indication of the higher involvement RNW has with its Renren friends.

Figure 4.19 the proportions of SNS-tactics used by RNW and CWSJ



Next, the SNS-tactics that are frequently used by RNW and CWSJ, have been separately compared, in an equal way as has been done with the activities. The SNS-tactics 'Provide in depth articles/reports' and 'Provide multi-media information' are the most frequently used tactics for both organizations. According to figure 4.19, RNW uses the SNS-tactic 'Provide in depth articles/reports' in 36 percent of SNS-tactics, while 35.5 percent of CWSJ's SNS-tactic usage belongs to this tactic. 'Provide multi-media information' as the second most used tactic covers 28 percent of RNW's tactics and 31 percent of CWSJ's. Those numbers are quite similar between the organizations. That observation is confirmed by the Z-tests for these two tactics (Provided in-depth articles/reports: $z= 0.133$, $p= 0.8942$; Provide multi-media information: $z= -0.758$, $p= 0.4485$). These findings thus suggest that these two tactics are equally important in the strategies of both organizations. This result is not surprising because both organizations are news agencies and their major 'products' are news articles and reports. Apparently, both organizations' marketers are fond of presenting their news products on Renren. A great amount of multi-media content information found in the messages suggests that both organizations pay some attention to increasing the variety of the content posted on SNSs. However, it is important to note that features meant to share multimedia information, such as the 'Photo' and 'Video' features, are barely used by the two organizations. Both organizations did not post any video and only one photo has been posted (paragraph 4.21 and 4.22). Therefore the question is raised here is: If the features that are meant for multi-media content have not been used, where did the organizations provide media information in stead?

One explanation is that many in-depth articles and reports include some kind of multi-media content. The crosstabulation table (table 4.20) shows that 42 out of 74 of the RNW's and 129 out of 380 of CWSJ's messages contained both SNS-tactics. Using this cross-tabulation the expected number of in-depth articles in which multi-media content would be expected has been compared to the actual count. In this way Chi-square values of $1.008E1$ ($p=0.002$) and $1.492E1$ ($p=0.00$) have been found for RNW and CWSJ respectively. These values indicate that 'in-depth articles' are indeed highly connected with providing multimedia information. This suggests that both organizations focus on providing in depth articles including some kind of multi-media content. Given their core business, it is interesting to find out that the news organizations not

only provide their pure text on the SNS but also pay attention to add multimedia content along with the articles and reports. This could be considered an important SNS-tactic for news organizations to better make use of the SNS 'multi-media' platform.

Table 4.20 Provide multi-media content and Provide in-depth reports/articles Crosstabulation

		Provide in-depth reports/articles		
		None	Yes	Total
Provide multi-media content (RNW)	None	11	17	28
	Yes	4	42	46
	Total	15	59	74
Provide multi-media content (CWSJ)	None	36	123	159
	Yes	92	129	221
	Total	128	252	380

The third most used SNS-tactic by RNW (12%) is 'Provide non-mainstream topics'. In the case of CWSJ (7%) 'Provide non-mainstream topics' is the fourth most used tactic. The Z-value that results from a comparison of the proportion of messages with non-mainstream topics ($Z=0.758$, $p=0.4485$) proves that two organizations pay similar attention to the SNS-tactic 'provide non-mainstream topics'. RNW and CWSJ, thus, both have the intention to leverage the user experience by publishing on topics that would normally not be encountered in traditional Chinese media (provide non-mainstream topics) to attract the users' attention. The usage rate of this tactic is still having space to improve. Nevertheless, the Chinese audience is rather conservative; over-exposure of taboo topics could therefore also bring contra-effects. From the experience of the researcher it seems that many comments to 'non-mainstream' message were negative (although the number has not explicitly been counted here).

Looking at the other SNS-tactics used by RNW and CWSJ (figure 4.19), the main difference in SNS-tactics used seems to be "Provide news bulletins." RNW did so in only two instances (which is equal to one percent of the cases) while CWSJ's news bulletins covered fifteen percent of all its messages. However it has been impossible to test the significance of this difference as RNW only included two cases. Therefore, it is hard to draw any concrete conclusion here.

4.55 SNS-usage by Friends

The use of the Renren pages by the two organizations' Renren friends is compared. As already stated in the beginning of this paragraph, there is a huge difference ($Z=27.387$, $p<0.0002$) in

terms of the proportion of messages that are posted by the RNW's and CWSJ's friends on the organizations' pages. The reason for this finding seems obvious: CWSJ has far more friends and should post a huge amount of messages themselves to make up for this large difference. Therefore the number of messages posted per friend has been compared by using a Z-test. In that way we can get a feel with the level of involvement of the friends on the page. It has been found in paragraph 4.1 that an average 0.11 messages are posted per RNW friend while each CWSJ friend posts an average number of 0.02 messages. The Z-test ($Z=15,263$, $p<0.0002$) has also proved the significant difference between the numbers of messages posted per friend. This result indicates that RNW holds a small amount of friends, though its friends are more active in posting messages on RNW's page than CWSJ's friends are. In other words, CWSJ holds a larger number of friends, but the proportion of 'sleeping friends' or inactive friends is accordingly larger than RNW. The amount of friends is apparently not connected with the page SNS-activity level. It suggests that a huge amount of friends does not guarantee a high level of SNS-activity performance. As mentioned before, the level of friends' SNS-activity usage could highly connect with the organizations' SNS-activity level. It seems likely that a high SNS-activity usage by the organization is likely to bring more active SNS friends on its page.

Based on this, a good SNS-strategy by the organization should also result in a more engaged public to talk to the organization (conversation from customers to the organization) and more conversations between users (conversation between users). The SNS-tactics employed by users have been compared to test this hypothesis. Of course users do not tempt to think about the way in which they use SNS-tactics, but the way they use the tactics could be deemed as a reflection to the use of SNSs by the organizations.

Firstly, the activity-level (number of tactics used per message) of the two groups of Renren friends SNS-tactics has been investigated using a T-test. Similar to the organization, the SNS-tactic used in one message has been accumulated. The T-test value ($T=0.057$, $p=0.811$) shows that the activity level of the two groups of users is not significantly different. A similar amount of SNS-tactics (around one per message) has been used by the two organizations' friend. In addition, Chi-square was used to find whether there is significant difference in the type of SNS-tactics used by both organizations' Renren friends. The p-value for the tactic 'Conversation from customers to organizations' is 0.356 along with a chi-square of 0.852. On the other hand, the 'Conversation between customers' measures a chi-square value of 0.848 ($p: 0.357$). According to the results, no difference has neither been found in the kinds of SNS-tactics used by Renren

friends. Thus, the hypothesis raised at the start of this paragraph is rejected. The differences in SNS-activities between the organizations have apparently not influenced the behaviour of users on its page in terms of communicating to the organization or between the customers themselves.

