



Mini Programs: Everything You Wanted to Know But Were Afraid to Ask

George Borrelli, Founder ChatDevs

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Meet the Speaker:

- “Marketer by day, hacker by night”
- Came to China in ‘12
- Graduated in ‘15 and began Hangzhou Plus
- Created first English Mini Program, HZPlus
- HZPlus ends, begin ChatDevs to develop Mini Programs



Contents

- What are Mini Programs (MP's)?
- Differences between various Official Accounts
- Why you need (or don't) need a Mini Program
- So you want to build an MP – What you need
- MP Case Studies
- QA
- Activity

Silent But Deadly



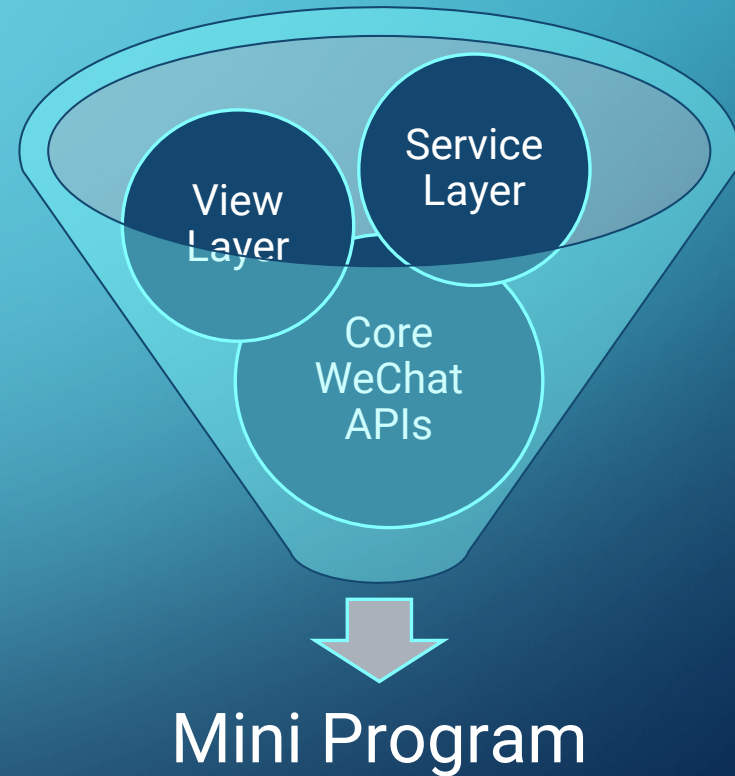
What Are Mini Programs (MP's)?

- Mini Programs are WeChat's newest type of Official Account.
- Officially released on January 9th, 2017
- Allow easy cross-platform 'app' development
- The final element of WeChat's immersive ecosystem?



What Are Mini Programs (MP's) – Techie Version

- A Mini Program is a development framework which allows the creation of cross-platform applications that run within WeChat and have access to its rich array of APIs and services.
- Mini Programs incorporate a service layer (the MP backend) and a reactive view layer (the frontend) which communicate with each other and update on-the-fly
- TL;DR: A customized extension of core WeChat functionality that can instantly manipulate + display data.



Similar Technologies

Instant Pages / Apps:



