



Journal Homepage: - www.journalijar.com

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ADVANCED RESEARCH (IJAR)

Article DOI: 10.21474/IJAR01/14169

DOI URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21474/IJAR01/14169>



RESEARCH ARTICLE

RESEARCH ON DEVELOPMENT PROCESS AND OPTIMIZATION STRATEGY OF THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF SHANGHAI GOVERNMENT'S ENGLISH WEB PORTAL

Mao Feng¹, Lyu Wenhui¹, Zhang Xuehe¹ and Wu Biyu²

1. School of Foreign Languages, Shanghai University of International Business and Economics, Shanghai, China.
2. School of Foreign Languages, East China University of Science and Technology, Shanghai, China.

Manuscript Info

Manuscript History

Received: 30 November 2021

Final Accepted: 31 December 2021

Published: January 2022

Key words:-

Shanghai Municipal Government,
English web portal, Website
construction, Optimization strategy,
Internationalization

Abstract

The English web portal of the Shanghai Municipal Government is a platform for the Shanghai Government to release information and provide services, and it is also the best window for publicizing Shanghai to the outside world. This research reviews the history of the English web portal construction of the Shanghai Municipal Government and finds its future direction by gaining enlightenment from the characteristics of foreign governments' foreign-language web portals construction, so as to promote more accurate and timely release of information on the government website, and answer questions for foreigners. It is conducive to creating a real service-oriented web portal and increase the influence of communication.

Copy Right, IJAR, 2022,. All rights reserved.

Introduction:-

With the rapid development of information today, government image, as a special political resource, plays an increasingly significant role. A good government image means the trust and support of the public. The important part of the government web portal is a new stage of government foreign affairs and an important carrier of international diplomacy. It plays a critical role in enhancing the country's soft power. The Shanghai government English web portal is aimed to provide foreigners with convenient services so as to show Shanghai as an international metropolis with love and kindness. Therefore, the internationalization of government websites is urgent and practical.

The government web portal has the characteristics of internationalization, transparency, and integrity, as well as the rule of law. The construction of the English portal of China's government website is still in its infancy. On the whole, the quality of the English website is far less than that of the government's website in Chinese version. Due to lack of experience and other reasons, the image of China or a city displayed on the government's English website does not correspond to the pace of China's economic construction and opening to the outside world^[1]. In contrast, foreign countries have relatively mature experience in the construction of government websites, especially the United Kingdom, the United States and Singapore^[2]. This research uses the three countries' government websites as a reference and takes Shanghai Municipal Government English website as an example. It analyzes the construction and requirements of the Chinese government English web portal and clarifies the positioning of the government English website in the new era. Building a good government English portal is conducive to spreading the government's voice, shaping a people-oriented government image, and further improving international competitiveness.

Corresponding Author:- Wu Biyu

Address:- School of Foreign Languages, East China University of Science and Technology, Shanghai, China.

The Construction Process of Shanghai Municipal Government English Website

1. The Early Stages of Construction

The portal of Shanghai government website is the general platform for Shanghai government to release information and provide services, and is the window to communicate with the people. At the same time, it is also the best window to promote Shanghai image. The Shanghai government website is available in both Chinese and English. The English version is aimed at expats in Shanghai by providing them with convenient services to work, study, travel and so on. The purpose is to enhance Shanghai's communication to the world, optimize Shanghai's service to foreigners, promote Shanghai's image, and attract more high-quality overseas resources. Since its establishment, the Shanghai government English website has constantly adjusted the positioning and strengthened the service function, and underwent three major revisions.

In early 2003, the Shanghai government English web portal was revamped for the first time. As much as possible, the content and structure of the website should be aligned with that of the Chinese version. Shanghai daily helped to update the content of the English version of the website so that it was timely and accurate. Following the steps of the Chinese version of the website, the English version of the website had set up columns such as "Window of the Municipal Mayor", worked hand in hand with the Municipal Education Commission, the Municipal Bureau of Industry and Commerce and the municipal tourism commission to carry out planning and consultation, renovating columns such as "Traveling to Shanghai" and "Investing in Shanghai", and added "Study in Shanghai", "Foreign Employment" and other practical columns, providing better service for foreigners.