General speaking, the organizations' SNS-activity level may have affect on the total amount of activity conducted by friends but it does not necessarily influence Renren friends behaviour on its page by means of bringing more interaction with the organization or with other friends. Nevertheless, extra research would be necessary on this topic, because only two cases have been used here.

5 Conclusions and Discussions, Drawbacks, Further Research

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, conclusions will be drawn on how the two organizations make use of their Renren page. Similarities and differences in the way the organizations make use of Renren, will be pointed out based on the results from chapter four. While doing so, strengths and weaknesses of the organizations' Renren usage will be stressed, in line with the findings from chapter two. This will all be done to answer the research questions:

--What kinds of SNS-activities are being used by RNW and WSJ in their respective SNS strategies?

-- What are differences and similarities in the way RNW and WSJ marketers use Renren?

Next the results from the e-mail interview will be discussed to answer the final two research questions, namely:

-- How do international media corporations monitor SNS-activity in China?

--How does Chinese internet policy influence the use of SNSs?

To close the chapter, drawbacks of this study and suggestions for further research will be suggested.

5.2 Conclusions and Discussions

It has been pointed out in the beginning of chapter two that marketing has three main purposes: (1) to increase product awareness, (2) persuade people to purchase a product and remind the audience of the existence of your product (Kotler & Keller, 2007). The growth of Internet and the prevalence of SNSs have created new opportunities for marketers. SNSs are effortless and inexpensive to use and have the potential to easily reach the marketer's objectives by spreading a company image to millions of users at the same time. Thus there is no surprise that SNSs have started to become an important tool during the marketing process.

SNSs have not only gained their popularity in business, but have also attracted the attention from scholars, whom are looking at how organizations use social networks. A lot of research has been done by scholars on how marketers use popular SNSs, such as Facebook. From this research, it has been concluded in chapter two that marketers must firstly learn to look at users' motivation in using SNSs and find their preferred SNSs (Thackeray & Neiger, 2009). Next, marketers should not try to control the SNS-communication but try to influence it by using certain tools and tactics (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). This leads to the following conclusions: starting a conversation with customers is essential, however, marketers should also listen to their

customers and engage the users on SNSs. Marketers should use the SNSs and SNS-features that are preferred by its users. Through that feature they should provide high quality and valid information, but they should avoid spamming users. In addition, posting original or special content as well as providing multimedia information may attract more attention. Offering user exclusiveness could also help to leverage the SNS-marketing (Thackeray et al, 2008). Lastly, monitoring SNS-conversations is necessary for marketers, because it will help them to continuously develop the SNS-marketing impact.

Nevertheless, for countries such as China, limited studies have been conducted on this topic because of the closed internet environment. This paper is trying to bridge that gap by investigating how two international news organizations use one of the most popular Chinese SNSs: Renren. This research will also point out the good and bad points in using Renren and what organizations could improve in their SNS-strategy based on the SNS theories.

In chapter three, I first present the way in which the study has been executed. Firstly, two cases have been selected from Renren as they are the only two international news organizations that could be found on Renren by the time the research started. Secondly, a research method combined with content analysis and e-mail interviews has been performed to answer the major research question that were mentioned in paragraph 5.1. To perform the data analysis, three categories of data have been collected from the Renren pages of both organizations. General page information (Info, Profile, Customized page) and all the messages posted from Renren-features within in a three-month time period have been gathered. Extra information such as the number of friends and applications usage on page has also been taken into consideration. After the data collection, the first and third category data have been analysed qualitatively. Correspondingly, the second data category has been coded according to a designed coding table and analysed in a numeric way. The coding table has been developed based on the literature in the area of social media. It consists four major SNS-activities and 10 SNS-tactics (Table 2.1). All the messages have been coded in accordance with this categorization.

Moreover, an email interview has been conducted with the organizations' marketers. This interview has been aiming to dig into their purposes of using Chinese SNSs, the monitoring of their pages and the influence of Chinese internet policy on their behaviours.

After that, in chapter four, the results from the study are presented. In the remaining of this chapter, the result will be summarized and conclusions will be drawn based on those results and previous literature.

5.21 The use of Chinese SNSs Page Type

Firstly, through observation, it has been established that the two organizations have registered a different kind of presence on Chinese SNS- Renren. RNW has only been able to create a personal account. Such an account needs bilateral friendship confirmation and is not visible in the public page zone as a public page is. Thus a personal account needs to be searched for explicitly. A public page, used by CWSJ, does not need bilateral friendship confirmation and is visible in the public page zone. Reviewing the foregoing statements, it is expected that a marketer would commonly prefer a public page over a profile page because public page is fantastic for business development and could includes all the official announcements, links from a company (All & Armstrong, 2009; Treadaway & Smith, 2010). Interview results suggest that, even though RNW marketers are endeavouring to build a public page, Chinese SNSs are not enthusiastic about cooperating with international news organizations due to the internet policy in China. By allowing an organization to use a public page, Renren directly supports that organization to discourse in the Chinese public. Misuse of such a right (e.g. disclosure of information on sensitive topics) might therefore endanger the entire social network. Therefore Renren created a complex applying procedure, requiring an organization to follow a series of complicated procedures and to admit to strict regulations. By doing so, Renren could prevent their website from suffering unnecessary damage. However, it is very reasonable that, especially international news organizations are not always willing to life up to such rules. Though most companies prefer to create a fan page, a profile page might also be used for marketing purposes. Connecting the introduction of the Renren page function (paragraph 2.5) with the results from chapter four (paragraph 4.2), it can be concluded that the features on a public page are similar to those on a profile page, therefore, the SNS-activity employed on both pages could be very similar. From a 'functional viewpoint' the friends-page is no different from a public page.

Thus, although the functions are similar between the two pages, the different level of exposure on SNS and the way of creating SNS friendship (one-way or two-way) are still crucial in SNS-marketing. Therefore SNS-activity on the organizations' page could be totally different, this could lead to the conclusion that creating a public page is preferred over a profile page for an organization. Though, considering the Chinese policy, it seems very reasonable for international

news organizations such as RNW to create a profile page instead. International news organizations in general should therefore evaluate their dedication to operate in China, based on that they may chose between a public page or a profile page.

5.22 The use of Chinese SNS-feature

This paragraph looks first at the features that are used to present general profile information on a SNS. Then it will elaborate the features that used to post messages. It can be seen that RNW did not do any change to its profile page while CWSJ customized its own page-design in accordance with its official website. 'Customization' as one of the most popular and powerful features on SNSs allowing user to create a very unique web page with its own look and rich media content (Safko & Brake, 2009). An SNS-page with the organizations' owns 'look' allows the user to recognize an organization on SNS more easily. With the unique 'look', the recognisability of the organization will be increased. Thus, as Renren provides a customization function on both the profile page and the public page, RNW could still make use of this function to create its own unique page and increase its recognisability among users.