Android
Instant
Apps



Google
AMP



Facebook
Instant
Articles

Cross-Platform Reactive Frameworks

React
Native



Vue +
Weex

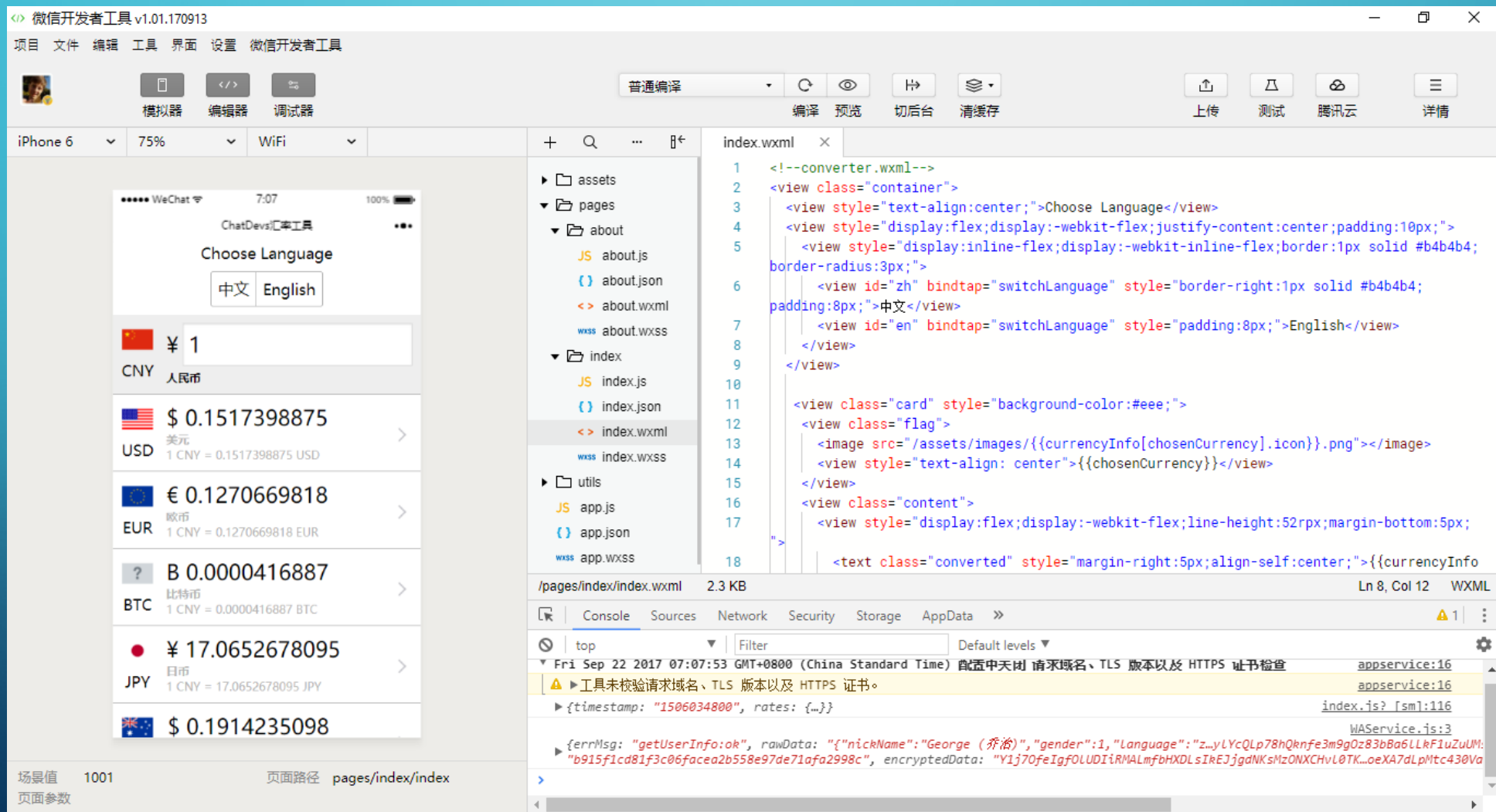


Angular +
Ionic



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Dev Tool



The Beginning of MP's

- （小程序）， literally “Mini Programs” were announced in 2016
 - Open development began on September 22nd
- Mini Programs were created on the premise of 『好的产品是用完即走』, meaning “Good products let the customer get in and get out quickly”.