In 2007, the English version of the government website was revamped for the second time. Among them, the style, layout and the design of each column had a greater innovation, which greatly highlighted the portal's service functions. The new columns included "Learning Chinese", "Statistical Yearbook", "Practical Information", "Living in Shanghai" and so on, so that foreigners could further experience the charm of Shanghai. The information retrieval system had been further improved, the site map and the site level navigation had been further upgraded and improved, and the language standardization of the "Convenient QA" column had been emphasized, international consulting firms had been hired to proofread the language and various measures had been taken to improve the readability of the English version of the website. In 2007, the English language site received 5.6 million page views, up 50 percent from the previous year, according to the data, which showed that the improved site has attracted more attention from foreigners.

In 2009, the English language portal underwent its third major overhaul. As a result of the successful bid for the World Expo, Shanghai seized the opportunity to speed up the construction of the website and strived to move closer to the world's advanced government websites, shouldering the important task of connecting Shanghai with the world. In this revision, the key task was to continue to reform and improve the specific content of the column, to highlight the service content, and to design the website in accordance with the international mainstream standards, so that its function and release form were in line with that of the English version in terms of the site features and browsing habits.

There was also a need to increase the publicity of the English website, and carry out online interaction with foreigners to understand and solve the inconvenience in their lives. The revision appropriately adjusted and deleted the column content which was not practical enough to ensure the authority and integrity of the information on the website; the contact methods of government departments were updated to enrich the services for the public; at the same time, the column content was added, such as "Hotel Reservation", "Aircraft Flight Query" and other practical information inquiries, so foreigners could easily live in Shanghai. In 2009, the English version of the site reached a record high of 19.8 million hits as a result of constant updating of the site's content.

2. The New Stage of Improvement

The "Shanghai, China" portal, hosted by the Shanghai municipal government and undertaken by the General Office of the Shanghai Municipal Government, was opened on September 28, 2001, and officially launched in early 2002, more than three years after the launch of the Beijing government website "Capital Window", however, the construction of "Shanghai, China" website fully absorbed the experience of Beijing Foreign Language website construction, forming a slow, fast and slow pace of development. The initial construction of the website in "Shanghai, China" was relatively difficult, but after three revisions, the speed of development of the website had increased rapidly. The successful bid for the 2009 World Expo had brought the development of the English web

portal in Shanghai to a climax, however, because its relatively uniform construction mode was not suitable for the late integration of resources, so the second development stage of the website is relatively slow.

With the development of e-government, the main goal of the post-construction of "Shanghai, China" is to continue to develop and improve the online government and government service integration. More and more offline government services have transferred to the online. For example, services such as education, medical care, transportation and marriage registration are provided to foreigners, and services such as business establishment and business operation are provided to foreign enterprises, which broaden and deepen the range of services available to different categories of expatriates (As shown in Figure 1).



Figure 1:- Shanghai Municipal Government's English web portal.

The web design style is closely related to the government service concept. Therefore, "Shanghai, China" has also made certain adjustments to its web design style. While retaining some of the traditional features of early government websites, it has learned from the foreign government websites design to form a clear and simple style with better organization and ease of use, which make it easy for foreigners to quickly find the services they need, in order to reflect Shanghai's international characteristics and the service concept of the Shanghai government.

Nowadays, the English web portal of the Shanghai government provides targeted services for foreigners, compatriots from Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan, overseas Chinese, and foreign companies. These groups can get the information they need on the website and gain any service they want to know about. The English version of the Shanghai government website includes columns such as "News", "Business", and "Encyclopedia". The webpage design complies with international mainstream standards, the information is comprehensive and authoritative, and the volume of visits have increased significantly. The portal strives to meet the needs of foreigners, to let them learn more about Shanghai by publishing Shanghai's daily news, business-related information, and cultural and tourist information, and so to become a professional website of internationalization and practicality, and truly implement the "people-oriented" policy.