Moreover, based on the analyses in chapter two, it turns out that RNW provides more additional information about the organization itself in Renren's 'Profile' and 'Info' sections, while the information showed on CWSJ's public page is more authentic. Providing extra company information can bring users closer to the organization, but providing untruthful information easily destroys the organization's accountability on SNS (Mangod & Faulds, 2009; Lewis, 2009;). In addition, previous literature on SNS recommends a consistent profile picture and relevant and truthful information, in order to increase the accountability of the organization's page (Zarrella, 2009:105). RNW did add additional 'words' from the editors, which may accommodate a closer connection with its friends by triggering more attention. However the untruthful information filled on its profile page, such as its establishment date and current location, might lead users to serious doubts on the Renren page's accountability. The incorrect information may lead users to believe that the profile page is not an official organization's page but a page created by its fans. CWSJ did a better job in this sense. The information that CWSJ posted on its page is consistent with the information on the organizational website and has been confirmed to be truthful and relevant.

It would be wise for RNW marketers to adjust the SNS-account information. Such will help to

build a more valuable account and develop a trustable reputation among users. It will also make users more receptive to the organizations' stories (Zarrella, 2009: 105). CWSJ marketers may pay more attention to provide 'inside information' to its SNS friends, as it would help to build a tighter relationship with its friends.

Next, a remarkable finding of this research is the small number of features that are used by both organizations in order to reach their SNS goals of (1) generating more traffic to the official website and/or (2) attracting a new audience. Chapter four reveals that the two organizations share a similar strategy in SNS-feature usage characterized by focusing on one or two features while they have many other choices on the SNSs. Paragraph 4.5 established that the organizations post the same type of messages but chose different features to do so (RNW mainly uses 'Diary' while CWSJ mostly uses the 'Links' feature). RNW marketers that have been approached to participate in this research have pointed out that their main purpose for using Renren is to access more readers and establish the readers' loyalty to RNW. CWSJ marketers, on the other hand, indicated to focus more on increasing the amount of traffic to their official news website. With these different intentions in mind, it is not hard to rationalize the feature-choices the companies have made.

In addition, using the 'Diary' RNW is able to provide long text and multi-media sources to its readers on Renren. In chapter two we have found that the diary is the preferred feature to provide detailed and in-depth information. Moreover, messages posted in the diary will be directly readable and shareable by Renren friends, making it the easiest way to reach a new public. The links feature, which is used a lot by CWSJ is indeed more suitable to direct Internet traffic from Renren to your own website. By using the 'Links' feature, you are likely to catch the readers' attention and increase the number of page views on your own website, just by the number of clicks that will be generated on the link. However, the disadvantage of this feature, especially in China, is that links might not always be accessible. Once the official page is not reachable (e.g. following governmental interventions), all the links that have been posted on Renren will not be reachable neither. The diary feature contains a self-censorship tool to prevent such government intervention. Therefore, it seems like that 'Diary' and 'Links' are both good features for international news organizations to use on Chinese SNSs. With different intentions and expectations, international organizations' marketers could choose to use either the 'Diary' or 'Links' feature. A 'Diary' message could include long and in-depth information as well as customized text format and multimedia content. More important, it can prevail and be shared by

friends on Renren for a long time. Using 'Links' could bring traffic from the social websites to the official page but the information can suddenly be unreachable as the link page might be blocked by the Chinese censor system. To sum up: RNW and CWSJ, have clearly chosen their preferred SNS-feature, which is easy to make sense of. However, the question that might be raised here is: why that could not go along with using the other possible tools at the SNS? It has been pointed out in chapter two that the best ways to use Facebook include a strategy that goes beyond the use of a single application. The use of several applications will allow people to communicate and interact with their friends more often (Zarrella, 2009). It has also been pointed out that the Facebook feature 'Photo' is a very popular feature that is used and shared by a great amount of friends (Zarrella, 2009). As Renren has similar or even more SNS-features comparing to the other international SNSs, both organizations marketers could consider to increase the variety of features they are using and explore the advantages that could be brought by other features such as 'Application' or 'Photo'. For example, they could consider uploading pictures such as 'news pictures of the week' or post some status containing the organization culture or other items that they might consider 'funny' or 'remarkable'.

5.23 The use of Chinese SNS-activity

As for the organizations' SNS performance, the results from chapter four show that the organizations' SNS-activity performance is different from its page performance (both organization and friends' SNS-performance on a page). In general, a CWSJ post more messages per day, thus, are more active on Renren than RNW. In paragraph 4,5, It has also statistically been proved that CWSJ is using the SNS-activity 'Provide' much more often than RNW, while RNW, on the other hand, is more likely to 'Listen and Engage' with its friends. As for the other two SNS-activities, the two organizations use them in a similar way.

In other words, more news information, such as links, is posted by CWSJ. As stated before: that this is not surprising. CWSJ is a larger organization that could easily employ more people to gather news items and maintain the SNS. However, a lot of researchers simultaneously believe that frequently maintaining and updating an SNS-page is essential in a SNS strategy (All & Armstrong, 2009; Holzner, 2008). Communicating with customers on a regular, daily, cadence could help attract friends in a subtle and subconscious way and affect the consumer's perception of a company (see: paragraph 2.4), Therefore, daily page maintenance could bring marketing benefits to an organization, A lot of involvement is required from within the organization to

reach the same results on RNW's friends page as on CWSJ's public page, if such is possible. The 0.8 messages per day that have been reported in chapter four are clearly too little in that sense. There is still space for RNW to improve in terms of the total amount of the information that is provided on the SNS. It should however be noted here, that a thick line exists between providing sufficient information and spamming friends. International news organizations' marketers should be aware of this and always post valuable, relevant and authentic.

Nevertheless, RNW does a better job in terms of listening and interacting with its friends. According to Thackeray and Neiger (2009), the first step for marketers to adapt to the SNS communication model is to listen to the users' needs. Sending desired messages provided in preferred formats could help to enhance the communication. In addition, starting conversation and engage with the customers could trigger the user to get familiar with the brand or the company and talk about it (All & Armstrong, 2009). RNW seems to realise this better than CWSJ does. The results of this study even indicate that it works for them: as RNW friends seem to be more actively posting messages on their Renren pages than CWSJ friends do. RNW does hold a larger proportion of active friends whom are willing to post messages on its page than CWSJ does. In conclusion, as communication on SNSs is two-way, the more organizations like RNW and CWSJ communicate and interact with their friends the more reactions and involvement they are likely to gain from those friends.