“好的产品是用完即走”
- Allen Zhang, WeChat Founder



The Hype

WeChat's Mini Programs Take Aim at Traditional Apps

Service may upend app usage

January 10, 2017 | [Mobile](#)

[eMarketer](#)

#BUSINESS NEWS JANUARY 10, 2017 / 7:43 PM / 8 MONTHS AGO

China's WeChat seeks slice of Apple's app store with 'mini' function

Reuters Staff

3 MIN READ

[Reuters](#)

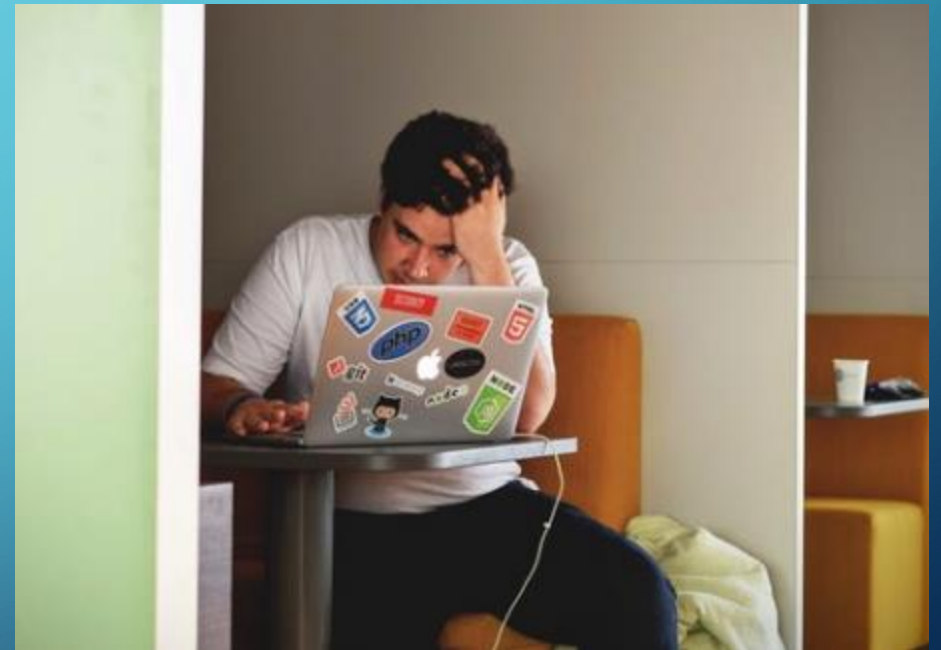
WeChat “Mini Programs” Are The End Of Installing/Uninstalling Apps On Your Smartphone

[Fossbytes](#)

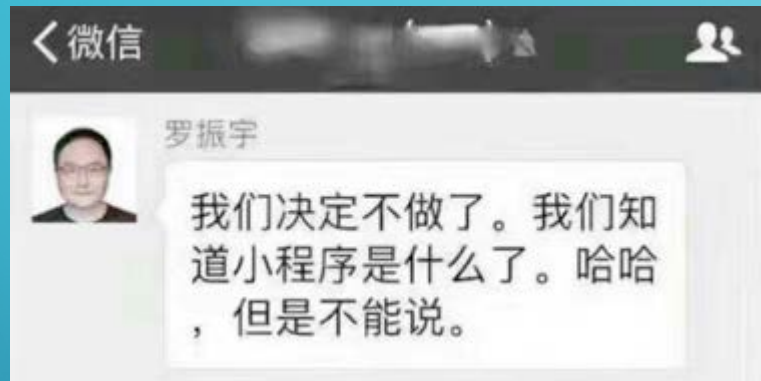
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The Release

- Mini Programs were released on Jan. 9th (10 yr. anniversary of the iPhone)
- Marketers everywhere let out a collective sigh...
- Camera scan QR, “Mini Programs Nearby” / history, or search to open MP’s, nothing else!



