The Creativity Thoughts Project: Integrating Website, Blog, Weibo and Mobile App into a Platform to Promote Creative Studies in China

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ABSTRACT OF A PROJECT

The Creativity Thoughts Project: Integrating Website, Blog, Weibo and Mobile App into a Platform to Promote Creative Studies in China

The Creativity Thoughts project is a long-term project that works on integrating the website, blog, Weibo (a microblogging website similar to Twitter), and mobile app into a digital platform of knowledge exchange to introduce basic information and knowledge to Chinese readers who are interested in this field. The core of this project is the growing Creativity Thoughts database that is mainly composed of this author’s original writing, academic notes or translations of English materials into Chinese. Besides literature, this database also includes pictures that help to visualizing creativity and creative events. The materials of the database will be published at the official website of this project and author’s blog. The content of this blog will be converted into a mobile app for the Android mobile system. At the same time, the Weibo feed will synchronize with the blog and build more interaction between the author and readers. After a one-month experiment, the effectiveness and meaning of this project was positively proven.

Key words: ONLINE LEARNING, CREATIVE LEADERSHIP, CREATIVITY THEORY, CREATIVE CHANGE, CREATIVE THINKING, CREATIVITY EDUCATION

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Chendan Cui

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December 10, 2012
Buffalo State College
State University of New York
International Center for Studies in Creativity

The Creativity Thoughts Project: Integrating Website, Blog, Weibo and Mobile App into a Platform to Promote Creative Studies in China

A Project in Creative Studies
by
Chendan Cui

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science

December 2012
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Dates of Approval:

__________________________________ J. Michael Fox (Project Advisor)

__________________________________ Chendan Cui (Candidate)
Abstract

Creativity is rising. As China’s economy develops, government and public interest in creativity and innovation has never been higher, but Chinese literature about creativity is comparatively limited, and there is no website specifically focused on promoting basic information and knowledge about creative studies in China. The Creativity Thoughts project is a long-term project that works on integrating the website, blog, Weibo (a microblogging website similar to Twitter), and mobile app into a digital platform of knowledge exchange to introduce basic information and knowledge to Chinese readers who are interested in this field. The core of this project is the growing Creativity Thoughts database that is mainly composed of this author’s original writing, academic notes or translations of English materials into Chinese. Besides literature, this database also includes pictures that help to visualizing creativity and creative events. The materials of the database will be published at the official website of this project and author’s blog. The content of this blog will be converted into a mobile app for the Android mobile system. At the same time, the Weibo feed will synchronize with the blog and build more interaction between the author and readers. After a one-month experiment, the effectiveness and meaning of this project was positively proven.

*Keywords:* online learning, creative leadership, creativity theory, creative change, creative thinking, creativity education

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Chendan Cui

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December 10, 2012
Acknowledgments

After the Cultural Revolution ended, China resumed University Entrance Examinations in 1978 after a 10 year break. My mother, Ms. Yang, a typical country girl, was already 28 years old. When her peers had already accepted their destiny to stay in the village forever, she spent the whole summer in a dark cottage to prepare for the examination. Most people in the village thought my mother was crazy. However, my grandfather, who graduated from teaching college, but resigned from his teaching job to protest the bureaucracy’s over-interference on education, offered great support to my mother. He believed his daughter deserved better education and had the ability to change her life for the better. He was right. After graduation, my mother returned to her hometown and taught mathematics in a high school. One year after she married a handsome Chinese Literature teacher from another high school, I came to the world, my blood was born with endless passion about education and self-realization...My deepest love and appreciation goes to my mother, who demonstrated to me the value and power of integrity and education, she gave me the courage to overcome all the obstacles to living our dreams by working hard and being who we are. Years later, when I came to study in the USA and left my comfortable teaching job at the Communication University of China, Nanjing to embrace an uncertain future, this willpower came from my mother.

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Section One: Background to this Project

Description of Project

By integrating the website, blog, Weibo (a microblogging site similar to Twitter), and mobile app into an online education platform, the Creative Thoughts project is going to introduce basic information and knowledge to Chinese readers who are interested in creativity and innovation.

The core of this project is the growing “Creativity Thoughts” database that is mainly composed of this author’s original writings, academic notes and translations of English materials into Chinese. Besides literature, this database also includes pictures that contribute to visualizing creativity and creative events.

The materials of the database will be published at the official website of this project and author’s blog, and the blog will be converted into a mobile app for Android mobile system. At the same time, the Weibo feed will synchronize with the blog and build more interaction between the author and the reader. After a one-month experiment, the effectiveness and meaning of this project was positively proven.

Rationale and Significance

The Creative Change Model highlights that the three facets of person, process, and environment interact to yield particular outcomes. Under certain environments that are conducive to creative thoughts, by working through an effective process, people with the right skills, knowledge, and personal traits are more likely to produce creative products, which means tangible or intangible outcomes that are new and useful (Puccio, 2011, p. 26).
My project is an attempt to effect some creative change by making a creative product. Creative change can take on different forms and was defined as “the adoption of a creative product, a novel and useful idea that has been embodied in either an intangible or tangible form, which adds value to an individual, team, organization or society” (Puccio, 2011, p.26). Two creative changes are expected after this project is finished: first, I will have developed new skills and built up a new website which I am proud of; second, there will be a new website dedicated to promoting creative studies in China.

There are seven reasons that make this project my passion, two of them are “environment” reasons, and the other five are “person” reasons.

**Reason one: meeting the need of creativity trends in China.** Niu (2006, p.13) take 1978 as the starting year of creativity research in Mainland China, and separate the development of creativity research in Mainland China into 3 steps. The trends of Creativity and innovation are rocking the world, China is trying to catch up with the world not only in economic development, but also in social innovation in different fields. With government support and encouragement, creativity and innovation is rising in China. At many important occasions, such as on March, 4, 1998, on the first meeting of the 9th Session of National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), or on the opening ceremony of the third Session of the National Educational Working Meeting on June 15, 1999, the former president of P.R. China Zemin Jing talked about the importance of innovation and raised it up to the level of “innovation plays essential roles in the survival and development of Chinese nation”, in China, political power’s influence on education, academic research and public opinion can never be too highly valued. In the past ten years, Creative Studies has become a
hotbed for Chinese educators and scholars, although there are big differences in
understanding of some basic concepts in creative studies (Cui, 2011, p.16).

Although differences exist, Chinese society is eager to know more about
creativity and innovation. Some popular business books about innovation, such as books
of Edward, and De. Bono, were introduced to China and achieved great success, but
either the depth or the breadth of these books is comparatively limited. We need different
views and perspectives to enrich the picture of creative thinking and creative studies in
China.

The internet offers extremely rich materials about creativity and innovation, but
most of them are in English. Online resources and materials about creativity and
innovation in Chinese are far from meeting the needs of the people. At 7:44 pm on
November 29, 2012, When I search the Word “Creativity” on Google, it takes 0.42
seconds to find 250 million results, while when I searched “创造力” (Creativity), it took
0.35 seconds to find 45 million results, almost 5 times lower than the former number.
Besides the quantity, we should also consider the quality of literature that can be found
on the internet. I began to teach the course of creative thinking in a Chinese university in
the Spring semester of 2007, during which time I discovered it was very hard to find solid
research and academic literature about creativity. In the spring semester of 2011, I
translated some chapters from English textbooks and reorganized them to teach my
Chinese students, and found it worked pretty well! I am bilingual, but how can we make
knowledge about creativity from the Western world more accessible to those who only
understand Chinese or those whose English is not good enough for reading university-
level English literature? Presently, English education starts in elementary school in most
areas of China, yet most Chinese still have difficulty communicating and learning from English materials.

With this background, A Chinese website that focused on offering basic knowledge about creativity could be important and useful.

**Reason two: E-learning & M-learning is reinventing education.** As the English science-fiction writer Eden Philpotts said: “The Universe is full of magical things, patiently waiting for our wits to grow sharper.” The approaches we teach and learn have changed a lot since the emergence of modern media. The modern classroom was invented in the 1770s in Prussia as a learning format that immobilized learners, forcing them to look straight ahead and pay attention to the teacher as the sole source of all knowledge (Woodwill, 2012, p.34). Although still based on a classroom metaphor, E-learning (learning over the internet) changed the organizational approaches of the classroom, and with the rising of M-learning (mobile-learning), all kinds of social media and mobile devices for learning became prevalent and rebuilt the vision of education.

China has the largest number of computer and mobile users in the world. According to the National Bureau of Statistics of China (2011), the sixth national population census started on November 1, 2010 suggested that China has a population of 1,370,536,875. In a report from the Ministry of industry and Innovation Technology of the People’s Republic of China, Ding (2012) announced that as of 2011, the home ownership rate of computers in China is 70 computers per100 families (the percent of homes owning computers is somewhat less than 70 percent, as some homes have more than one). And the ownership rate of mobile phones is 73.6 phones per 100 persons. Huge opportunities are available in China, considering that Chinese families highly value education for their
children. The coming waves of E-learning and M-learning are going to make big changes in China. Under these circumstances, it is meaningful to build a website about creative studies for Chinese users, particularly as few alternatives currently exist.