The other two SNS-activities (Leverage and monitoring) are used more or less the same by the two organizations. This suggests that RNW and CWSJ pay similar attention to these two activities. Nevertheless, according to the frequency of the SNS-activities usage, a 'Leverage' strategy has been used far more often than a 'Monitor' strategy. In chapter two, it has been pointed out that making use of 'Leverage (provide non-mainstream topics, multimedia content, exclusiveness)' can largely attract user's attention, facilitate and enrich the communication (Thackeray et al., 2008). This suggests that both organizations have also clearly considered the topic and the format of the news, and what kind of extra information should be included when they post a message. Both organizations' marketers intend to make better use of SNSs by focusing more on the message content they are posting on SNS. This is a great strategy for international news organizations to use. Apart from the organizations' main business of posting popular news items, it will be very helpful to drag some of the users' attention and force a discussion.

The monitor activities are an important strategy to keep organizations having continuous

development on SNSs and avoid negative conversations about the organization (Safko & Brake, 2009:44). Nevertheless, it has been found that both organizations use this activity very limited. As the activity is essential for evaluating and developing an organizations' SNS-performance improvement, it would be advisable to both organizations to pay more attention to monitoring the SNS. . Paragraph 5,26 "Monitor Chinese SNS" will elaborate more extensively on this issue.

5.24 The use of Chinese SNS-tactics

Chapter four has shown that SNS-tactics usage is very similar between the two organizations. The comparison study in chapter four suggests that both RNW and CWSJ are fond to use two tactics: 'provide in-depth news articles and reports' and 'provide multi-media information'. The outcome on the first tactic is not so surprising. The 'main product' of both organizations is news articles however; it is a bit surprising that 'provide multimedia information' tactic has been used a lot especially considering that features that are specially meant for uploading multi-media content have not been used.

Carrying such a doubt, the comparison study has found the answer: one of the main SNS-tactics used by both organizations is to add multi-media content to in-depth articles that they have posted. Thackeray and Neiger (2009) state that providing multi-media information as a SNS-tactic could enrich the content, facilitate the communication, and leverage the WMD-effect (see: paragraph 2.31). It seems like both organization did a good job on posting news message with more visible attraction. Doing so, could help international news organization to enrich the content variety and save readers from general news "aesthetical fatigue".

Nevertheless, a diary including multi-media content has a different objective from these files typically uploaded in the 'Picture' and 'Video' areas on Renren. Whereas marketers at RNW and CWSJ might aim to increase the visibility of an article by adding a picture or video, uploading a stand-alone picture or video, offering diverse content, might really attract different groups of users. Direct uploading pictures or videos certainly gives rise to a stronger visual impact to user. Given RNW's objective of attracting different groups, such might be especially interesting to this organization.

Moreover, the results from chapter four show that the two organizations indeed paid a similar amount, but limited, attention to posting special and original news. As the percentages are neither high nor low compared to other SNS-tactics, it can be concluded that both organizations

pay some, but not a lot attention, to those topics. Therefore it can be said that, international news organizations in China do try to provide some taboo topics on SNSs that are not well known or not commonly seen in the media. However, they still did not forget their major business: providing mainstream information and normal news topics. The usage of this tactic is deemed as a desirable practice. It can be concluded from chapter two that providing special and original news could attract more attention and help marketers to leverage their business (Thackeray et al., 2008; Himmelsbach, 2008). This tactic could be well used by international news organization to attract Chinese readers' attention on SNSs. As mentioned before, the Chinese internet environment is very closed and the content has been highly censored. Fresh and unique news information that comes from the 'outside world' will surely arouse Chinese reader's interest. Nevertheless, one thing still cannot be neglected: as Chinese users are not used to be surrounded by taboo information, through my observation, those topics normally come along with critics. It is thus important to be careful.

Furthermore, the last tactics discussed in this report is "provide customer exclusiveness". Based on the results from chapter four, RNW uses this tactic only in three percent of the cases while only seven percent of the messages sent by CWSJ include some kind of exclusiveness. Clearly, there is also a lot of space for both organizations to increase their use of the SNS-tactic "provide customer exclusiveness". The feeling of exclusiveness can give the user a very positive opinion about the organization and therefore, improve the organizations' image. It seems that both organizations underestimate the impact that a feeling of exclusiveness could have on customer's impression of the organization.

5.25 Chinese SNS-usage by Friends

The attention will now turn from the SNS-usages of the organizations to the behaviour of its friends. The comparison of the Chinese SNS-usage by friends suggests that the amount of friends is not linearly connected to the total quantity of messages posted by friends. But the level of an organizations' SNS-activity does trigger more friends to leave a message on its page. This has again proved that the more active an organization makes use of SNS-activity to interact, the more actively its friends engage. In conclusion, as communication on SNSs is two-way, the more organizations like RNW and CWSJ communicate and interact with their friends the more reactions they are likely to gain from those friends. However, more reaction to the SNS-activity does not automatically mean more direct 'talk' to the organization or to other friends. It has been

found that even though RNW friends posted more comments than CWSJ's friends, their SNS-tactic usage is the same. The two groups of friends hold no differences in terms of communicating with the organization or other user. As mentioned in paragraph 2.3, marketers can shape the online conversation by encouraging customers to exchange experiences, give more comments and interact with the organization and users (Constantinides & J.Fountain, 2007; Thackeray & Neiger, 2009). It seems like RNW and CWSJ only 'shape' the conversation to a limited extent. The amount of comments from CWSJ is larger than the amount of comments by RNW but the interaction between friends and the organization and between friends mutually is identical. For upcoming scholars it would therefore be interesting to look at what the friends' comment about and what could be done to increase the interaction.

5.26 Monitor Chinese SNSs

The monitoring strategy has been the final strategy considered during the content analysis. To support the conclusion on the monitoring strategy of RNW and CWSJ an e-mail interview has been carried out. This interview has shown that both organizations monitor their pages to some extent. However, the interview results indicate that they do so whenever they feel free rather than periodically (daily, weekly or monthly). Thus, it is barely possible for both organizations to monitor the impact of their own efforts on the SNS pages. Additionally the marketers have indicated in the e-mail interview that they try to read all the comments that have been directed to them. For RNW that means they read (almost) everything. If we, following that, judge the number of reactions and comments that the organizations post (the 'monitor rates' from paragraph 4.3), it seems that they most often do not react after reading messages on their wall.

Additionally, Renren does not offer metrics such as page views like Facebook does (Treadaway & Smith, 2010), the possibilities to monitor on Renren are therefore more limited. Basically, next to the monitoring tools (described in paragraph 2.32) only the friends count can be used by the two organizations.