The construction of web portals presents the image of Shanghai government to be service-oriented, and ensure openness, transparency, integrity. However, the English portal of the Shanghai government still needs to be strengthened in highlighting the government's good image. Therefore, it is still necessary to clarify the Shanghai government's English website construction by learning the advantages of foreign government portals.

The Characteristics of Foreign Government Web Portal Construction

1. The Image of a Service-oriented Government

Service-oriented government focuses on serving people as the core concept, therefore, the construction of the government website should also focus on serving the people and facilitating the people. The service-oriented government website is different from the general portal website, its outstanding characteristic is to serve the public, the enterprises and the government system. The service is the lifeline of the government web portal ^[3]. The construction of government web portal aims to make the citizens and foreigners get the service they need conveniently and quickly.

In constructing the service-oriented government website, we have to mention the Singapore government. The service function of the Singapore government portal is extremely powerful, and it was once rated as the most advanced comprehensive service website in the world by the Public Service Management Department of the United States. Citizens can complete almost any service they need online. It is not difficult to see from Figure 2 that the website covers all kinds of services that are closely related to residents' lives, from economy, immigration, law to education, housing, transportation, etc., realizing a true "one-stop" service. In the process of e-government development in Singapore, it has experienced two more important "Five-year Plans". The first one was in 2006 when Singapore launched the first five-year plan for the "Smart Nation". Based on the concept of "One Government", this reform coordinated the design of public affairs, promoted mutual cooperation among various departments, and initially realized the larger-scale sharing of processes, data and systems within the government. In June 2011, Singapore released its second five-year plan "E-Government 2015" to promote the transition from "Government for you" to "Government with you", and create an interaction with the public from the perspective of cooperative government ^[4]. After continuous innovation and the 10-year plan of "Smart Nation 2025" launched in 2016, Singapore's central government website has continuously improved its own service functions, greatly increasing the online service rate, and 98% of public services will be provided through online platform, people can more fully enjoy the one-stop service (As shown in Figure 2).

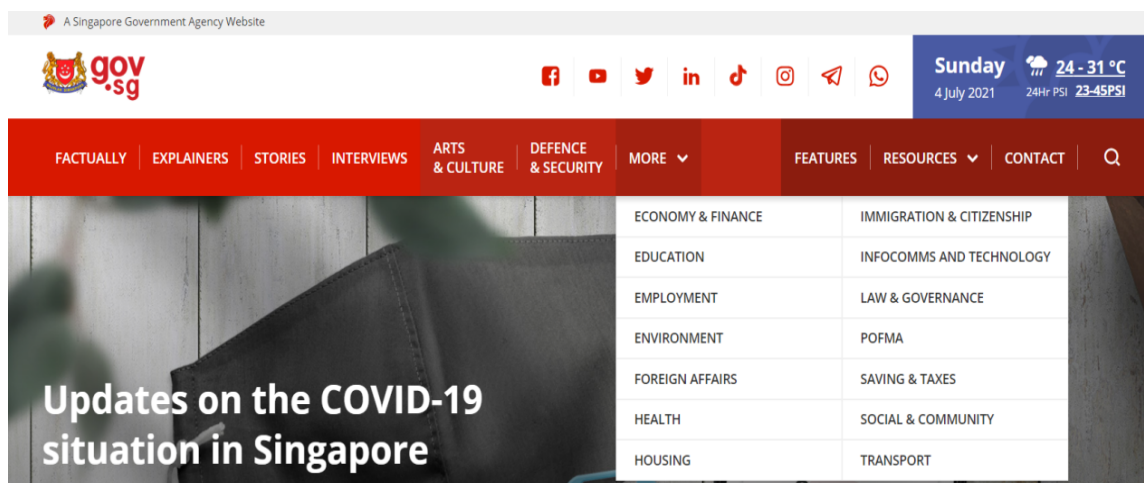


Figure 2:- Singapore Government's English web portal.