**Reason three: the belief that everyone can be a creative change leader.** As Eleanor Roosevelt said, “The future belongs to those who believe in their dreams”. I believe that anyone who works hard and smart can be a creative leader. I believe that by sharing our ideas with people we can change the world together. I believe that creativity is essential for the future of human society. Finally, I believe that everyone deserves to make full use of his or her potential to become the person he or she wants to be.

I love the precise and succinct definition that creativity is about “making the change that sticks (for a while)” (Talbot, 1997, p.181). By the way, this project will stick for a long time, not just for a short while. Puccio (2011) defined “deliberate creativity” as “taking a proactive approach toward the production of novel and useful ideas that address a predicament or opportunity” (p. xvi). My project is going to address an opportunity and build something new that benefits society. Basically, it aims at contributing to the creative change in creative studies’ learning, at great extent or at small extent. I believe that change of the outside world begins from within. For me, creative change first happened in my life, and I would love to extend it to the outside environment.

**Reason four: Building a life-long teaching position for myself.** I am definitely a life-long learner, and I want to be a life-long teacher. After six years’ teaching, I resigned my lecturer position in China and moved to North America in September 2012, but my passion and desire for teaching, writing and sharing never dies. I plan to pursue my PhD education in the USA and look for opportunity to work as a faculty member after
getting my PhD degree. I left the profession temporarily, but information technology offers a bigger one- there are thousands more people waiting to learn about creativity in China, the question is whether I am qualified and prepared to begin to meet that need. I think I need to learn more to carry on this mission, and this project offers me a great chance to practice and learn.

**Reason five: interests in applying technology and new media in education.**

Graduating from the Communication University of China, the leading university in media and communication education in China, I am always excited by the big potential associated with the development of new media. I have continuously made efforts in creating teaching methods that are both new and useful. In the fall semester of 2011, I used the Youku.com website and Weibo platform to manage and evaluate students’ projects, it helped me to reduce plagiarism and improved the participation and involvement of students greatly. The idea of building my own website excites me a lot, it would be a new tool and platform for teaching.

**Reason six: extend my curiosity and serve my study.** I am curious about a question: There are countless good resources and materials on the internet, how can we make full use of them for education purposes? I take a lot of notes when I read and teach, but they are clattered in my bookshelf or somewhere I even forget. Without sharing them, most ideas and thoughts just flash and disappear. This reality inspired me to create a platform that can integrate my resources, experiences and knowledge to share with the world and learn from others. Things are useful only when they are in use - so is knowledge and information. With this project, I am going to build a channel that will guide the water in my little pool of information out into the big information ocean of the
world. By sharing with others, the drops in my little pool can live forever.

Section Two: Literature Review

The Internet is reinventing the vision of education. Free online courses are shaking the foundation of the traditional higher education system. Education organizations and educators have to be creative and innovative to address this big change. E-learning seems to have already become such an established concept that some recent literature about E-learning hasn’t felt the need to define the term (Nehme, 2010; Gilbert, Morton & Rowley, 2007; J. Bahhouth, & V. Bahhouth, 2011; Robert, 2010; Stein, 2011; Journell, 2010 & Khogali, 2011). This topic has stoked wide interest, 10 years ago, Imel said “the development of E-learning products and the provision of E-learning opportunities is one of the most rapidly expanding areas of education and training, in both education and industry (as cited in Gilbert, Morton & Rowley, 2007, p. 560). Khogali’s case study showed that the students found that online resources can not only supported their learning from lectures, but may also “be of value in helping them to learn on their own and to learn things they would not have learned in lectures or accessed from books or other sources.” (2011, p. 315). As online resources, my project will be helpful for E-learners. Technology is becoming more and more user-friendly, with the help of software or online website builders like WordPress, it’s easy for users without technical backgrounds to build a website or other online resources. Based on the platform of wix.com, Jenna Smith, my classmate in the International Center for Studies in Creativity built the “Beyonder” website and mobile app about TIM model that help teachers to apply creative skills in their work. As Salmon (2005) suggested, if we avoid being overly concerned about the technological details, we can easily understand that teaching online,
including E-learning, “has almost nothing to do with computers and everything to do with time, motivation, knowledge and the new agency of cyber-experience, as well as good, appropriate teaching” (p. 14-15).

As the development of smartphone, M-Learning replaces E-learning to become a new buzz in education and industry. Educause, a nonprofit organization focused on advancing education through technology, defined M-learning as:

Mobile Learning, or M-learning, can be any educational interaction delivered through mobile technology and accessed at student’s convenience from any location. M-learning hardware may include mobile phones, handheld PCs, tablets, the iPad, and Netbooks, as well as devices such as the iPod touch that are able to run mobile applications. Because M-learning utilized a variety of devices, many of which are ubiquitous in the lives of students, it can foster student engagement and offer opportunities to make learning integral to daily life. (cited as Smith, J. M., 2012, p.11-12)

By using M-learning, students can learn anytime, at anywhere, and they can communicate with fellow learners via email and discussion forms, as well as public file-sharing platforms (like Dropbox, Evernote, Youtube, Slideshare), people can easily share files or work together on projects remotely.

Virtual classrooms, websites, blogs, twitter, can all become platforms of E-learning and mobile learning. The deliverables of my project include; website, blog, mobile app and Weibo.

The definition of a blog could be “a web page containing brief, chronologically arranged items of information. A blog can take the form of a diary, journal, what's new page, or links to other web sites” (Scott, 2001). Blogs provide a communication space that teachers can utilize with students whenever there is a curriculum need to develop
writing, share ideas and reflect on work being undertaken in the classroom (“APA styles”, 2011) Several studies have shown that blogs can be used in education effectively and students’ attitudes towards blogs are very positive (Du & Wagner, 2005; Glogoff, 2005; Birney, Barry & Eigartaigh, 2006; Hall & Davison, 2007).

“Weibo” is a micro-blogging service popular in Asia, similar to Twitter. My project will use the Weibo service offered by Sina Corp which is the largest Internet Portal company in China. This August, the financial report of Sina Corp showed that the number of registered users of Sina Weibo is 368 million, 13.6 percent more than this past March. The number of daily active users amounts to 36.5 million (Jia, 2012). Weibo has become one of the most popular media for Chinese web users to do all kinds of communication, from vent anger over corruption to protesting, branding and education. By integrating my Weibo into my project, I can make use of this platform to build effective communication.

Section Three: Project Planning

This project took me more than 3 months, and the work hours amounted to more than 500 hours.

Step One: Prepared the Creativity Thoughts database

Time: From Sept. 1 to October 28, 2012

Task: Wrote & translated 223 notes/articles; Collected & edited 223 Pictures

Work hours: 260 hours

Step Two: Technical Construction of Website

Time: From October 18 to October 29, 2012

Task: Bought the domain www.creativitythoughts.com and host service from Just
Host; Chose the template for the website.

Work hours: 15 hours

Step Three: Uploading contents

Time: From November 1, 2012 to November 15, 2012

Task: Uploaded contents to Website, Sina blog, Weibo and built the mobile app.

Work hours: 85 hours

Step Four: Writing the report

Time: From November 24 to December 8, 2012

Task: Wrote the report for the Creative Thoughts project

Work hours: 140 hours

Doing a project focused on online media is an undoubtedly logical choice for me since I am always interested in using media to build another world that people can easily go beyond borders of countries and cultures without applying for Visas, but it’s never easy to build this free space.

First, It’s very time-consuming to prepare both notes and pictures. After two month’s work, I finished 223 notes at the end of October 2012. I felt that I was working on a book instead of a website. The domain of creativitythought.com was registered on October 18, 2012, one day later, I chose Just Host as my web host. My longtime friend Yuqing He, the owner of http://www.bukop.com/ which focused on Business Innovation, helped me to solve some technical challenges. At the end of October, the website was ready for content uploading. The first article About Creativity Thoughts was published on the website on October 29, 2012 and all the first 223 notes were uploaded to the website, blog and Weibo in the coming 4 weeks.
As to the mobile app, I had struggled with building it for iPhone or Android system. I talked with a couple of software engineers from USA, Korea, India, and China by Skype, and evaluated the cost and outcome of building the iPhone app, before I finally choose a realistic option and decided to save the idea of a Creativity Thoughts iPhone app for the future. I asked for an opinion from my project instructor Jon Michael Fox, his instruction was very helpful:

As I read your status report, I am reminded of William of Ockham, a British logician from the 1300’s, who said “other things being equal, a simpler explanation is better than a more complex one.” I think the fastest and easiest one is the best choice. As you progress new and unexpected forces may emerge. A fast prototype is the way to go. (Fox. J. M., personal communication, October 25, 2012)

Once the direction and tasks were clear, the only thing left was to “Just do it.” Doing is the spirit of the implementation of this project.

Section Four: Outcomes

Mission & Target Audience

This project is not a one-time shot, it will continue to grow after this project report is done. The mission of this project can by stated as “By integrating the website, blog, Weibo, and mobile app into a personal digital platform of knowledge exchange, the author will share Creativity Thoughts with the public to promote creative studies in China”.