Monitoring could be used to find out which features are preferred by the users and what kind of information they desire most (Thackeray & Neiger, 2009). CWSJ marketers are paying attention to the user engagement on each posted message. By ranking message topics on engagement rates, CWSJ-marketers are able to find the preferred topics of their users. Accordingly, the marketers will dedicate more time to these topics that rank high. In general, looking beyond the semi-opened environment of Chinese SNS, both organizations should devote more time to systematically monitor their SNS page in order to continuously improving their SNS-usage. But

organizations that plan to engage on Chinese SNS should be aware that monitoring of activity is not as easy as it seems to be on, for example, Facebook. The risk of negative publicity and especially the extent in which this risk can be controlled is therefore limited on Renren,

5.27 Internet policy Influence on Chinese SNS

Finally, the Chinese internet policy has fairly affected the use of Renren by the two organizations. The first influence is the difficulty for international organizations to operate (and most significant for this research: create a public page) in China, as has been mentioned earlier in this report. Next, even though organizations are free to use all the functions on Renren, all the content posted by the organizations has been censored highly by the Renren self-censor system, facing the danger of being blocked by the system. In other words, International news organization could not post all the information on Chinese SNSs. But once the message has been uploaded, it normally will not be blocked. Therefore, the Chinese internet policy did not stop the organizations from using Renren. Both organizations chose to cope with the difficulties and continue to market themselves in China through Renren.

In conclusion, it seems like Chinese SNSs do have their limitations in terms of the content that can be available, the restraint on building a public page and the corporation between the Chinese SNS companies and the international news organizations. However, it can not be neglected that Chinese SNSs have gained some popularity in China and hold a giant amount of users. More important, Chinese SNSs share similar functionality or hold more features than other popular SNSs.

As the pioneers to enter the Chinese SNSs, the two international organizations that have been researched both seem to have their strengths and weaknesses considering the way they use Chinese SNSs. Moreover each strength could possibly complement with a weakness, from the other organization. RNW has a low frequency in terms of using its profile page, however, it has a higher level of SNS-activity usage that indicates a higher number of tactics used per message. The actively using SNS-activities and SNS-tactics has seemed directing to a group of active SNS-friends who are willing to take action on SNS. CWSJ, on the other hand, owns a massive number of friends who are more frequently posts messages but not really interact with the organization or other friends on its public page. Nevertheless, both its SNS-activity by which means the tactic-usage per message is lower than RNW. Its SNS-friends base is huge, but those

friends are sort of invisible. Without really interactive friends, the SNS is another platform that an international news organization could provide its news items. Chinese SNSs are no different from a normal corporate website in this case. International news organizations' marketers pay more attention on the important nature of SNSs 'interaction'. By increasingly using SNS-strategies such interactive applications and features usage, offer extra company information and exclusiveness as well as systematic monitoring the SNS-marketing result et al., could surely increase the interaction and amplify the SNS-marketing effect. In this way, international news organization may spread information to millions of Chinese audience.

5.2 Drawbacks

The conclusions from the study have been set out in paragraph 5.1. Although the study has resulted in some interesting findings, there are also some limitations to the research that we have to keep in mind. Those limitations will be described here.

The first drawback of this study is a limitation on the research design and case selection. Based on the fact that only two international news organizations had created their presence on Renren at the moment the research took off, there has not been much choice in terms of selecting the best cases for this study. As a result, the two selected organizations have great differences in terms of size and in number of supporters and SNS-activities. Such differences have made it hard to perform a high-standard comparison. Of course such differences also come with an advantage: the research has shed light on two entirely different worlds that have their own (interesting) characteristics. But in order to really come up with a advise, a more focussed case selection would have been preferred. In addition, it is hard to generalize the conclusions in a research when there are only two cases. Therefore, if it is possible, more cases should be selected in order to generalize the findings and make it more meaningful.

The topic of research has not been researched much before. Therefore this report has an explosive character. It has described the Chinese internet policy and the way in which international news operations use SNSs in such an environment. A case study design is the right design to perform a research with such an explosive character. Though to really establish and describe the best strategy available on SNS a more in-depth research would be required.

Secondly, the whole research has been taken place in a Chinese environment. Therefore readers

should keep in mind that it is hard to generalize the findings and use them in other situations. Partly because the Chinese market is rather special due to the government policies, it is hard to judge. However societal culture takes an important roll here.

Thirdly, no research has especially been dedicated to Renren yet. Therefore research from other SNSs, such as Facebook, have been used a benchmark. Such an approach has been chosen because Renren shares many characteristics with Facebook and moreover: before Facebook was blocked in China it has also been a very popular SNS in that market. Nevertheless, Renren and Facebook may look very similar and the use of these two pages might be interchangeable. The other SNSs in China may look entirely different and thus, could be used totally different. Whether the usage of Renren could be applied to other Chinese SNS is still a subject to proof.

Fourthly, a three-month research window has been chosen. Although that might be satisfactory for the purposes of this research, especially considering constraints in terms of time, a longer time frame might lead to more reliable conclusions.

Fifthly, Renren does not allow an analysis on the use of a 'Like'-button such as Facebook does. Therefore it has been hard to measure the impact of different message types, strategies and tactics. If 'Like'-button-information would have been available it could have been very helpful and interesting in assessing the effectiveness of strategies.

Furthermore, the purpose of this study has never been to analyse content of posted messages. It did only analyse frequencies. Especially considering the huge amount of user-activity on the public page, it is interesting to look at the topics Renren friends' discussed on the organization's Renren page and how the organization has reacted.

5.3 Further research

This paper intends to find out how two international news organizations make use of Renren and what the similarities and differences are from a macro perspective. It has been the intention to describe two strategies on Chinese SNS-activity and SNS-tactics usage.

However, it has been impossible to find two equally-sized cases for the research period at hand, that hold the same type of account: for example two public pages. As more and more

international organizations have marched into Renren, a comparison study between same size cases could now be conducted. This could help to reduce the size-difference influence in this research and to find more in-depth conclusions on what the similarities and differences in terms of Renren usage could be by large organizations. By comparing this, more findings could be discovered in terms of what SNS-activities and SNS-tactics have made one organization better than the other.

Moreover, it can be seen from this research that both organizations only used limited SNS-features although there are a great amount SNS-tools that could be used on Renren. It would be interesting to investigate why the two organizations did only use very few SNS-features and what other SNS-features and SNS-functions on Renren could be explored to help the organizations reach their marketing purposes on SNSs.

Furthermore, as there is a huge amount of user comments on Renren, it would be interesting to carry out a qualitative study on the content of posted message to look at the themes of Renren conversations. What subjects do the organizations and their friends 'talk' about on Renren. Even more: what subjects do attract the most attention.