2. The Image of a Transparent Government

In the new era, the citizens' rights to know, participate and supervise require the government to disclose more information, and the government should provide more correct and convenient information to promote the positive interaction between the government and the citizens, at the same time, create a responsible, pro-people image of the government. Chinese scholar Keping Yu (2000)^[5] defined transparency as "The openness of government information, that is, the right of every citizen to have access to information about government policies relevant to his or her interests, including legislative activities, policy making, legal provisions, policy implementation, administrative budgets, public spending, and other political information"; "Transparency requires that the above-mentioned political information be made known to citizens through various media in a timely manner so that citizens can effectively participate in the public decision-making process and exercise effective supervision over the public management process." He Xiu (2016)^[6] said, the Chinese government website mainly publishes information about government agencies, leaders' political activities, and policy documents, but the data is less open. With the development of e-government, the French government has continuously expanded the scope of government data sharing, and has established a good foundation for open information.

The French government portal mainly includes the French public service network, French government network and the French government data network, providing different services. The French government believes that information of government and state can be shared with citizens and, in order to monitor the release of data by French authorities, to set up a data-sharing platform, the French government officially launched the data sharing platform **data.gouv.fr** in 2011. The website has three sections. First, open data (Découvrez l'OpenData), website users can access the relevant information according to their different identities; second, data (données), sub-datasets (jeux de

données), re-use data (réutilisations), data publishing organizations (organizations); third, navigation (tableau de bord), whose main function is to monitor and update the data provided by the website in real time^[7]. The data access of the platform will allow the French government to monitor which areas of are of the greatest interest to its citizens, thus "tailoring" the government to the needs of the people. (As shown in Figure 3)

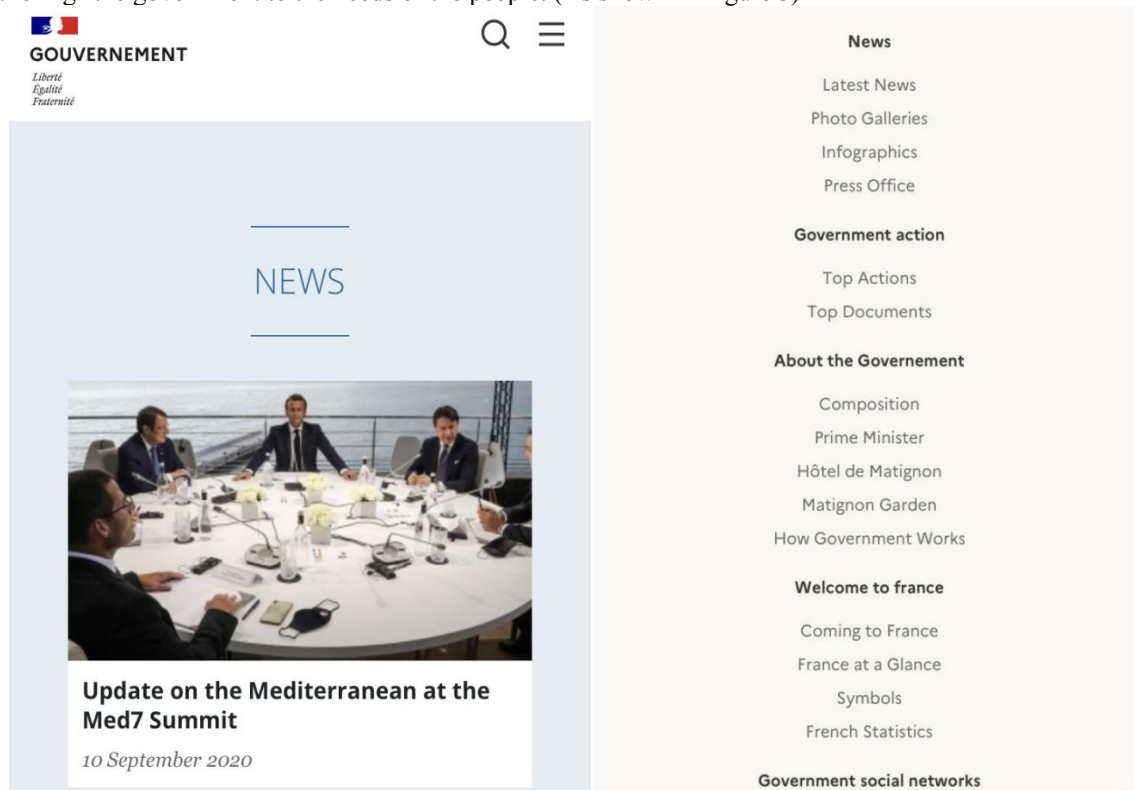


Figure 3:- French Government's web portal.

