



Wellington Xiamen Association

[www.wellingtonxiamen.com](http://www.wellingtonxiamen.com)

Xiamen Office: 86-592-5312128

86-13906018796

## 2014 China (Xiamen) International Forum for Friendship Cities

### *Seeking Cooperation and Development among International*

### *Friendship Cities in the New Media Era*

#### **Introduction:**

Thank you for the invitation to speak. It is great to be amongst my old friends but also to see so many new faces from sister cities. I shall make a point of making friends with all of you too. Many of you will know that I have been part of these annual meetings for many years. The annual gatherings of sister cities are essentially there to give us time where we not only have the business at hand that give us impetus and worthwhile knowledge, but also interact with each other and get to know what and how you do things in your cities. For a good many years, I have advocated that we ought to do more to interact and instill closer relationships with each other on all aspects, being this cultural or business of any kind.

Today's topic is yet another way to achieve almost instant interaction since adopting the New Media tools can give us easy communications.

#### **Background:**

When budding volunteer soldiers in New Zealand wanted to sign up to defend 'mother England' at the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> World War in 1914, people in New Zealand were told that the war would perhaps only last about 3 months. Some mothers of these fine young soldiers told them look, by the time you get there it will be all over. Transport from New Zealand was only by ship which mostly took 5 weeks to reach England or Europe. That also included communications as mail was sent on the very same ships.

By around 1965, mail-time was reduced to about 1 week as aircraft transport was becoming the norm. Nevertheless, if I wanted to call my mother in The Netherlands, I had to ask her neighbour, that had telephone, to jump over the fence to alert my mother that her son from New Zealand is on the phone. It also cost me at least \$35.00 per call for just a few minutes, a fortune at that time.

## **Current Internet Useage**

We all know that communications have had a phenomenal growth with numerous new ways that rendered some of the tools we used, near obsolete.

Worldwide, we use the internet almost exclusively with many people also using smart phones that have everything inside them we need to communicate with. Many people use popular sites like facebook and twitter. Neither of that kind of social media in my view are something we should aspire to, particularly in light of recent video placed, showing gruesome uploads that are totally immoral and must be banned. This platform of communication can be dangerous for sister cities to be associated with. Be it right or not, already much of what we do electronically is being traced or can be traced by third parties without consent of the person placing their items.

## **Wellington IT & Media**

Wellington is the IT Capitol of New Zealand. A highly developed and highly skilled, mostly young entrepreneurs are or have influenced large international companies such as Microsoft, Google and Hollywood with their technically advanced software developments. You are probably aware of advanced technical know-how that have propelled Wellington as a prime destination in digital media projects resulting in internationally acclaimed movies such as Avatar and Lord of the Rings. Television New Zealand has become significantly more profitable as a result of digital media that have been invented in Wellington by Wellington based software guru's.

All this would not have been possible without the foresight of Wellington City Council in partnership with venture capital from mostly local companies setting up incubators where likeminded young people could explore their minds.

## **Possibilities**

I think that New Media can be categorized as follows;

- **Social Media**: WeChat is an excellent platform for instant inexpensive communications widely used in China and elsewhere where we can speak to each other but also exchange documents, pictures and almost anything except a handshake. Naturally, there are a few others on the market including Twitter, Facebook and others also having enormous traffic for anyone including business. Although I have real misgivings in security issues about such platforms of communications, we can use this media for our Sister City organization too. Already, our Wellington-Xiamen Association website gives the opportunity to use Facebook. Please look at [www.wellingtonxiamen.com](http://www.wellingtonxiamen.com)
- **Digital Canvas**: Again, China too has a platform called Youku designed to show film or movie screening with excellent resolutions and general good

quality. It is by and large not very convenient to watch on small handheld machines.

- **Broadband:** Wellington is well advanced to have WiFi available in all of the city. Also, Wellington is rolling out further capacity in fibre-optic cabling that enable large digital traffic volumes to take place with much higher speeds. Internet access is a must for everybody and already we see many examples of new technology replacing traditional means of communications and sales.
- Not least is the fast developing Internet Sales worldwide that are a severe threat to shopkeepers in cities such as Wellington where it could have the capacity to force out shopping clusters that have been the backbone of prosperity for cities worldwide.

## **Future**

I am looking forward to see further developments coming into being as we aspire to ever inquisitive minds bring us ways and means to interact. Today, there is no need to be lonely when it comes to entertainment or out-reach to anyone one that he or she may wish to be associated with. I therefore recommend that all Sister Cities make it possible to reach other by making themselves available to have free communications with each other by establishing websites and other means so as we can see what you are up to without having to travel to Guadalajara even though I would love to be there.

May I take this opportunity to strongly recommend that Sister Cities of Xiamen be encouraged to set up Associations such as what we have in Wellington. I am convinced that those people with affinities to the cities by having had studies, travels, business or other relations be canvassed to become members of such associations. This will bring better interest between sister cities with a broader view and input from the wider population of those cities and thereby becoming more vibrant and create further willingness in free communications with each other. This cooperation between all of us can be achieved in the New Media Era!!

## **Closing**

Thank you for listening to me and I sincerely hope we can continue our revered friendship with this outstanding city called Xiamen. So please, come again or better still, come more often.

*Ben Van Rooy*

Xiamen Representative