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7 Appendix

7.1 Appendix A -Code Book

Data Codebook: International Media Organizations' OSN usage in China

I. Coding Sheet

Sector one: General Information

- (1) Message ID
- (2) Date
- (3) Message Type
- (4) Post By

Sector two: OSN-activity Provide

- (5) Provide news bulletins
- (6) Provide in-depth news reports/articles
- (7) Provide relevant information about the organization

Sector three: OSN-activity Listen and Engage

- (8) Conversation from Customers to Organizations (Listen)
- (9) Conversation from Organizations to Customers (Engage)
- (10) Conversation between Customers (Engage)

Sector Four: OSN-activity Leverage

- (11) Provide non-mainstream topics
- (12) Provide multimedia content
- (13) Provide customer exclusiveness

Sector Five: OSN-activity Monitor

- (14) Monitor conversation

II. Coding instructions

General Coding Regulations:

This research intends to find out how RNW and CWSJ make use of Renren features, OSN-activities and OSN-tactics. By comparing the result of the coding, it is interesting to find out what the differences and similarities are in the ways in which RNW and CWSJ use Renren. Considering there is no one universal answer in this line of research, this paper is to provide insight in the use of Renren by the two international news organizations. All results need to be conducted by means of objective and persistent coding by the coder.

When the coder starts to code, she will code based on the designed coding sheet. Within the coding sheet, there are five sectors that have been designed for this research. Throughout the coding process, the coder needs to stick to the variable definitions.

The message type and length, the message title and the content will be observed. The type of message will be coded based on the message formats, as they will be introduced later on. The length will be judged based on word count. Regarding the coding of the content, coder should stick as much as possible to the title of each message. If the message title is ambiguous, the coder may need to have a close look at the complete text in the message or click the link to browse the full text on another website.

The coding process needs to be unbiased; otherwise it may affect the validity of the research. If a message is hard to code based on the regulations and definitions, it will be coded as “undecided”. However, this category will not be used until it is really hard to make a coding decision.

Coding will be electronically because all the data will be electronic.

Coding procedures:

There are five sectors in the coding sheet. The first sector is the general information of the message, which requires giving each message an ID number, to look at who and when the message has been posted and lastly the type of the message. All these information will be easily recognized as it is in front of each message title. Starting from the second sector, the coder needs to closely evaluate the message length, headline and text.

Core Data Elements

Sector Name	Length	Description	Valid Values/Definitions
Message ID	5	Every message that has been collected processing an ID number.	Valid value range: 0 - 9999
Date	8	The date that message was posted.	MM-DD-YYYY format Valid value range: Aug-01-2010 – Nov-01-2010
Message Type	1	All messages collected from “Renren-Wall” belonging to which message format.	1-Status 2-Links 3-Comments 4-React 5-Diaries 6-Photos 7-Vdieos

Sector Name	Length	Description	Valid Values/Definitions
Post By		Which party posts the message on the Renren page	1-Renren user from RNW's profile page 2-RNW 3-Renren user from WCSJ 's public page 4-WCSJ
<i>OSN-activity Provide</i>			
1-Provide news bulletins	1	A Message used the OSN-tactic "provide news bulletins" (<500 words)	0- None 1-Yes
2-Provide in-depth news reports/articles	1	A Message used the OSN-tactic "provide in-depth news reports/articles" (>500 words)	0- None 1-Yes
3-Provide relevant information about the organization	1	A Message used the OSN-tactic "provide relevant information about the organization"	0- None 1-Yes
<i>OSN-activity Listen and Engage</i>			
1-Conversation from Customers to Organizations (Listen)	1	A Message that is a "Conversation" starting from a customer to an organization.	0- None 1-Yes
2-Conversation from Organizations to Customers (Engage)	1	A Message that is a "Conversation" starting from an organization to a customer.	0- None 1-Yes
3-Conversation between Customers	1	A Message that is a "Conversation" between customers.	0- None 1-Yes
<i>OSN-activity Leverage</i>			
1-Provide non-mainstream topics		A Message includes the topic that is considered as taboo topic.	0- None 1-Yes 2- Undecided
2-Provide multimedia content		A message includes multimedia content.	0- None 1-Yes
3-Provide customer exclusiveness		A message provides extra information that could not be retrieved from the organizations' official website or any other place or message offers direct communication from the editors or other employee.	0- None 1-Yes 2- Undecided
<i>OSN-activity Monitor</i>			
Monitor conversation	1	The message that is a "React" from an organization to a customer.	0-None 1-Yes

Sector Name: Actual variable name as found in dataset

Length: Length of sector as stored in dataset

Description: Full explanation of sector

Valid Values and Value Definitions: Code stored in database followed by full definition of code value

The following paragraphs offer more specific instructions to each variable:

General Information Sector

(1) Message ID

Each message is required to have a message ID. It will start with 1 and all the following numbers will continue in sequence (e.g. 1,2,3,4...).

(2) Date

Insert the date that appeared underneath each message. The computer will adjust in mm/dd/yyyy format (i.e.08/05/2010).

(3) Message Type

Seven types of message will be collected from the organization's Renren-wall. A 'wall' is a place where the actual communication between social network users takes place. It is probably the most important part of the whole social network as it is the place where a user of Renren presents him or herself and communicates with others. Participants can share all kinds of information through the wall. Those are: status updates, links, comments, reacts, diaries, photos and videos. Each message that is collected for the purpose of this research will be labelled one to seven, indicating its type. The distinction between the different types of messages on Renren's wall can be recognized through the format of the message on a wall. Below the seven different formats are set out.

3.1 Status updates

A status update can only be posted by the organization itself, not by other users. The format of a status update as it appears on the wall is: "[ORGANIZATION]: [MESSAGE]" (e.g. RNW: HELLO, EVERYONE). A status message might also contain a link (Figure 2). However as long as the message comes in this format (e.g. "[ORGANIZATION]: [MESSAGE]") it should be recognized as a status update. The next section explains how to recognize a link.

Figure 2: Status message with a link

**3.2 Link**

A link can be posted by both users and organizations. It is a message that is directly referring to another website. Links can be recognized through the following format on Renren's wall "[USER NAME] shared a Link [LINK TITLE]" (e.g. "RNW shared a link

THE RISE OF CHINA”).

3.3 Diary

A diary message can only be posted by organizations. Such a message can be recognized from the wall as it comes in the following format: “[USER NAME] published a ‘Diary’ [DIARY TITLE]”.

3.4 Picture

A picture can be posted both by a user and organizations. It comes into the following format “[USER NAME] uploads a ‘Picture’ [PICTURE TITLE]”. If a group of pictures is uploaded in an album, it will be counted as one message.

3.5 Video

A video can only be posted by organizations. It comes into the following format “[USER NAME] uploads a ‘Video’ [VIDEO TITLE]”.