3. The Image of a Law-based Government

Government websites should have law-based characteristics. The government under the rule of law is an important symbol of political civilization in modern countries. The construction of the government under the rule of law promotes the construction of a law-biding society, not only because the government implements laws and represents public power, but also because the government's work is closely related to people's lives and have a direct impact on people's acceptance of the law government^[8]. In essence, the rule of law is the foundation of the top-level design of the government image. The government constructs the image of law government through website, which can convey the values of justice, harmony and order to the public. It is conducive to providing more diversified choices and convenient ways for citizens to participate in legislation in an orderly manner^[9]. U.S. government websites have been used to promote government policies. For example, the immigration system successfully caught the attention of U.S. citizens in June 2013. The administration introduced reform policies and used "Our immigration system is broken" on the White House website to make visitors aware of the importance of the issue had ultimately provided support for the Democrats' policies led by Obama. The United States has used its government website to promote relevant policies and win the hearts and minds of the people with a win-win effect^[10]. (As shown in Figure 4)

U.S. Government Services and Information

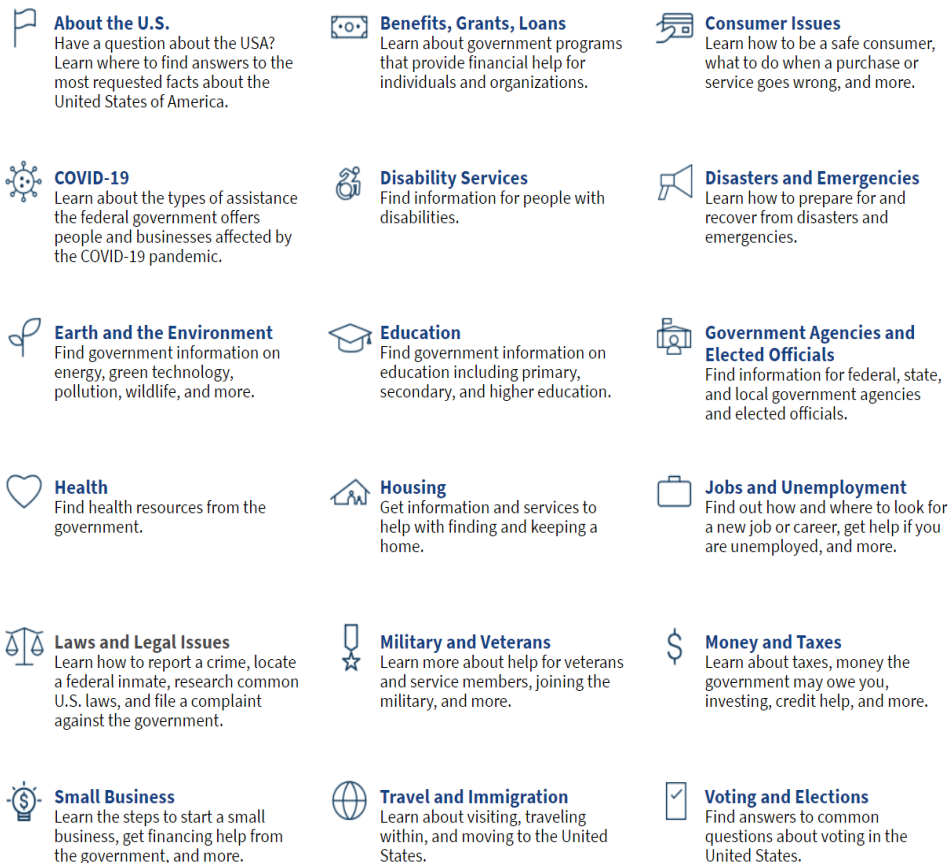


Figure 4:- U.S. Government's Web Portal.