Imagine creative studies is a mysterious woods that’s still a mystery for most Chinese minds, what I do is show some clues of the map to them. This project introduced the concepts, theories, stories, and perspectives just like introducing new plants or trees to
the new visitors to this woods. As to those experienced spirits that already know something about the woods, it is wonderful to make further communication too.

The target audience of this project includes:

• Scholars and students who are interested in knowing more about creativity and innovation. The creativitythoughts.com site can be one of those resources for them to reference.

• Professionals who work in fields that need creativity and innovation, such as education, design, arts, management, marketing, advertising, etc.

• People who are life-long learners and want to empower themselves via creativity. People always want to be smarter, more creative and more innovative, while the challenge is how. My project will open a window for them.

• People who know little or nothing about creativity. My project might put kindling in their mind.

• My family, my friends and my students. They all have personal connections with me, using my knowledge and experience to enrich their understanding of the creativity and helping them develop creative problem solving skills is my greatest pleasure.

How This Project Works

This project is composed of different parts which have different functions but which work together to make full use of the content. The connections and relations between them are shown in the following figure:
Figure 1: The relationship between different components of Creativity Thoughts project

The contents of Creativity Thoughts database will go into the website and the blog, and the content of the blog will be merged into a mobile app for Android system. The blog and the mobile app share the same audience, which, while different from the audience of the website, may coincide with it. The contents of the Sina blog will be associated with the Weibo. The Weibo content comes from both the blog and improvisational or situational writing based on the context and interaction between my Weibo followers. The audience of Weibo is different but might coincide with the audience of the blog or website. All the responses from different audiences will influence
the future writing of Creativity Thoughts database.

**Creativity Thoughts Database**

Creativity Thoughts is a personalized database that is mainly composed of notes and pictures related to creative studies. Each note and one or more picture(s) or other materials are one “Unit” of this database. This database is the “energy pool” of the whole project. All media are tools used to reach people and build connections, while content is the soul of this project. I will introduce the Creativity Thoughts database from different perspectives.

**Philosophy & attitude.** My philosophy and attitude towards life will affect how I work on this project. As an old Chinese saying from *The Histories of Three Countries* (《三国志》) said “Do not reject anything virtuous for its pettiness, nor embrace anything vicious for its insignificance.” If there is something that deserves to be done, I will go for it without hesitation, even though there might not be phenomenal short-term rewards. My undergraduate major was advertising, creativity is highly valued in this industry, but it was a pity that there was no course about creativity offered. I made up my mind if I got a chance to lecture in university, I will develop a course about creativity since I believed in the value of a creative course. Five years later, I made my dream come true. Now, in the global village, traditional geographic borders disappear. The digital revolution broke all kinds of limits and borders and a new world is emerging. Culture and language, instead of geography, becomes the biggest border between people in different countries. The internet is reinventing the traditional concept of college and university, private course offerings by individuals often get thousands of registrants and followers. Traditional universities are also working hard to catch on, Stanford University started its
open course of “A Crash Course on Creativity” in the fall semester of 2012 and there were 24,000 people signed up from all over the world as of October 6, 2012 (Seelig, T. personal communication, October 6, 2012). The future of E-learning and M-learning is exciting, even though my project may be very small and unnoticed at the beginning, I believe as time goes by and more work is done, my website and blog will be phenomenal in the future.

**Language & perspective.** China has the largest number of students that have to learn English as the second language since it’s a test subject for the University Entrance Examination. I began to learn English when I was in the first year of my middle school, but now English class begins as early as kindergarten. However, the examination-oriented educational system might not be so successful in educating proficient bilingual users; most Chinese who get more than six years of English instruction still have problems with speaking and listening in English, not to mention learning from English materials. My project uses Chinese as its primary language, English was also used occasionally. For the convenience of my advisor who will review my work, names of categories in my websites are listed in both Chinese and English.

**Topic & focus.** In any academic field, there are thousands of topics and concepts to discuss. I am going to start from the point where I am standing, and expand it later. It’s always easier and better to make full use of what you have than to desire something that is far away. The International Center for Studies in Creativity at Buffalo State College is the place where I got my creative education and life changing experience. My project started its journey by recording and sharing what I have learned and experienced from here.
Each note and the picture(s) that pair with it are one unit of this database. Each note can be perceived as a knowledge unit. I took notes when I found something that is novel, interesting and useful...in one word, I will publish “All the Ideas That’s Fit to Post”, to paraphrase the slogan of the New York Times which was created by its owner Adolph S. Ochs in 1897 and said “All the News That's Fit to Print.”

Presently, I have 223 notes in my database, those notes belong to different categories as listed in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Category (Chinese Name)</th>
<th>Contents &amp; Purpose</th>
<th>Number of Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Creative Views (笔者视点)</td>
<td>The column where I publish my review and understanding</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Concepts &amp; theories (概念&amp;理论)</td>
<td>Introduce concepts and theories in Creative Studies</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Books &amp; Writings (文献著述)</td>
<td>Introduce books, articles or other kinds of literatures</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Scholars &amp; Professionals (专家学者)</td>
<td>Introduce scholars and professionals in creative industry</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Creativity Education (创新教育)</td>
<td>Offer information about creative education</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Resources &amp; Links (各类资源)</td>
<td>Introduce resources related with creative studies</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Creativity Quotes (经典引语)</td>
<td>Collect classic quotes about creativity and innovation</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Creative Stories (创意人间)</td>
<td>Share wonderful creative stories with the world</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Training 4U (思维训练营)</td>
<td>Offer questions, puzzles and guild to help people practice their creative thinking ability.</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Categories of the Creative Thoughts Database

**Quantity & size.** When I initiated this project, I tried to make short notes that fit the screen of a mobile app. Extending it to a project that works for a website and blog influenced my content production at some extent. I felt the limitation of “make it as short and precise as possible” disappear, but should I focus on writing long notes and make
those “short” notes longer? Two books inspired me, one is the *Essays and Criticism* (《世说新语》) edited by Yiqing Liu in Nan Dynasty (around 1600 years ago), another is Yuewei Cottage Notes (《阅微草堂笔记》) written by Jun Ji in Qing Dynasty (this book was written around 210 years ago). Both of them are classic books in Chinese history, they are both comprised of short but meaningful, wonderful, and thoughtful stories and notes. This reminds me that it’s not the size, but the quality that matters. As the advertising slogan of Volkswagen’s Beetle car said, “Think Small!” Some notes are very short, like those quotes in creativity, while other notes are long articles focused on certain topic, and some notes are complete translations of existing English webpages.

The 223 notes amounts to 51,474 Chinese words, now I can almost publish a little book named Creativity Thoughts easily. For convenient management, I numbered all the notes based on time they were created. The idea of numbering them came from my experience in managing books. I had a personal collection of more than 2,000 books, I had tried to organize them by categories or last name of writers, I even visited the Dean of the Library of the Communication University of China eight years ago to learn how to use the New Classification Scheme for Chinese Libraries. After several tries, I found that the easy way is the best: simply organize my books by numbers based on the date I get them. This logic can also apply to management of my notes. With the number, it’s much easier for me to locate the original notes and pair them with the pictures.

**Visualizing creativity.** In my project, I matched each note with a picture, and I tried to make the picture match the topic of the notes. I have been a freelancer for TV programs and magazines since I was in graduate school in China, and I always love to combine language with visual materials to create the best reading experience.
All the pictures used come from three sources: first, most of the pictures used in this project were from my photography work. In the Creativity Expert Exchange conference held May, 2012 in Buffalo, I presented a photography exhibition named “Album of Creative Family” including more than 200 pictures. All the pictures were taken either inside the classroom or during events of the International Center for Studies in Creativity with appropriate permission. As an amateur photographer, technically, these pictures are not perfect, but they achieved the most important goal: Documenting the wonderful moments of creative spirit and sharing with the world. In this project, I used some pictures of this exhibition. Besides these pictures about people and events, I also used some pictures that I took in the Pangborn Design Collection Store in the Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport on November 18, 2011, the creative products there were very interesting and inspiring. Finally, there are some pictures downloaded from internet. Each picture was given a reference unless it was taken more than 60 years or hard to track the original resource. The last resource is screen shots, I made some screen shots when I tried to introduce some websites. Afterwards, I am going to mainly use my photography work to avoid any possible copyright problem, which means I need to keep shooting and make good use of all the pictures that I took before.

Uploading contents to the website, blog and Weibo was a labor of patience, especially when I uploaded posts to my blog, since the Sina Corp didn’t allow me to update frequently. But compared with writing these notes, it’s much easier.

Creativity Thoughts Official Website

Domain, host and QR code. www.creativitythoughts.com is the official website of this project. The domain might be a little longer for Chinese audience, but both
“Creativity” and “Thoughts” has complete and independent meanings, “creativity” is the soul of this website, as to “thoughts”, The Collins Dictionary’s definition about “thought” includes:

- the act or process of thinking; reflection; meditation; cogitation
- the power of reasoning, or of conceiving ideas; capacity for thinking; intellect; imagination
- a result of thinking; idea, concept, opinion, etc.
- the ideas, principles, opinions, etc. prevalent at a given time or place or among a given people ⇒ “modern thought in education”
- attention; consideration; heed ⇒ “give it a moment's thought”
- mental engrossment; preoccupation; concentration ⇒ “deep in thought”
- intention or expectation ⇒ “no thought of leaving”
- a small amount, degree, etc.; a little; trifle ⇒ “be a thought more careful”

Wonderful! The meanings of “thought” can express the spirits of my website. “Creativity Thoughts” is perfect for being the name of my project and website.