3.6 Comment

A “comment” can be posted both by a Renren user or organizations. It by definition appears below another message, which can be any type of message (e.g. status updates, links etc.). Users generally use it to give their opinion on a prior message.

When the comment has been made to for example a status update, it could be recognized through the following format:

“[ORGANIZATION]: [MESSAGE]

[USER NAME/ORGANIZATION] [DATE/TIME]

[MESSAGE CONTENT]”

3.7 React

A “react” can be posted both by a Renren user or organizations. It differs from comments because reacts involve discussion while a comment is a single opinion. Moreover, a “react” requires a user to click on the ‘React’ button at the right side of a “comment”.

It appears in the format

“*[USER NAME/ORGANIZATION] [DATE/TIME]*
Reacts to [USER NAME/ORGANIZATION] [MESSAGE CONTENT]”

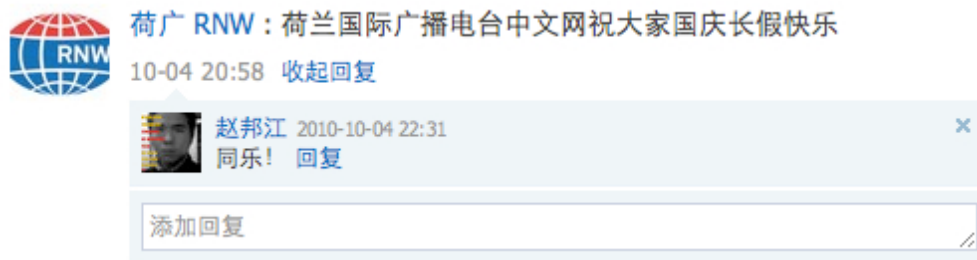
Figure 1: Formats of each message type

Number	Type	Format
1	Status	[ORGANIZATION]: [MESSAGE]
2	Links	[USER NAME] shared a Link [LINK TITLE]
3	Diary	[USER NAME] published a ‘Diary’ [DIARY TITLE]
4	Photo	[USER NAME] uploads a ‘Picture’ [PICTURE TITLE]
5	Video	[USER NAME] uploads a ‘Video’ [VIDEO TITLE]
6	Comments	[USER NAME/ORGANIZATION] [DATE/TIME] [MESSAGE CONTENT]
7	Reacts	[USER NAME/ORGANIZATION] [DATE/TIME] reacts to [USER NAME/ORGANIZATION] [MESSAGE CONTENT]

(4) Post by

All the messages collected will show the account’s profile picture on the left side and the account name on up right side next to the profile picture (figure 3). The posting person can be identified by the user name. As two cases will be studied during the research (Radio Netherlands Worldwide, RNW and Wall Street Journal Chinese, CWSJ), ‘Post by’ can only take four values: 1= Renren user on RNW’s profile page, 2=RNW, 3=Renren user on CWSJ’s public page and 4=CWSJ. Coder only needs to identify if the message is coming from one of these parties and fill in the number accordingly.

Figure 3: A message posted by RNW



Sector two: OSN-activity Provide

(5) Provide news bulletins

News organizations can provide short messages or a long in-depth article or a report to analysis a current event. Both of these can be called news (selected information commenting on current events). However, a short message intends to provide a quick view about an event and to get audiences be notified about it. An article or report on the other hands, intends to provide in-depth opinions on an event and to share writer's thoughts with the audiences. Different format of news posted on Renren could indicate different purposes of the marketers. This is why this research makes a distinction between news bulletins and articles or reports.

Generally speaking, news bulletins are giving quick view while articles are giving in-depth information. But to make a well-established distinction in the coding process, the words will be counted as well. News bulletins can not be longer than 500 words. Normally, news bulletins only contain one or two paragraphs which would equal to two to three hundred words. By choosing five hundred words as the boundary value, it can be sure that all news bulletins will be considered. Moreover, news articles or reports are commonly count far over 500 words. Therefore, these two categories should be satisfying as there will not be any doubt concerning the differences in length between news bulletins and news articles or reports.

If a message contains news and the length is less than 500 words, it will be coded as "Yes". If the message is not containing any news or the length is longer than 500 words, coded it as "No". There will be two choices to put in the coding sheet: 0=No, 1=Yes.

In the meanwhile, if a link does not contain any text but a "picture" or "video", it will be coded as "provide news bulletins (=1)". This because "picture" and "video" are offers a

visual material of a news event, and they are unlikely to offer an in-depth view on a news event.

(6) Provide in-depth news reports/articles

Generally, the length of an article or a report is far more than 500 words. Therefore, if a message contains in-depth information and the length is more than 500 words, the coder will judge it is a news article or a report coded “Yes” in this section. If the message is not containing in-depth information or the length is less than 500 words, it will be coded as “No”. There will be two choices to put in the coding sheet: 0=No, 1=Yes.

(7) Provide relevant information about the organization

If a message is posted by an organization and contains any information related to the organization or to the people who work for the organization, it will be coded as “Yes” (E.g. launch a new service, introduce an activity, introduce editors from the organization, and explain a situation related to the organization). If the message does not contain any information related to the organization, it will be coded as “No”. Coder can code the message: 0=No, 1=Yes.

Sector three: OSN-activity Listen and Engage

(8) Conversation from Customers to Organizations (Listen)

The ultimate goal of an organization using social networks is to attract attention. The study measures to what magnitude the organization succeeds to attract this attention and to what extents it want to listen or even engage in such discussions. First of all messages will be counted that indicate engagement by users.

Comments and reactions are the types of messages that could indicate engagement of users. If a user comments or reacts to an organization’s message it will be labelled as “a conversation” starting from a customer to an organization (Conversation from Customers to Organizations =1). If none of the situation is fitted, it will be coded as no (Conversation from Customers to Organizations =0).

To align this to paragraph 3.6 and 3.7 (on comments and reactions), this variable could take the following two forms:

“[USER NAME] [DATE/TIME]
[MESSAGE CONTENT]”

Or

“[USER NAME] [DATE/TIME]
Reacts to [ORGANIZATION] [MESSAGE CONTENT]”

There will be two choices to put in the coding sheet: 0=No, 1=Yes.

(9) Conversation from Organizations to Customers (Engage)

Next to the engagement of the user, we want to know to what extent the organization itself is listening. To be able to do so we will look if an organization is commenting or reacting to a message from a user. Ideally content of the conversation would also be taken into account. Is it a conversation on products, complaints, promotions etc? However due to time constraints it has been decided to keep it to an objective measurement of the extent in which the conversation takes place.

“Conversation from organizations to customers” stands for a comment or a react that posted by RNW or CWSJ. It would be an interesting topic for other scholars to study what kinds of topics are most discussed online.