4. The Image of an Honest Government

Government websites should reflect the characteristics of integrity. Honest government means that government offices and officials should carry out their functions and powers in good faith, and cannot change or withdraw their behaviors or commitments. As the main body of service, the government should improve the public trust, and provide public services to the people in good faith^[8]. The honest government image will affect the government authority and the public trust degree to the government. As an important platform for government information disclosure, government websites provide channels for public opinion supervision and help strengthen public supervision of government's public power and reduce corruption^[9]. In 2010, Europe launched the EU I2010 E-government Action Plan, which aims to build inclusive e-government to ensure that all citizens, including socially vulnerable groups, can benefit from e-government by 2010. She gained more and more public trust by providing public information and services^[11]. The function of the U.S. government website includes the section of U.S. government services and information. As a communication bridge between the government and the public, it provides real and objective data so that the public can understand information released by the government at any time, including information on housing, education, and services for the disabled, consumer rights, unemployment assistance and other sections. This expands the way the government and the public communicate, and is conducive to creating an honest and people-friendly government website image. Singapore's government website has set up sections for online services and public consultation. Netizens who browse the website can participate in discussions on some topics and consult the government while obtaining the services they need^[12]. On the British government website (gov.uk), "Government Departments and Policies" consists of links to 24 cabinet departments, 331 other departments and public institutions, which is open and honest, and facilitates public access to information^[2].

Shanghai Municipal Government Web Portal Construction Direction

1. Stress the Service Function of the Government

There are significant differences in the provision of services between the Chinese and English websites of the Shanghai Municipal Government. Both homepages of the Chinese and English websites of the Shanghai Municipal Government have search boxes for "Search for policies, information or services you want to know". On the Chinese version of the website, there are search boxes especially for "Covid-19", and a column for prevention and control of the pandemic, including five major sections: policies and news, epidemic trends, individual services, company services, and third-party services. The public can view the latest daily epidemic situation, or click on the individual services section to obtain relevant information on outpatient clinics, self-examinations of inbound passengers, and designated pharmacies of medical insurance in Shanghai. However, searching for "COVID-19" on the English version of the website, the search results are too different from the results of the Chinese version, only containing two sections: "News" and "Government". Users rarely see some service information, such as querying the epidemic situation and the address of the institution receiving patients with fever. The news about the epidemic is too fragmented and not as clear as the Chinese version of the website, so it is not conducive for foreigners to obtain the information they need efficiently and conveniently. Therefore, in order to highlight the function of a service-oriented government, the Shanghai government should build the English version website the same as the layout of the Chinese version website as much as possible. In the "Search Service" column, we should provide more services, such as relevant policies and news and personal service query column, which helps to truly satisfy foreigners. The demand of the government is also conducive to helping the Shanghai government establish a good image. Building a service-oriented government is by no means empty talk, it should be proven by all the aspects in the website construction.

2. Create a Transparent Government

On the "Public Government Affairs" column of the Chinese version of Shanghai government website, there are five major sections, namely "Public strategic decision", "Public execution procedure", "Public management", "Public service", and "Public results". Among them, there are detailed branches under each section. For example, in the "Public management", citizens can obtain information related to the city government's regulation, institutional responsibilities, rights and liability list, negative information about cross-border trade in services, and personnel information. The Chinese version of the website is open and transparent, so the public can learn about any government policies that are closely related to them, and can learn about government reports, publicized data and results, etc. However, on the English version of the Shanghai government website, the "Government" column is relatively small, just including six sections, "Office of Mayor", "Policies and legislations", "Agencies", "Press conferences", "Government Bulletin" and "Shanghai Master Plan". As a result, foreigners' understanding of the Shanghai government may only remain on the surface. Compared with the Chinese version of the website, it is relatively rough and needs to be further improved. For example, the "Public service" section of the Chinese website includes "Public Service needed", citizens can check the service institutions or the business that needs to be handled according to their district or even their subordinate streets, which can also be designed in its English version. Of course, the English version of the Shanghai government website also has a special "Encyclopedia" column. In this column, foreigners can get a general understanding of Shanghai city maps, major universities, international schools, hospitals, and museums. The column is rich in pictures and texts, which can provide convenient guidance for foreigners living or traveling in Shanghai. In short, whether it is the Chinese version or the English version of the government website, creating a transparent government image will help to answer questions for the public and establish the prestige of the government.