Where to host this website? Mr. He suggested me to host it in USA to avoid any possible blocks and interferences from the internet police in China. I don’t think my website will be politicized in the future, but it’s true that if I host my website in China I need more procedures to register it as a website governed by official departments. Finally, I hosted my website in America since I preferred freedom and want to simplify things where I can. A minus of this is that the traffic to my website will be much smaller than being hosted in China.
I also created a QR code for my website, I will put it on my name card and other materials, it is very convenient for users to scan it using a QR code reader app and navigate to my website (The permalink of my QR code is http://qrfree.kaywa.com/?s=8&d=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.creativitythoughts.com%2F).

Figure 2. QR Code of www.creativitythoughts.com

**Template & theme.** WordPress makes it very easy for a user to start a magazine-style website. When I choose the theme for my website, I prefer a template that is simple and clean, black, grey, and white colors are my favorites. WordPress has a lot of themes to choose from, while the challenge is that most of the themes are only in English, even if I can edit the content in Chinese, there are some function buttons that can’t be transformed into Chinese.

**Structure & content.** Following the Creativity Thought database, the website also has nine categories. The latest update or the featured articles will show on the front page, visitors can tap the button of different categories to go to different notes.

There are three pages here: main page, Contact Me and About Creativity Thoughts. The main page is where all the notes are posted. On the Contact Me page,
visitors can see my contact information and leave their contact information. About Creativity Thoughts illustrates the mission and background of this website.

Some widgets were used in the sidebar of the website, which includes Images, Category, Recent Posts, Recent Comments, Archives, Blog Subscriptions, and Facebook Like Box, etc. They are all on the right-hand side of this website. I will keep updating the visual design of the website to make it look and feel better.
Figure 3: Main page of www.creativitythoughts.com
As shown in figure 3, a feature of a magazine style website is that the main page can be scrolled down a little bit instead of fitting everything on one screen. We can see on the top of the website, are three pages that were mentioned before, then the name of the website and a short tagline to introduce the website. On the right of the tagline there is a search area where people can search the contents of this website.

After the title and tagline of the website, are the categories where readers can locate posts in certain categories that interest them. After opening an article, other articles in the same category can be seen in the top of the sidebar on the right. The categories show both here and in the right bar. Below the Categories are the latest updated posts, they will always be shown on the front. In figure 3, the latest post was an article introducing Dr. Jeffrey D. Zacko-Smith. On the right of the post, is a featured picture that I took for my students, in this picture five young student Dingni Fang, Xinyu Zhang, Daomin Du, Ye Han and Lu Wang were sitting on the roof of District 1 of Teaching Building of Communication University of China, Nanjing and looking up into the sky, their eyes were shining with the light of hope, joy, creativity, and energy of youth… I named it “ Rising China & Creative China (青春中国 & 创新中国)” to express my wish for the new generation in China.

Then we can see three columns, on the left is the featured category “Creative Views”, the middle column is “Recent Posts”, and this screen shot doesn’t cover all the content of the front page, below the “Recent Posts” is “Older Posts”. In the right column, there are “Categories”, “Recommendations”, and “Recent Reviews”, if we stroll down the main page on the website, we can also see “Subscription” and “Links”. Users can
input their email address to subscribe to my website, and the “Links” will lead to websites that are related to creativity and innovation.

Figure 4. Display in posts of Scholars & Professionals category
By clicking on Categories located in two different places in the page, readers can easily navigate my website. Figure 4 shows how different posts were displayed after clicking the button, Scholars & Professionals. Other categories display in the same style.
Figure 5. Sample post in Scholars & Professionals category
Figure 5 is a post to introduce J. Michael Fox, the great facilitator and lecturer in the International Center for Studies in Creativity of Buffalo State College, to Chinese readers. The content of this post was truthful translation of the faculty information on the official website of the department. The link to the webpage (http://www.buffalostate.edu/creativity/foxjm.xml?username=foxjm) was put in the post in case the readers want to know more or double check whether the translation is truthful and accurate to the original meaning in English. Similar with the introduction of Jon Michael Fox, all the introductions of other faculty members of the International Center for Studies in Creativity were based on information offered in its official website, and the only difference between my translation and the original English version is that I add some personal reviews at the last paragraph of the post. I am a responsible writer. All my writing is sincere and focusing on building positive image of our creative scholars.
0196-创意人间-ROI理论

Figure 6. Sample post in Creative Stories category
The Creative Stories category represents wonderful creative works in different fields and domains. Figure 6 is a short introduction of the ROI (Relevance, Originality and Impact) creative theory developed by DDB advertising company, this notes used my teaching materials of Advertising Principles course.
Figure 7. Sample post in Concepts & Theories category
The “Concepts & Theories” category focus on introducing basic concepts and theories in Creative Studies, figure 7 represents a bilingual post about personality characters of creative person, and the Chinese part of this post is my translation work. Besides, I used a picture I took for my good friend and classmate Joshua Mahanoy, he is a wonderful creative person, and he has many characteristics listed in the post. This post is also a regard to our friendship.
0164-创新教育-美国纽约州立大学布法罗学院（SUNY, Buffalo State College）

Figure 8. Sample post in Creative Education category
Figure 8 represents a post from the category of Creativity Education which introduces information on the creative education world. This post talked about the degree and diplomas offered by the International Center for Studies in Creativity and listed the link of official website of it for readers’ further exploration.
Creativity Thoughts 造学笔记

0177-文献著述-Creative Leadership：Skills That Drive Change

By Gerard J. Puccio, Mary Muntock & Marie Mance合著的Creative Leadership (《创意领导力》) 一书第一版于2006年发行, 第二版则于2010年12月面世。卓越的领导力的重要性在于对于个体和社会的影响。换句话说，领导力需要创造力。该书能有效帮助读者提升其领导能力，并在实际应用相关技能的过程中成为更优秀的领导者。

以下是作者任教的大学的官网对该书的英文介绍：“Creative Leadership: Skills That Drive Change demonstrates how creative thinking is an essential element of leadership, especially when bringing about change. This engaging book provides a unique combination of conceptual arguments, practical principles, and proven tools to enhance future leaders’ effectiveness in creating and managing change.” (参见http://www.buffalostate.edu/creativity/visit/ntt/click.html)

更多关于此书的信息，可以参见英文亚马逊网站对该书的详细介绍：Successful Leadership today relies heavily on an individual’s ability to effectively respond to and proactively drive change, in short, to be creative. This book helps readers enhance their creative talents and employ these skills as a leader. Now to the Second Edition is an expanded discussion of the important role creativity plays in leadership, a more extensive account of the skills necessary to be an effective creative leader, a broader range of historical and contemporary examples, and enhanced graphics throughout that bring the Creative Problem Solving model to life visually.”(参见www.amazon.com/Creative-Leadership-Skills-Drive-Change/dp/1412975756/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&dpID=1355081174&sr=8-1&keywords=creative+leadership)

Figure 9. Sample post in Books & Writings category
The Books & Writings category works on introducing books, articles or other kinds of literature in creative studies to Chinese readers. The post in figure 9 represents the book *Creative Leadership: Skills that Drive Change* written by three leading figures in this area. In The post, a bilingual introduction is available.
Figure 10. Sample post in Training 4U category
Just as John Morgan said, “the mind needs exercise as much as the body does.” Training 4U offers questions, puzzles and other materials that can help people practice their creative thinking ability. The post in figure 10 discussed a classic story about the design of a creative wheelbarrow, Michael Fox had told us the full story of this wheelbarrow in his class, and I am glad to share it with Chinese readers. In this post, readers were guided to practice their thinking first, and then I offered the theory analysis and suggestions.
0061-破解创意五障之四：文化障碍

Figure 11. Sample post in Creative Views category
Creative Views is a category where I share my reviews and understandings of creative studies. The post in figure 11 is a short article I wrote about how to overcome the cultural obstacles to creativity. This idea of this article was inspired by the book *Exploring the Nature of Creativity*, while my writing is based on the Chinese cultural context.
Figure 12. Sample post in Creative Quotes category
Creative Quotes category represents classic quotes about creativity and innovation. The quote from Youwei Kang (康有为) in figure 12 is one of my favorite quotes. Living between 1858 and 1927, Youwei Kang was a Chinese scholar, noted calligrapher and prominent political thinker and reformer of the late Qing Dynasty. More than 100 years ago, he was arguing that innovation played an essential role for a country. The original quote is written in traditional Chinese, each time when I read it, I felt excited and inspired.
Figure 13. Sample post in Resources & Links category
The mission of Resources & Links category is introducing resources related with creative studies to Chinese readers. The post in figure 13 talked about the CBIR database that was created in 1988. This database is very useful for searching literature, I believe Chinese scholars will love it.