The Criticism



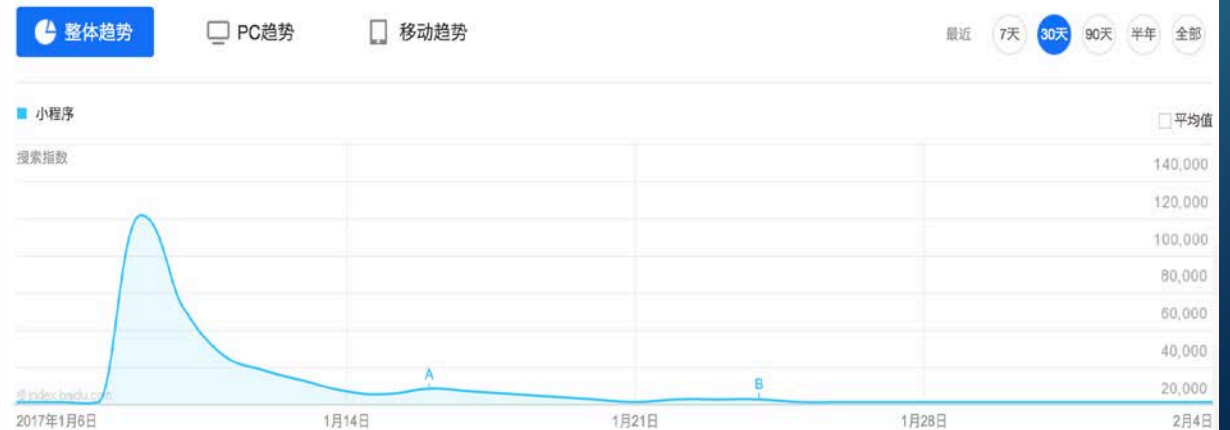
We've decided to stop doing it [our MP]. We know what Mini Programs are. Haha. But I can't say...
---Luojiwei

(Moved on to create the Dedao app)

WeChat mini-programs are already losing traction

TINGYI CHEN / FEBRUARY 5, 2017 / NEW WECHAT FEATURES

指数趋势 小程序 2017-01-06 至 2017-02-04 全国



[Walkthechat](#)

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My Experience with HZPlus

- A full-fledged Hangzhou city platform featuring events + tickets (like douban), restaurants + deals (like dianping), language exchanges, jobs, and more.
- Supported articles sent on ShareHangzhou subscription account
- First-ever English-language MP

Goodbye, Language Gap. Hello, Plus

2017-01-26 HZPlus ShareHangzhou



But...

2. Scan our QR Code

But there's a catch - WeChat has made it impossible to long press and "recognize" a Mini Program code. You must scan it with the WeChat scanning feature, so send it to your computer first.



微信扫一扫，使用小程序

This.

打开次数 ▾

自定义 ▾

2017-01-09 到 2017-04-18 ▾

粒度

日 ▾

按时间对比



Then, this

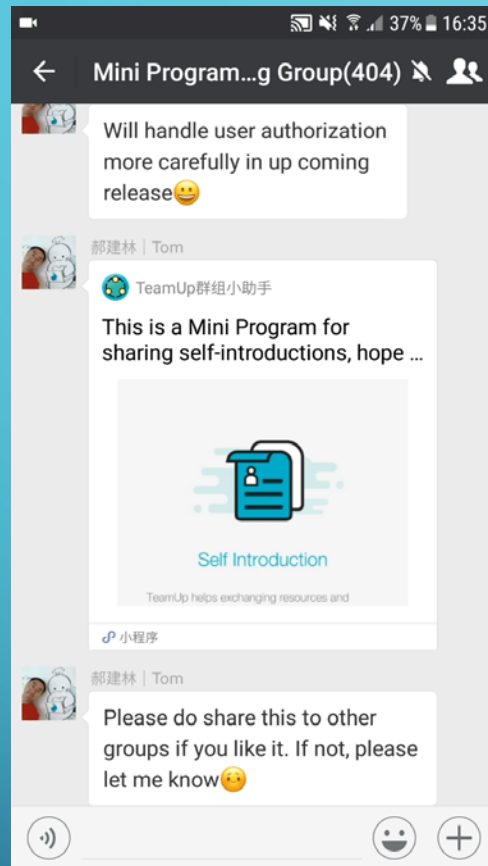
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WeChat Actually Listened! And Now...