3. Enhance Information Utilization

When we visit the English website of the Shanghai Municipal Government, we will find that there are various types of news in the "News" section, but all of which are anecdotes, such as "Night party starts at Sinai Mansions", "Disney staff save cardiac arrest victim" or "Police catch 32 suspects in sand mining cases", etc. This type of information is not of substantial help to foreigners. If they are interested in this type of news, they can get it from the Internet, TV or other social media platforms. As an important window for foreign exchanges and foreign affairs services, the government's English version should build itself into a convenient platform for foreigners. The news section should also provide more content related to foreigners, such as the adoption or changes of policies and regulations. Government can also do some investigations on news content that can attract foreigners' attentions, so as to reduce the low or even non-utilized information and improve the effectiveness of services.

4. Unequal Chinese and English Website Functions

After comparing the Chinese and English websites of the Shanghai Municipal Government, we found that the functions provided by the Chinese and English websites did not correspond well, and some very convenient functions were not provided in the English website. For example, in Chinese version of the website, it provides

services such as subscription, sharing, and customers' intelligent service on the right side of the page. If citizens have any questions that cannot be found on their own, they can directly ask customer service, which is very user-friendly, however, the English website does not have this series of services. Due to cultural and institutional differences, there may be some differences between the English version of Chinese municipal governments and foreign nationals' government websites. As a result, foreigners may not be able to find the information or services they need in a short period of time, so we believe that for foreign nationals, online customer service will greatly improve the quality and efficiency of service. We also noticed that there are five sections at the top of the Chinese website, namely "Government Services", "Latest News", "Transparent Government", "Interaction between Government and Citizens" and "Learn More about Shanghai". On its corresponding English version, there are "News", "Government", "Business" and "Encyclopedia". Although the English web portal has changed several columns according to the needs of foreigners, it is obvious that there is a lack of columns that provide interactions between foreigners and the Shanghai government. In addition, the Chinese government has provided functions such as "People's Suggestion Mailbox" and "Advice and Suggestions" to collect opinions from citizens, but similar functions have not been found in the English web portal.

Suggestions for Improvement of Shanghai Municipal Government's Web Portal

1. Provide People-centered and Diversified Services

Firstly, the English website of the Shanghai Municipal Government should further subdivide the foreigners who browse the website, according to different identities and different needs, such as by occupation or by age group. Thus we can provide corresponding services to users according to careful classification of foreigner users so as to provide good service to facilitate users. The second is to provide comprehensive policies of life, tourism, culture, commerce, etc., and release the latest information in a timely manner. At the same time, it is necessary to pay much attention to the problems that foreigners frequently consult. Providing information with a high degree of attention is conducive to increasing the visits of website, improving the efficiency of English websites, and increasing the credibility of the Shanghai government. In doing so, the purpose is to exhaust our ability to serve users and promote websites of English version to change from content-oriented to service-oriented, and finally making the English website an embodiment of the Chinese government's "people-oriented" service concept.

2. Enrich the Form of the Website and Strengthen the Integration with Media

The construction of English website of the Shanghai Municipal Government should seize the development opportunities in the Internet era, integrate the construction of English website columns by taking advantages of the Internet, innovate interactive models, and use WeChat, Weibo, TikTok and other popular social media to upgrade the latest news through a diversity of forms, such as text, pictures, or short videos on the website. The government can open its Weibo, TikTok or WeChat official accounts to interact with the public through comments, and give feedback in time. As these official accounts get more "followers" via this new model, they can help increase the affinity of government, and make English website truly become a platform for the communication between government and foreigners in Shanghai ^[1], thus realizing the transformation of English website in the new era with the power of new media and keeping in line with the times and enhancing connection with the users.