Preparing for the next move of my Creativity Thoughts project, besides the nine categories that I mentioned above, I also opened a category titled Academic Frontier that will feature the latest research in Creative Studies; posts for this Category will start in January 2013.

To know more about all the different posts, you are welcome to take a tour in www.creativitythoughts.com and explore more surprises.

**Creativity Thoughts Blog**

A Website is wonderful for its independence, while blogging in a well-known platform can attract greater traffic and more interaction. Sina Corp offers the biggest and most popular blog and Weibo platform. Instead of creating a new account for this project, I used my old account but changed the name of the blog. I didn’t really work on this blog in the past, but since I set this blog up 6 years ago, I got labeled as a “senior blogger” and get more features to use when I edit my blog.

As I mentioned before, a good benefit of content production is it can be duplicated easily. I updated all the posts in the website to my blog http://blog.sina.com.cn/cuichendan, and set up 9 news categories as the website, at the same time, I edited the names of other categories and reorganize my old posts.

The blog has many widgets that make the blog user-friendly. In my blog, I used widgets like Basic Information, Blogger Greeting, My Weibo, List of Articles, Search
Blogger’s articles, Category, Visitors, Reviews, Messages, Subscription, Friends on blog… these widgets can be found on the left side of the blog. Figure 14 and figure 15 show the front page of my blog.
THE CREATIVITY THOUGHTS PROJECT

Figure 14. Main page of my blog (upper part)
Sina Corp updates their blog service continuously to provide better service. Many
new functions have been added since Sina blog was created. As Weibo became more and more popular, Sina Corp began offering a service that can synchronize posts of a blog to Weibo by either putting a notice or using the Long Weibo service to converge the article into a picture to post it on Weibo. There is a rule that the post in Weibo can’t be longer than 140 Chinese words, so it is frustrating for users who would love to share posts that go beyond this limit, Long Weibo service settled this problem, It’s really amazing that after publishing a long article I can transfer it into a Long Weibo picture and publish it on my Weibo, by using the “@” function towards other Weibo users, I can easily communicate and share with others. The problem with Long Weibo is that when transferring a blog post into a picture, the layout of the blog post might be changed; sometimes the picture(s) in the blog might go missing, but these problems don’t hinder the effectiveness of Long Weibo.

**Creativity Thoughts Weibo**

My Weibo account was created on May 12, 2011. Since someone else already registered my name, I named my account “创造学在中国” (“Creative Studies in China”) to honor my dedication to creative studies. Sina Corp offers an “Identification of Personal User” Service, by submitting my work identity and my Chinese ID card, I made this account as my official Weibo Account, guaranteeing the authenticity of my ID. It will be helpful for me to build my reliability and reputation in Weibo.

Before I started the Creative Thoughts project, I began to use Weibo for four purposes:

- Uploading information and materials about creative studies to share with my followers.
• Learning from others and making more friends who have similar interests to me. When I make new friends, I also remember to defer judgment, you never know who will amaze you.

• Using Weibo as an education platform to review students’ homework and engage students in group communication.

• Keeping in touch with my family, friends and acquaintances and sharing my life and thoughts with them.

I integrated my Weibo into my project because:

• Weibo is a very effective and convenient way to interact with many people at one time, and all your discussions can be shared with the public. Besides, Weibo also has “one to one talk” and “group talk” functions that are convenient for more private interpersonal communication.

• In this project, the main body of the website, blog and mobile app is based on the Creativity Thoughts database, while on the Weibo I can do some improvisation and write randomly, this offers more flexibility to the project.

• Sina Corp is developing more products based on Weibo, one good example is “Wei Journal” that allows users to publish their own online magazine(s) based on the Weibo platform. After I registered my Wei Journal which was named Encyclopedia of Creative Studies, I got seven subscriptions in 20 minutes. In 2013, I will put more emphasis on Wei Journal.
Figure 16. Main page of my Weibo

Figure 16 is the screen shot of the top part of the front page of my Weibo. This
self-designed template of my Weibo used the picture I took for my students as the background image. Below the picture in the left there are three numbers that show how many people I am following, how many followers I have and how many posts I have published. In the right column there are different widgets like Following, Follower, and Pictures of my Weibo.

Compared with the website and blog, Weibo is more user-friendly. There are three ways to communicate in Weibo: First, writing reviews which are public; second, chatting online which is good for instant communication; third, sending private messages that don’t go public by using either “one to one talk or “group talk”.

Figure 17. Sample record of chatting online on Weibo
Figure 17 represents the chatting record between one student and me (used with permission), the student was asking me to recommend some books of cultural industries and I said I was sorry since I didn’t have immediate answers for her, but I will keep an eye on this topic and keep her in the loop. Sometimes, my students ask me something that’s not in my domains. Sometimes, the questions that students ask are about everything except their studies.

Figure 18. Sample message sent by my students

The message on the top of figure 18 was sent by my student Hao Zhou of the class of 2010, he graduated two years ago already, but he proposed the question of “What’s creative studies?” to me. I always answer academic questions that don’t involve privacy by writing another public post and including the person who asked the question.
Figure 19 represents a question that was sent by a friend I met on Weibo. After reading my post about creative education in Buffalo State College, he asked me about the difference between the SUNY, College at Buffalo and SUNY, University at Buffalo. I answered his question by posting a public post on Weibo (as shown in figure 20).

Figure 19. Sample question from other Weibo user

Figure 20. Sample post based on response or questions from audience
Figure 21. Post about Freud’s opinion on creativity
Figure 22. Sample Question from a student about the post of Freud’s opinion on creativity

I published a short post about Freud’s theory on creativity (as shown in figure 21), and a student asked me a question in the review. I was glad to answer back and communicate with him.

**Creativity Thoughts Mobile App**

The mobile app’s Chinese name is “创造学笔记”, the same as the Chinese name of the website and blog. The website allows me to use the Chinese name and English name in the title at the same time, while in the blog and mobile app there is not enough space for a title both in Chinese and English, so in the blog and mobile app I only used the Chinese name.

The mobile app is technically supported by a company that works with Sina Corp, and all the content of the app is based on my blog. My app can be downloaded from this website: http://appmaster.hudee.com/sina/broadcast/manage.html and if the user is going to download the app by mobile phone, they can put this link http://s.hudee.com/1247592545 into their mobile browser. Another way to retrieve this
App is by using the QR code in figure 23. This app only works for the Android operating system.

Figure 23. The QR code of the mobile app

Figure 24. Screen of my student’s mobile phone with my mobile app installed
The logo of my app is a picture of me, after downloading my mobile app the user can drag the logo to any place of the screen. In figure 24, my mobile app was put on the top right corner of the screen. After tapping the button, readers will see the main page as presented in figure 25, a list of the articles published in my blog.

![Figure 25. Main page of my mobile app](image-url)
Figure 26. Sample post of the mobile app

Figure 27. Comment interface of the mobile app
After tapping the title, readers can see the content of the post. By tapping the More Functions button at the top right as shown in figure 26, readers can choose to collect or share the post and change the font. All the posts are easily shared on social media like QQ, Qzone, Weibo, and RenRen by tapping the “sharing” function button. As shown in figure 27, it is easy for readers to leave their reviews, and all the reviews will go to my blog simultaneously.

Section Five: Evaluation & Key learnings

Evaluation

“How wide of an audience can I reach without marketing efforts?” I was curious. Since I started this project, my emphasis was put on upgrading posts to the website and blog, I didn’t initiate any connections or promotion of my project except mentioning my website on my Facebook page and talking with my friends on the Qzone (a famous social media website in China), one reason is I simply didn’t have time, another reason is that I was really curious, simply based on the content, with little to no promotion, how many views my website and blog could attract.

Figure 28. Statistics of views of www.creativitythoughts.com (retrieved on December 4, 2012)
As shown in figure 28, my website has 361 views till December 4, 2012, the largest traffic came on November 21, 2012 after I published the post about creative education in Jönköping University and Lancaster University. The lowest traffic was as low as one visitor on November 29, 2012. The traffic may be limited, but I am not upset, and I would love to say “That’s pretty good!” Considering that it’s a Chinese website hosted in America, and it even didn’t show up in the search engine when I put the key word “创造学” (creative studies) in famous search engines widely used in China like Google, Yahoo and Baidu, I am satisfied at how my website is doing. Since I could reach no more than 150 students per semester when I was teaching in China, I am confident that my website will reach more people than I could meet in the classroom. That’s good enough.

![Figure 29. Statistic of Views of my blog from November 5 to December 4, 2012](image)

As to the blog, through December 4, 2012, visits to my blog amount to 2,810. On
November 15, there were 197 views in one day. Before I integrated my blog into this project, I had around 1000 views of 31 posts, which means the views to my blog increased by more than 1500 (at least) since late October of 2012.

Comparing the statistics of my blog and website, with the same contents, the blog attracts around 8 times more views than the website. One reason might be that the blog is on a Chinese platform which has many users. When it comes to my Weibo, I got 210 new followers after I made my Weibo as part of my Creative Thoughts project, and there are around 12 professionals in the consulting, training and education fields who have begun to follow me. Based on the statistics offered by the website and blog, I can further analyze what kinds of posts are most popular and deepen my understanding towards how to make my project work better. On my blog, the latest visits to my blog mainly came from Google search, Sina Search, Weibo, and Baidu search.