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1 on 1 Share



Group Share



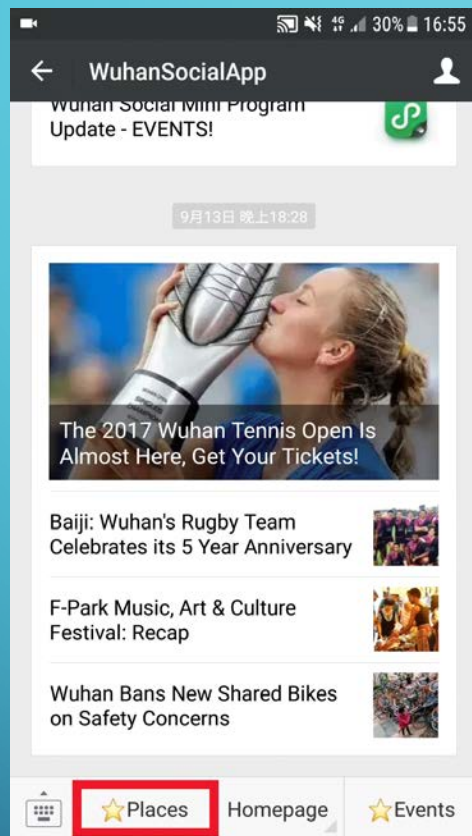
Recent MPs



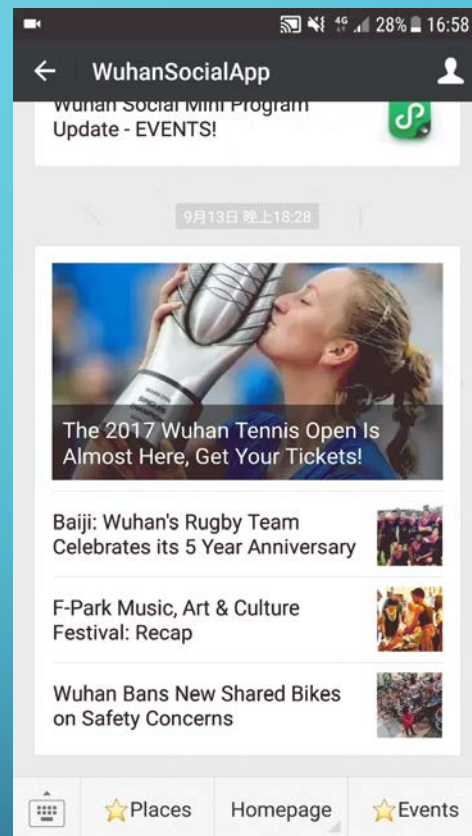
Instant Search



Payment
Complete



OA Menu



OA Article



QR Code



Quick Search
Links



MP Menu



Search

And More



Home Screen
(Android)



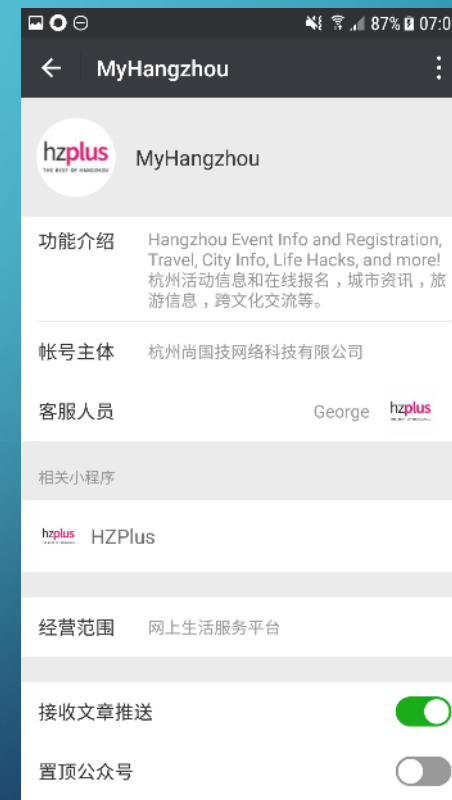
QQ Browser



From Other Mini
Programs (10 + 3)