3. Promote the Website to Attract Social Attention

For some Western developed countries whose mother tongue is English, because of their innate language advantages and international influence, the government websites of these countries attract more attention than the foreign language government websites in China. Nowadays, China is now receiving more and more attention from the international community, and the depth and breadth of attention are unprecedented. Therefore, the Chinese government website should regard the external promotion of the Chinese government's English website as a key task, and the government's English website as a window to display China's image so as to make good use of all available internal and external resources. For example, strengthen cooperation with government websites of other countries and add links on websites of other countries to provide convenient paths for foreign netizens to visit Chinese government websites; broadcast the website's promotional videos at major events such as airports, high-speed railway stations or landmark buildings to attract people; "advertise" on websites with high reputation abroad, such as Alibaba, to expand promotion channels.

4. Increase the Interaction between the Foreigners and Municipal Government

The government web portal in China is changing from being content-oriented to service-oriented, and this should also be revealed in the English version of the government website. In the process of building intelligent and service-oriented English website, mobile computing technology and big data analysis technology are very important, and the

opinions of foreigners are even more important ^[13]. We should actively encourage foreigners to participate in the construction of government English website, provide them with a convenient and unobstructed feedback platform, and put forward opinions and suggestions on the process of website construction, which is conducive to creating a good atmosphere for the people, and shaping a friendly, open and sharing China in the international community. Specifically, the government can provide online services to meet the needs of foreigners in Shanghai for consultation, complaints, and suggestions; set up "mailboxes" to encourage foreign netizens to supervise the website, and provide suggestions for modification and improvement of inappropriate expressions on the website to improve the quality of the English version of Shanghai government website .

References:-

- [1]Li Hongxia, The Status Quo and Improvement Strategies of the Construction of Chinese Government Foreign Language Websites, International Communications, 2018,(05),40-42.
- [2]Li Dan, Research on the Construction and Development of Foreign Versions of Government Websites under the Background of Internationalization.,Telecom World,2015,(02),248-250.
- [3]Zhang Xianghong, Zhang Shaohong, Wang Mingming, Three Functional Positioning of Chinese Websites-one of the Theoretical Foundations of Government Websites, E-Government , 2007(03):16-20.
- [4]Deng Nianguo, Thoughts on Creating a "Mobile Service City" , Hangzhou, 2018(35):31-35.
- [5]Yu Keping, Governance and Good Governance, Social Sciences Academic Press, 2000.
- [6]He Xiu, A Comparative Study on the Construction of Government Portal Websites——Taking China, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Singapore as Examples, Modern Business, 2016,(23),119-120.
- [7]Xiao Xue,Hu Linyue,Wang Xiaodi, Study on Government Open Data Development Status and Revelation Research in France, Journal of Modern Information, 2017,37(07),138-143.
- [8]Jiang Chuanguang, Liu Yue, The Value Basis of the Construction of China's Legal Government,Journal of Harbin Institute of Technology(Social Sciences Edition), 2020,22(03),35-47.
- [9]Huang He,WengZhijing, The Environment, Measures and Systems of Government Image Construction in the Context of Mobile Internet, Chinese Journal of Journalism & Communication, 2016,38(08),74-91.
- [10]Lu Hanzhi, Viewing the Development of Chinese Government Websites from the Construction of Chinese Government Websites, News World, 2014,(01),77-78.
- [11]Wu Yuyi, The Comparison Between Foreign E-government Construction and China's E-government Construction, LataiWorld, 2012(01).
- [12]Bai Chaoyang, Competition of Central Government Websites of Various Countries,China Economic Weekly, 2013,21.
- [13]Zhu Xin, The Construction Path of China's Smart Service Oriented Government in the Era of Big Data, Office Informatization, 2021,26(03):12-14.