For me, the biggest encouragement comes from my readers. I got some warm messages and reviews from strangers, and I have to say, those comments inspire me a lot.

**Things worked well.** I love all the help and assistance from my advisor, my friends, and my family.

- I love my dedication to make it work.
- I enjoy the feeling of creating something new in this world.
- I love all the hard work I spent on this project.
- I appreciate that I went through dark moments when I felt frustrated and confused…and each time I went through them, I became stronger!
- I love the feeling that having belief in my heart, and that as long as the heart is full of joy and love, all the technical and implementing details can be worked out.
My life is a labor of love, so is my project. As long as I have a willing and loving heart when I do it, I can make it.

**Space for improvement.** After completing the project, I found ways of doing it better. Luckily, it’s never too late, since this is a long-term project instead of a one-time deal.

I would love to design a structure of a textbook in Creative Studies for education at the university level, and follow the structure to prepare all the materials of this website. I will do the design now and use it to guide the direction of my future work.

I would love to work more on systematic writing instead of using occasional topics and ideas that come to my mind.

I would love to publish more articles in Chinese magazines and update them to my website. Since this June, I published 4 articles in a Chinese business journal, but I still haven’t updated any of them to my website.

I would love to work in a smarter way and improve efficiency. I worked very hard and spent 2 months on the original database, and my website has 224 pages as of November 25, 2012, but the traffic of my website is comparatively low. I need to manage my website in a smarter way to make it more influential and popular.

I would love to learn to use Dreamweaver to edit my website. The professional webpage editing software is better at creating personalized functions and webpages.

I would love to do one thing at a time, never spend any time on thinking or worrying about job-hunting or creating my own business. Now I already know it, and I find great joy in being focused on one thing.
I would love to visit my project advisor J. Michael Fox’s class about project writing and make full use of the Creative Studies Library — It was hard for me since I am living in Connecticut and it takes me 7 hours one way to drive to the campus, but I know it will make a big difference on my project.

There are always countless ways to make things better and better, and I am glad that I know how to do it.

Key Learnings

What we do and how we do things is always a mirror of who we are. This project offered me a perfect chance for introspection. I want to list some key learnings into 3 categories: spiritual achievements, soft skills and hard skills

Spiritual awareness. Spiritual awareness is always what I am looking for. Everything I do, every thought in my mind, is practice that leads me to better awareness of life and brings me closer to wisdom. Spiritually, I learned so much from this project.

With improvement in my ability to prioritize and simplify issues, everything seems to be easier to handle than before, and I am feeling more happiness and joy than before. As an ideator and clarifier (based on test results of the FourSight measure), my life is full of all kinds of ideas; how to balance imagination, idea, possibility and reality is always a challenge for me. During the process of doing this project, I experienced the pain and pleasure of giving up some ideas and thoughts to save them for the future and find the most essential elements and implement things that need to be done. Chan Master Yaoshan has said “Stand on the top of the mountain, but walk at the bottom of the sea” (高高山顶立，深深海底行). This sentence has rich meanings, one understanding could
be “one should have a big vision of the world and a deep insight of the essence of life, but work on practical things and do what should be done.”

An ideator never has problem with visioning the future. Through this project, I went through an inner change that made me evolve from a mountain-stander to both a mountain-stander and ocean-walker. This means a lot to me. As I set my feet on very practical issues, every day, I devote more and more time to being present without worries for the future, without regrets about mistakes I had made. “The moment of present” is everything I have, “now” is also the only path that leads me to anywhere I want to go. For most people, one of the biggest causes of pain in life is the distance between “what I thought” and “what is”. In creative studies, we call it “Wisdom of Clarification”, In Buddhism, we call it “seeing through the truth”. The pleasure of work can never be stronger, I experience more and more “flow” moments every day, when I wrote for my database, when I update posts to my website, I am always present at that moment, and my heart is full of joy. The obstacles of creativity, at most stances, are also obstacles to joy and enlightenment.

**Soft skills.** By tracking the work process and reflection on the connection between time and outcome, I get a better sense of “what I want to do” and “what I am able to do”, my skills in project management and time planning improved a lot. I also feel more comfortable at data collection and analysis.

I became more conscious of building a support system. My family in China helps me take care of all kinds of issues in China for me; my boyfriend is not only my life partner, but also a good director and facilitator on improving my prioritizing skills when I am faced with confusion related to my project; my good friends Lishan Ge and Jing Ye, a
PhD candidate in History and a professional coach respectively, offered me suggestions and facilitation that helped me go through some tough moments; my friends Xuefeng Ren and Yuling Niu were always there for me when I went through dark moments. My long-time friend Yuqing He helped me to build my website. This project reminded me that the value of a support system can never be overestimated, I began to take care of this support system intentionally since the best way to get supported is always being there to support others.

By doing this project, my management skills improved as well. Confucius said, “Managing the country is like cooking an entree.” It is true. The secret of the world is just in a flower and a drop of water. In this project I find a way to integrate my learning, my experience and my talents.

As to the improvements in creative problem solving skills, that’s a sure thing. Creative problem solving had already been integrated into my life and changed how I think and act, the whole process of working on this project is also a process of applying creative problem solving everywhere.

**Hard skills.** Skills will never be a burden, after this project, the improvement of my skills is phenomenal. First, my Chinese writing and translation skill was improved. Writing is always my passion, if you write more than 3,000 words every day, your “writing muscles” will absolutely get stronger. Along with the writing skills, my skill in translating English into Chinese is also getting better. After eight years’ translation experience for magazine, I am excited to see that different editors liked my translation. When I have more time, I would love to translate more English-language writings in creative studies into Chinese.
Second, my photography editing skills improved a lot, after editing a lot of pictures using Lightroom 4.0, a professional photography editing software presented by Adobe Company, I am more proficient in this software.

I have web-editing skills that I didn’t have before. Since I never did web editing before, a beginner always has the highest rate of growth. I find web editing to be great fun and will keep learning and practicing this skill.

Section Six: Conclusion

Three month’s hard work to finally put some thoughts and ideas into a practical and accessible product, is a process like a mother finally delivering the baby safely. I feel great about this! I am happy at what I already did, but I am happier at knowing that what I can do in the future and how to do better.

What’s the future that I want my website to have? After setting the website up, I got some foundation to stand on to think about the future: how can I make my website a portal for all Chinese visitors to the paradise of creative studies to take a look? My background in Advertising influenced my thinking. I just realized that I was applying Integrated Marketing Communication when I put the website, blog, mobile app and Weibo together. Media is the tool, and message is the soul. The quality of content is always the most important factor that decides whether a website can be successful. But I also noticed that how to make academic materials interesting is a challenge, whether in America or China. I not only should write what deserves to be shared with others, I also have to share it in interesting ways. I found some wonderful short videos on YouTube that can make academic concepts very funny and interesting, I will learn from them and
apply the new learning into my future work. I will keep editing the posts I have already made, and write more posts which are appealing and interesting.

This project worked well to fulfill its mission of offering a platform to share knowledge about creativity in China. Although the traffic of around 2,000 views to the website and blog is not very high, the process of education is just like lighting a candle or putting a seed in the soil, we can’t expect it to grow into a tall tree in only one day. But I see some potential in this project. The idea of creating a well-designed iPhone app is still on the wish list, but presently I will save all the ideations in one place, and work on things that are most important and urgent one by one.

Next move is to design a structure of a textbook in Creative Studies for university students and list the most important questions or topics that need to be answered in the book. Then I will work on original writing and academic translations, and years later, the contents here will become a real book. Besides, this is also a good way to balance divergent and convergent thinking in implementing this project. Since I am focusing on building an online platform and emphasizing the function of education and communication, I need to link more resources to my website. The internet is such a wonderful place in that the more you give, the more you get. I enjoy the pleasure of giving so much.

With the completion of this report, my two-years of life changing study at the International Center for Studies in Creativity at Buffalo State College is going to end, but the road to creativity, awareness and self-actualization never ends. Around 2300 years ago, the great ancient Chinese poet Yuan Qu said in the poetry anthology *Li Sao* (《离骚》) that “路漫漫其修远兮，吾将上下而求索”, the English meaning of this
sentence can best be explained by the speech made by Barack Obama in 2008 after he won the president election: “The road ahead will be long. Our climb will be steep.” That’s the attitude towards the future.

Long live creativity! Long live peace of our mind and the world.
References

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Appendices

Appendix A: Concept Paper

Concept Paper
Chendan Cui
To: Jon Michael Fox
CRS 690
September 20, 2012

The Creativity Thoughts Project: Integrating the Website, Blog, Mobile App and Weibo into a Platform to Promote Creative Studies in China

Section One: Background to this Project

Description of Project

By integrating the website, blog, Weibo (a microblogging site similar to Twitter), and mobile app into an online education platform, the Creative Thoughts project is going to introduce basic information and knowledge to Chinese readers who are interested in creativity and innovation.