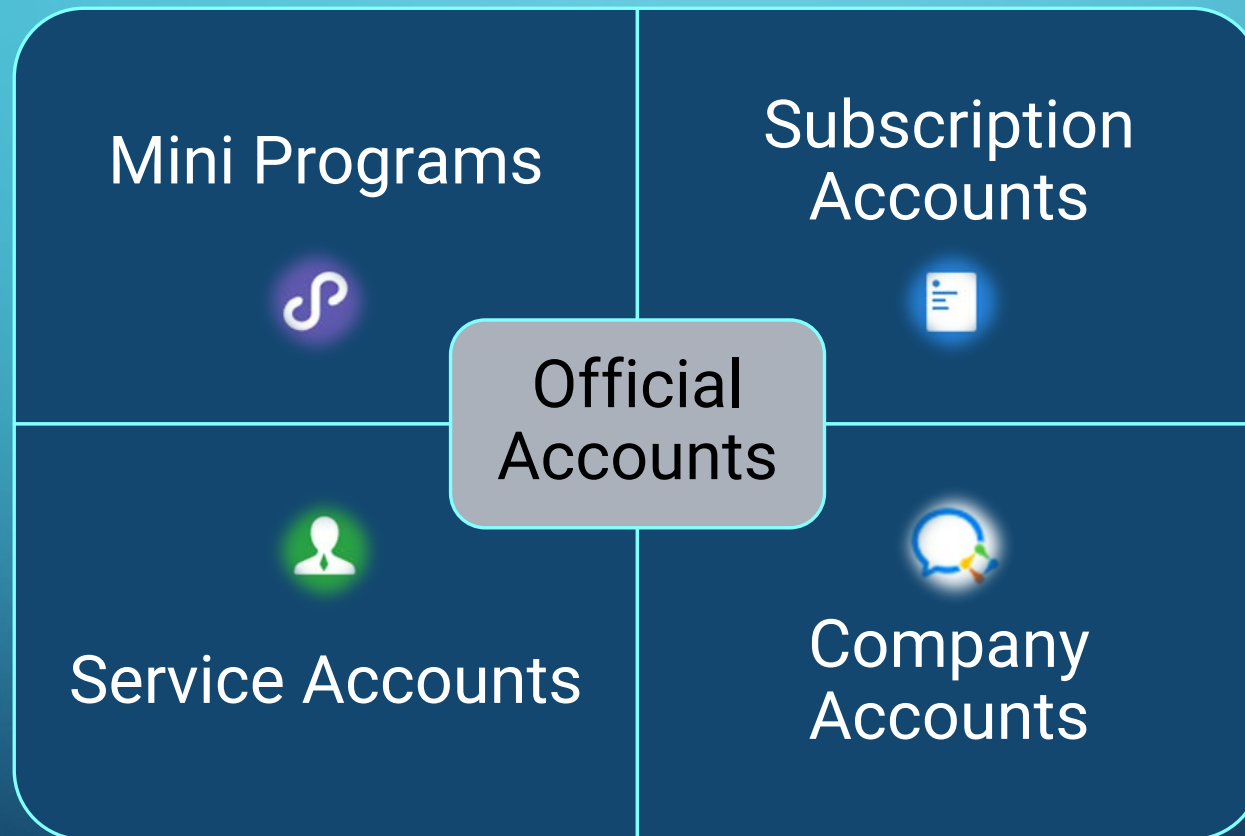
Service Messages



From Other OA
About Pages

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Differences Between OA Types



Service Accounts



服务号

给企业和组织提供更强大的业务服务与用户管理能力，帮助企业快速实现全新的公众号服务平台。

Service Accounts – Pros & Cons

- Pros:
 - Great for well...services – WeChat Pay, OA api's
 - Can use weixin-js package to build HTML5 mini site with rich features such as auto-login, coupons, sharing with customized titles, pictures, and descriptions, etc.
 - Articles show up in main message area, just like a friend is sending
 - Template notifications
- Cons:
 - Limited articles 4 per month
 - Relies on webpages, which may not be fast



Subscription Accounts



订阅号

为媒体和个人提供一种新的信息传播方式，构建与读者之间更好的沟通与管理模式。

Subscription Accounts – Pros & Cons

- Pros:
 - Can push one article per day
 - Some accounts can embed links
- Cons:
 - Little access to API's
 - Located in Subscription Accounts folder, drastically lowering open rates
 - Readership is falling as competition increases



MPs The End of Other OA's?