If a message is a “comment” and it is posted by the organization or the message is a “react” and it is posted by the organization, the message will be coded as “Yes”(=1). Otherwise, it will be coded as “No”(=0). There will be two choices to put in the coding sheet: 0=No, 1=Yes.

To align this to paragraph 3.6 and 3.7 (on comments and reactions), this variable could take the following two forms:

“[ORGANIZATION] [DATE/TIME]
[MESSAGE CONTENT]”

Or

“[ORGANIZATION] [DATE/TIME]
reacts to [USER NAME] [MESSAGE CONTENT]”

(10) Conversation between Customers (Engage)

Of course a social network could also create a ‘community feeling’. It connects

customers of the same product or service. The third type of conversation is one that points at such a community.

“Conversation between customer to customer” stands for one Renren user reacting to another user's comment. If a message is a “react” posted by a Renren user and it is a message replying to another Renren user will be coded as “Yes”. Otherwise, it will be coded as “No”. There will be two choices to put in the coding sheet: 0=No, 1=Yes.

To align this to paragraph 3.7 (on reacts), this variable could take the following format:

“[USER NAME X] [DATE/TIME]
reacts to [USER NAME Y] [MESSAGE CONTENT]”

Note that: as a user's comment does not (by definition) imply a comment to another user, only reacts will be counted here.

Sector Four: OSN-activity Leverage

(11) Provide non-mainstream topics

Till now we have talked about different types of message. The ‘leverage part’ of the research goes one step further. Does the organization try to attract attention by sharing intriguing information? Do they use multi-media content to enrich their message? And/or do they provide special privileges to users?

Non-mainstream information is indicating the information that is not normally seen on the Chinese media. Because it is “new” for the Chinese reader, it is more likely to intrigued people to read it. Therefore, a message that includes information that is not well known or not commonly seen on the Chinese news media is defined as “non-mainstream” topics. The non-mainstream topics are most time deem as the taboo topics: Drugs, Homosexual, Pornography, Prostitution, Euthanasia, Political prisoners, Criticism Chinese political system, Criticism Chinese economic system, Criticism the newest Chinese policy; Analysis US economic policy towards China.

A message contains “non-mainstream topics”, such as a taboo topic in China or not well known by Chinese reader will be coded “Yes”. Otherwise, it will be coded as “No”. There will be two choices to put in the coding sheet: 0=No, 1=Yes.

If a coder find it is hard to define whether the message contains one of the topics mentioned before, it should be coded as “2 (undecided)”.

(12) Provide multimedia content

This variable only goes for the organization, as we are interested in the way they use the OSN. So for all the messages that have been shared by the organization, it will be checked if the message contains at least one of the following multi-media items: photos, animation, audio, video. If so this variable should be coded as “Yes”. Otherwise, it should be coded as no. There will be two choices to put in the coding sheet: 0=No, 1=Yes.

(13) Provide customer exclusiveness

Again we are only looking at message shared by the organization. If a message is providing extra information that could not be retrieved from the organizations' official website or offers direct communication from the editors or other employee, this variable will be coded as “Yes”. For example, the following situations are commonly be considered as “provide customer exclusiveness”: organization asks for comments from Renren users, -answers user's questions, -launches a new services, -shares holiday wishes, -explains a situation related to the organization (e.g. website crush down or website has been blocked).

The coding is ideally based on a clear distinction between those types of messages. Therefore if there would be any ambiguity as of the content of the message it should be coded as ‘undecided’ (=2).

Sector Five: OSN-activity Monitor**(14) Monitor conversation**

Monitoring can be done in numerous ways: e.g. by ‘monitor’ the number of friends, by looking at the page views directed from the social media to the companies official page, by checking the reliability of several sources. It is hard to observe such elements directly from the OSN activity. Therefore a questionnaire has been launched to company marketers.

The ‘Listen and Engage’ variables mentioned before could though give some direction to

the extent in which a company monitors online activity. It can be assumed that if an organization that monitors online conversation, it would also react to users more often. Therefore as an indication the coder will code "Monitor Conversation" one if an organization reacts to a user.

To align this to paragraph 3.6 and 3.7 (on comments and reactions), this variable could take the following form:

A reaction to a user's message:

"[ORGANIZATION] [DATE/TIME]
reacts to [USER NAME] [MESSAGE CONTENT]"

III. Data Definitions

Data Definition Summarization		
Sector 1: Provide		
Value	Name	Description
1	Provide news bulletins	A message posted by organizations containing news information and the length of text is less than 500 words. A link posted by organizations is linking to “pictures” or “videos”.
2	Provide in-depth news reports/article	A message posted by organizations containing in-depth information, which length is more than 500 words.
3	Provide relevant information about the organization	A message posted by an organization containing information about the organization or the people who works for the organization (e.g. launch a new service, introduce an activity, introduce editors from the organization, and explain a situation related to the organization).
Sector 2: Listen and Engage		
Value	Name	Description
1	Conversation from Customers to Organizations	-A message in the following formats: “[USER NAME] [DATE/TIME] [MESSAGE CONTENT]” Or “[USER NAME] [DATE/TIME] reacts to [ORGANIZATION] [MESSAGE CONTENT]”
2	Conversation from Organizations to Customers	-A message in the following formats: “[ORGANIZATION] [DATE/TIME] [MESSAGE CONTENT]” Or “[ORGANIZATION] [DATE/TIME] reacts to [USER NAME] [MESSAGE CONTENT]”
3	Conversation between Customers	-A message in the following formats: “[USER NAME X] [DATE/TIME] reacts to [USER NAME Y] [MESSAGE CONTENT]” <i>Note that: as a user’s comment does not (by definition) imply a comment to another user, only reacts will be counted here.</i>
Sector 3: Leverage		
Value	Name	Description
1	Provide non-mainstream topics	-A message contains information or tells a story that is considered as an un-commonly seen topic or a taboo topic in China. <i>E.g. commonly taboo topics: Drugs, Homosexual, Pornography, Prostitution, Euthanasia, Political prisoners, Criticism Chinese political system, Criticism Chinese economic system, Criticism the newest Chinese policy; Analysis US economic policy towards China.</i>
2	Provide multimedia content	-A message contains at least one of the multimedia contents: photos, animation, audio, video.
3	Provide customer privileges	A message provides extra information that could not get from the organizations’ official website or offers directly communication from the editors or other employee. <i>E.g. organization asks for comments from Renren users, -answers user’s questions, and -launches new services, -shares holiday wishes, -explains a situation related to the organization (website crush down or website has been blocked).</i>
Sector 4: Monitor		
1	Monitor conversation	A reaction to a user’s message in the following format: “[ORGANIZATION] [DATE/TIME] reacts to [USER NAME] [MESSAGE CONTENT]”

7.2 Appendix B -Histogram