The core of this project is the growing “Creativity Thoughts” database that is mainly composed of this author’s original writings, academic notes and translations of English materials into Chinese. Besides literature, this database also includes pictures that contribute to visualizing creativity and creative events.

The materials of the database will be published at the official website of this project and author’s blog, and the blog will be converged into a mobile app for Android mobile system. At the same time, the Weibo feed will synchronize with the blog and build more interaction between the author and the reader. After a one-month experiment, the effectiveness and meaning of this project was positively proven.
Rationale and Significance

The Creative Change Model highlights that the three facets of person, process, and environment interact to yield particular outcomes. Under certain environments that are conducive to creative thoughts, by working through an effective process, people with the right skills, knowledge, and personal traits are more likely to produce creative products, which means tangible or intangible outcomes that are new and useful (Puccio, 2011, p. 26).

My project is an attempt to effect some creative change by making a creative product. Creative change can take on different forms and was defined as “the adoption of a creative product, a novel and useful idea that has been embodied in either an intangible or tangible form, which adds value to an individual, team, organization or society” (Puccio, 2011, p.26). Two creative changes are expected after this project is finished: firstly, I will have developed new skills and built up a new website which I am proud of; secondly, there will be a new website dedicated to promoting creative studies in China.

There are seven reasons that make this project my passion, two of them are “environment” reasons, and the other five are “person” reasons.

**Reason one: meeting the need of creativity trends in China.** Niu (2006, p.13) take 1978 as the starting year of creativity research in Mainland China, and separate the development of creativity research in Mainland China into 3 steps. The trends of Creativity and innovation are rocking the world, China is trying to catch up with the world not only in economic development, but also in social innovation in different fields. With government support and encouragement, creativity and innovation is rising in China. At many important occasions, such as on March, 4, 1998, on the first meeting of
the 9th Session of National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), or on the opening ceremony of the third Session of the National Educational Working Meeting on June 15, 1999, the former president of P.R. China Zemin Jing talked about the importance of innovation and raised it up to the level of “innovation plays essential roles in the survival and development of Chinese nation”, in China, political power’s influence on education, academic research and public opinion can never be too highly valued. In the past ten years, Creative Studies has become a hotbed for Chinese educators and scholars, although there are big differences in understanding of some basic concepts in creative studies (Cui, 2011, p.16).

Although differences exist, Chinese society is dying to know more about creativity and innovation. Some popular business books about innovation, such as books of Edward, and De. Bono, were introduced to China and achieved great success, but either the depth or the breadth of these books is comparatively limited. We need different views and perspectives to enrich the picture of creative thinking and creative studies in China.

The internet offers extremely rich materials about creativity and innovation, but most of them are in English. Online resources and materials about creativity and innovation in Chinese are far from meeting the needs of the people. I began to teach the course of creative thinking in a Chinese university in the spring semester of 2007, during which time I discovered it was very hard to me to find solid research and academic literature about creativity. In the spring semester of 2011, I translated some chapters from English textbooks and reorganized them to teach my Chinese students, and found it worked pretty well! I am bilingual, but how can we make knowledge about creativity
from the Western world more accessible to those who only understand Chinese or those whose English is not good enough for reading university-level English literature? Presently, English education starts in elementary school in most areas of China, yet most Chinese still have difficulty communicating and learning from English materials.

With this background, A Chinese website that focused on offering basic knowledge about creativity could be important and useful.

**Reason two: E-learning & M-learning is reinventing education.** As the English science-fiction writer Eden Philpotts said: “The Universe is full of magical things, patiently waiting for our wits to grow sharper.” The approaches we teach and learn have changed a lot since the emergence of modern media. The modern classroom was invented in the 1770s in Prussia as a learning format that immobilized learners, forcing them to look straight ahead and pay attention to the teacher as the sole source of all knowledge (Woodwill, 2012, p.34). Although still based on a classroom metaphor, E-learning (learning over the internet) changed the organizational approaches of the classroom, and with the rising of M-learning (mobile-learning), all kinds of social media and mobile devices for learning became prevalent and rebuilt the vision of education.

China has the largest number of computer and mobile users in the world. According to the National Bureau of Statistics of China (2011), the sixth national population census started on November 1, 2010 suggested that China has a population of 1,370,536,875. In a report from the Ministry of Industry and Innovation Technology of the People’s Republic of China, Ding (2012) announced that as of 2011, the home ownership rate of computers in China is 70 computers per 100 families (the percent of homes owning computers is somewhat less than 70 percent, as some homes have more than one). And
the ownership rate of mobile phones is 73.6 phones per 100 persons. Huge opportunities are available in China, considering that Chinese families highly value education for their children. The coming waves of E-learning and M-learning are going to make big changes in China. Under these circumstances, it is meaningful to build a website about creative studies for Chinese users, particularly as few alternatives currently exist.

Reason three: the belief that everyone can be a creative change leader. As Eleanor Roosevelt said, “The future belongs to those who believe in their dreams”. I believe that anyone who works hard and smart can be a creative leader. I believe that by sharing our ideas with people we can change the world together. I believe that creativity is essential for the future of human society. Finally, I believe that everyone deserves to make full use of his or her potential to become the person he or she wants to be.

I love the precise and succinct definition that creativity is about “making the change that sticks (for a while)” (Talbot, 1997, p.181). By the way, this project will stick for a long time, not just for a short while. Puccio (2011) defined “deliberate creativity” as “taking a proactive approach toward the production of novel and useful ideas that address a predicament or opportunity” (p. xvi). My project is going to address an opportunity and build something new that benefits society. Basically, it aims at contributing to the creative change in creative studies’ learning, at great extent or at small extent. I believe that change of the outside world begins from within. For me, creative change first happened in my life, and I would love to extend it to the outside environment.

Reason four: Building a life-long teaching position for myself. I am definitely a life-long learner, and I want to be a life-long teacher. After six years’ teaching, I resigned my lecturer position in China and moved to North America in September 2012,
but my passion and desire for teaching, writing and sharing never dies. I plan to pursue my PhD education in the USA and look for opportunity to work as a faculty member after getting my PhD degree. I left the profession temporarily, but information technology offers a bigger one- there are thousands more people waiting to learn about creativity in China, the question is whether I am qualified and prepared to begin to meet that need. I think I need to learn more to carry on this mission, and this project offers me a great chance to practice and learn.

Reason five: interests in applying technology and new media in education.

Graduating from the Communication University of China, the leading university in media and communication education in China, I am always excited by the big potential associated with the development of new media. I have continuously made efforts in creating teaching methods that are both new and useful. In the fall semester of 2011, I used the Youku.com website and Weibo platform to manage and evaluate students’ projects, it helped me to reduce plagiarism and improved the participation and involvement of students greatly. The idea of building my own website excites me a lot, it would be a new tool and platform for teaching.

Reason six: extend my curiosity and serve my study. I am curious about a question: There are countless good resources and materials on the internet, how can we make full use of them for education purposes? I take a lot of notes when I read and teach, but they are cluttered in my bookshelf or somewhere I even forget. Without sharing them, most ideas and thoughts just flash and disappear. This reality inspired me to create a platform that can integrate my resources, experiences and knowledge to share with the world and learn from others. Things are useful only when they are in use - so is
knowledge and information. With this project, I am going to build a channel that will guide the water in my little pool of information out into the big information ocean of the world. By sharing with others, the drops in my little pool can live forever.

Section Two: Literature Review

The Internet is reinventing the vision of education. Free online courses are shaking the foundation of the traditional higher education system. Education organizations and educators have to be creative and innovative to address this big change. E-learning seems to have already become such an established concept that some recent literature about E-learning hasn’t felt the need to define the term (Nehme, 2010; Gilbert, Morton & Rowley, 2007; J. Bahhouth, & V. Bahhouth, 2011; Robert, 2010; Stein, 2011; Journell, 2010 & Khogali, 2011). This topic has stoked wide interest, 10 years ago, Imel said “the development of E-learning products and the provision of E-learning opportunities is one of the most rapidly expanding areas of education and training, in both education and industry” (as cited in Gilbert, Morton & Rowley, 2007, p. 560). Khogali’s case study showed that the students found that online resources can not only supported their learning from lectures, but may also “be of value in helping them to learn on their own and to learn things they would not have learned in lectures or accessed from books or other sources.” (2011, p. 315). As online resources, my project will be helpful for E-learners. Technology is becoming more and more user-friendly, with the help of software or online website builders like WordPress, it’s easy for users without technical backgrounds to build a website or other online resources. Based on the platform of wix.com, Jenna Smith, my classmate in International Center of Creative Studies built the “Beyonder” website and mobile app about TIM model that help teachers to apply creative
skills in their work. As Salmon (2005) suggested, if we avoid being overly concerned about the technological details, we can easily understand that teaching online, including E-learning, “has almost nothing to do with computers and everything to do with time, motivation, knowledge and the new agency of cyber-experience, as well as good, appropriate teaching” (p. 14-15).