- No!
 - Official Accounts are within an ecosystem where each component provides complementary features to other components
 - Service Accounts + MPs
 - Subscription Accounts + MPs
 - Content marketing drives traffic DIRECTLY to Mini Programs!

Mini Programs – Pros & Cons

- Pros
 - Function much like native apps. No need to download. Fast loading
 - Rich APIs
 - Link to other MPs
 - Useful modules – scroll view, swiper, moveable view, maps, form inputs, etc
 - Template notifications
 - Cheaper & faster to develop. No need to develop for different OS
 - Visible group / conversation sharing abilities
 - Links can be embedded in OA articles
 - Easy, normalized login
 - Can access group information, phone number, address, fapiao stored in WeChat system
 - Continuous development – AR?
 - Customer service
 - Membership Cards / Coupons

Mini Programs – Pros & Cons

- Cons
 - No links to web
 - Lack of window elements / limited canvas support
 - Still some APIs lacking (upload documents)
 - Can only share QR to moments
 - Must follow Tencent's ever stricter rules
 - Functionality tested by Tencent on every update
 - User logins give little useful info
 - Limited amount of external data sources, all must have ICP
 - WeChat Pay only
 - Entry points still have a little way to go

Augmented Reality?

WeChat Is Building An Augmented Reality App Store

✍ CHINA CHANNEL / 📅 APRIL 28, 2017 / 📌 FEATURES

2 days ago an official video from WeChat team entitled “微信小程序: WeChat Mini Program” was uploaded to Tencent video platform with no announcement or fanfare. However the ending of the video hints at something absolutely huge: **WeChat will release a truly game changing new augmented reality feature for mini programs.**



WeChat Pokemon Go for apps!

Video Length: 2:31

OK... So why not just an app?

- No chasing for downloads, less marketing waste
- API's are good enough for most uses, and when they're not, it can be a great tool for segmenting your business
- Much cheaper than an app
- Cross platform
- Users are in WeChat all the time



App Cost vs. MP Cost

- Building HZPlus

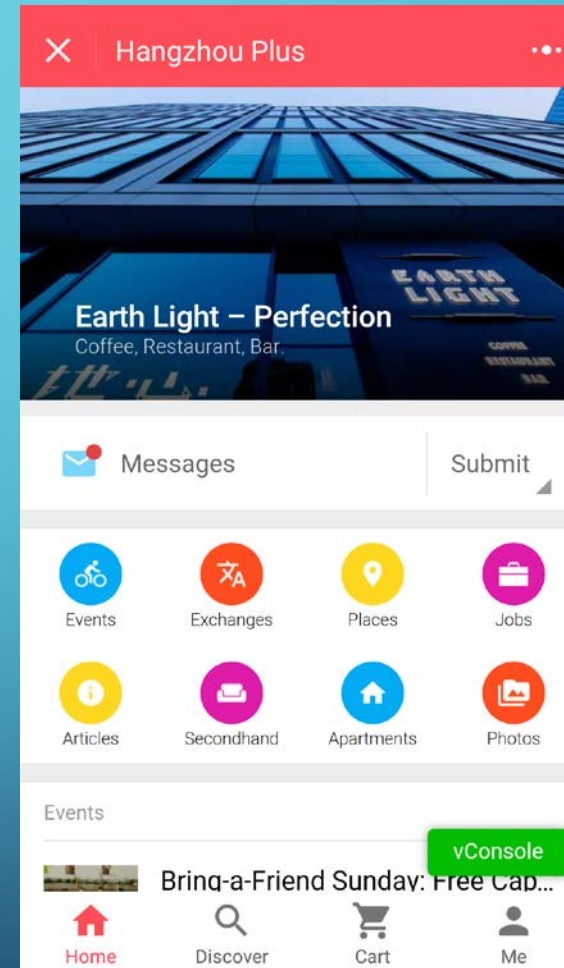
Android App

15 Designer Days (3 Weeks)

96 Developer Days (19.2 Weeks)

\$49,950

<https://estimatemyapp.com/>



HZPlus Mini Program

- Created by 1 person over 2 months
- Backend created over Wordpress (so came with website)
- ~Estimated 70,000 – 100,000 RMB