As the development of smartphone, M-learning replaces E-learning to become a new buzz in education and industry. Educause, a nonprofit organization focused on advancing education through technology, defined M-learning as:

Mobile Learning, or M-learning, can be any educational interaction delivered through mobile technology and accessed at student’s convenience from any location. M-learning hardware may include mobile phones, handheld PCs, tablets, the iPad, and Netbooks, as well as devices such as the iPod touch that are able to run mobile applications. Because M-learning utilized a variety of devices, many of which are ubiquitous in the lives of students, it can foster student engagement and offer opportunities to make learning integral to daily life. (cited as Smith, J. M., 2012, p.11-12)

By using M-learning, students can learn anytime, at anywhere, and they can communicate with fellow learners via email and discussion forms, as well as public file-sharing platforms (like Dropbox, Evernote, Youtube, Slideshare), people can easily share files or work together on projects remotely.

Virtual classrooms, websites, blogs, twitter, can all become platforms of E-learning and mobile learning. The deliverables of my project include; website, blog, mobile app and Weibo.

The definition of a blog could be “a web page containing brief, chronologically arranged items of information. A blog can take the form of a diary, journal, what's new
Blogs provide a communication space that teachers can utilize with students whenever there is a curriculum need to develop writing, share ideas and reflect on work being undertaken in the classroom ("APA styles", 2011) Several studies have shown that blogs can be used in education effectively and students’ attitudes towards blogs are very positive (Du & Wagner, 2005; Glogoff, 2005; Birney, Barry & Eigeartaigh, 2006; Hall & Davison, 2007).

“Weibo” is a micro-blogging service popular in Asia, similar to Twitter. My project will use the Weibo service offered by Sina Corp which is the largest Internet Portal company in China. This August, the financial report of Sina Corp showed that the number of registered users of Sina Weibo is 368 million, 13.6 percent more than this past March. The number of daily active users amounts to 36.5 million (Jia, 2012). Weibo has become one of the most popular media for Chinese web users to do all kinds of communication, from vent anger over corruption to protesting, branding and education. By integrating my Weibo into my project, I can make use of this platform to build effective communication.

Section Three: Project Planning

Project Implementation Plan

There will be four milestones for implementation of his project.
Table 1. Timeline of project implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Milestone</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Finish 200 notes/articles for the Creative Thoughts database.</td>
<td>Content writing, translation &amp; Editing Pictures</td>
<td>From Sept. 02, 2012 to October 30, 2012</td>
<td>240 Hours (5 hours/day, 5 days/week)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Set the website up</td>
<td>Buy the domain and host service and set this website up.</td>
<td>From October 20, 2012 to October 30, 2012</td>
<td>30 Hours (Flexible work time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Updating prepared content to Website, Sina blog, Weibo</td>
<td>Updating and editing posts. Collecting responses and making changes of former plan.</td>
<td>From November 1, 2012 to November 15, 2012</td>
<td>60 Hours (5 hours/day, 5 days/week)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Writing the Graduate Project report</td>
<td>Writing &amp; Editing</td>
<td>From November 15, 2012 to December 05, 2012</td>
<td>120 hours (8 hours/day. Be flexible on working at weekends)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section Four: Outcomes

Outcomes

The outcomes of the project will include four parts: the official website of Creativity Thoughts, a blog that synchronize with the website, a Mobile App that works for Android system and a Weibo associated with this project.

The criteria to evaluate of this project includes:

- Whether the traffic to the website and blog meets my expectations. I am
Reference


Appendix B: How to use QR code to navigate the official website of Creativity Thoughts

如何使用 QR 码浏览“创造学笔记”官网 (Chinese Title)

http://blog.sina.com.cn/main_v5/ria/print.html?blog_id=blog...
欢迎常来“创造学笔记”看看，若有宝贵建议，欢迎联系笔者
(creativitythoughts@gmail.com)。

注：QR码是Quick Response Code的缩写，于1994年诞生于日本Denso-Wave公司，是一种特定的矩阵条码，呈正方形，只有黑白两种。其工作原理在于将黑色模块排列在背景为白色的正方形图案上，其中所存储的信息可以是文字、网址，也可以是其他数据。QR码的容量大、可靠性强、易于读取，越来越得到广泛应用。

本文地址：http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_4d5cc6d103016bho.html
所属分类：文化
相关评论：
阅读次数：

程凝丹

总访问次数：2842
Appendix C: About Creativity Thoughts

Creativity Thoughts 造学笔记

留美创造学科学硕士的专业笔记。旨在滋润创意心灵、传播创造学知识，推动创造学在中国的发展。

- 专家学者 Scholars & Professionals
- 创意人物 Creative Stories
- 创新教育 Creativity Education
- 各类资源 Resources & Links
- 思维训练营 Training 4U
- 文献精选 Books & Writings
- 概念与理论 Concepts & theories
- 专家观点 Creative Views
- 经典引语 Creativity Quotes

关于“造学笔记”的诞生（About Creativity Thoughts）

飓风Sandy正袭美国，笔者所在的小城Enfield，除了风雨，全城寂静。
我是CiCi, 本站的主人，感谢您光临小站，本站今天开篇，之后将持继进行更新。
笔者最早对创造力产生兴趣，可追溯到十二年前，那时笔者正求学于郑州大学文化与传播学院广告学专业，有一次，老师播放《广告也疯狂》的录像给我们看，各种精彩创意使我笑翻到肚疼……我不禁畅想：“作为广告学专业的学生，要是能接受创造力方面的训练该多好呢！”但直至大学毕业，心愿未能得偿。2002年毕业时，我发下誓言：他日若成为大学老师，一定开一门与创造力相关的课程。
2006年，我从北京广播学院（现中国传媒大学）广告学院硕士毕业，放弃了两个到一本和二本院校任教的机会，来到中国传媒大学南广学院任教，动机很简单：新学校，年轻人有更多机会去尝试（兼之素喜南京这一历史名城的文化意蕴，更是美上加美了）。果不其然，在任教的第二个学期，我就得已实现了当年的誓言，开办了《创意思维训练》课程，后来在中国传媒大学张
在开课的过程之中，笔者经历了一个痛苦的过程：遍寻各类中文资料，但并未找到足够的让我十分满意的文献。后来笔者曾主要依据爱德华·德·波诺的多本著作提炼出一些教学内容，但深知这些资料的教育性，又无法在深度、广度以及科学性上满足笔者的好奇心与教学需要。笔者对教学已经尽力而为，但课程中存在的不足，常让笔者深感不安。笔者在此深深感谢我所教过的每一位学生，教学相长，是他们的反馈，帮助笔者不断地提高。笔者更感谢单位里各位前辈和同事，感谢他们的信任和鼓励，使我可以以在这一课程的教学中不断进行尝试与革新。

在独自摸索的过程中，笔者认识了加拿大Shelton学院计算机动画专业的创始人、创新教育方面的专家Robin King先生，他介绍了一些英文资源给我，在诸多与创造力有关的教育项目中，我被纽约州立大学布法罗学院的国际创造学研究中心所吸引，笔者对创办了BBDO广告公司的奥斯伯恩的“脑力激荡法”甚为熟悉，但对于他创办的这个教学项目以及他对创造力的贡献，竟然所知甚少……越了解，越想了解。这时的笔者，早已不满足于盲从模仿般独自摸索，于是决心赴美留学。虽然这个项目的最高学位仅是科学硕士，但我深知：他们所教授的东西，正是我所需要的。笔者毅然决定赴美求学，攻读第二个硕士学位。自2011年春天开始，三个学期里笔者奔波于南京与布法罗，以半学期在美国求学、半学期在南京教学的紧密节奏，探索创造学之道。

在美国的求学，是“Life Changing” 的体验，笔者在此期间也经历了深刻的人生变革，而感受最深的是，创造力竟与人生的幸福感如此紧密相关，其中许多关节，若隐若现于佛理及道家学说相应，只是在西方的学术体系里缺少与此相关的阐述罢了。放下个人偏见不谈，创造学，尤其是创造性问题解决，中之实用之术，对于对治人生与工作中的具体情境，提升个体与组织的创造力，亦具非常之效。身为中华学子，一方面要在道的层面上求索，在哲学层面深化理解，另一方面，则要在术的层面上锤炼百炼，实现技能上的娴熟内化。笔者越求学，越深感自已学力浅薄，需要在知行合一中潜心探索。

“创造学笔谈”网站，是笔者自我鞭策的工具，也是学以致用的尝试：该如何整理自己的所学，并实现有意义的分享？网站以原创性读书笔记为主，辅以对各种文献的整理、归纳与收藏，在为自己的学业服务的同时，若能与有缘份的同道中人互通有无，那是更好了。

www.creativitythoughts.com 是“创造学笔谈”的官网，其内容暂时与笔者的新浪博客

笔者勉力而为，不足之处请多指教。

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附一：简介博客“创造学笔记”的QR码


附二：简介博客QR码

本二维码的链接为：http://qrfree.kaywa.com/?s=8&d=http%3A%2F%2Fs.hudee.com%2F1247592545

附三：简介微博“创造学在中国”QR码


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Appendix D: Bibliography of Suggested Reading

(References of Creativity Thoughts database)


Evaluation Matrices, retrieved from people.ucalgary.ca/~design/.../eval_matrices.pdf on 2012-09-07

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