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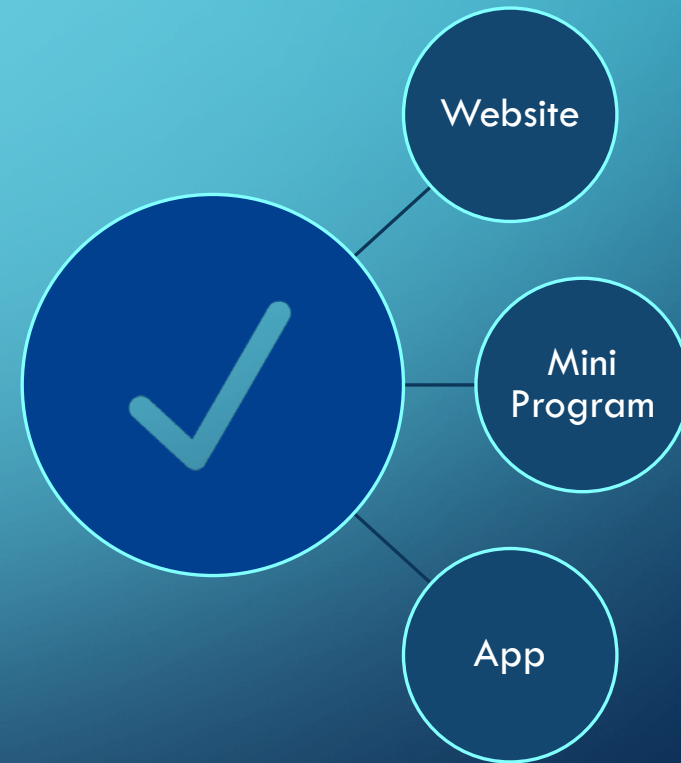
OK... So why not just an app-a webpage?

- MPs have very limited number of requests per page
- Cached on Tencent servers
- Variety of entry points
- Continued development
- Who uses webpages anymore?



Why Not Have Them All? (If you can)

- Webpages for organic search traffic
- Apps for “unlimited” functionality and safety
- Mini Programs to leverage huge WeChat user base



Do you really need an MP for that?

- What MP's are good for:
 - Things people want, but are unwilling to download: Bus time checkers, calculators, etc.
 - Things opened by scanning: restaurant tables, IoT
- What MP's aren't good for:
 - Chat / social applications
 - Things with external content
 - Huge apps
 - Audiences outside of WeChat ecosystem



So You Want to Build an MP...

- The Basics:



Idea



Domain &
ICP



Developer



Backend



300 RMB



Chinese
Person

Price and Time Required

- Factors:
 - Complexity
 - Functions needed
 - Multilingual
 - Rare backend framework
 - Backend + 1-3 weeks, + 10,000 – 70,000+
 - Domain , ICP + 2-3 weeks
 - Future Updates?

Other Options

- Templated Mini Programs
- Pros
 - Cheap (some free!)
 - No need for developer
 - No code required
- Cons
 - Backend isn't yours
 - Limited customization
 - Bankruptcy?



<http://tg.jisuapp.cn/>



<http://zd.weimob.cn/?zd>



<http://wx-mp.sxl.cn/>

文章小程序

免费

- 一个文章小程序
- 在线阅读
- 专题展示
- 分享转发
- 添加收藏
- 自定义主题色
- 关联公众号
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- 轮播图
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- 关联公众号

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- 线下物料
- 对接打印机
- 自定义主题色
- 附近的小程序
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- 在线预订
- 轮播图
- 房源管理
- 自定义主题色
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- 在线预约
- 设置营业时间
- 服务人员管理
- 确认预约订单
- 自定义主题色
- 附近的小程序
- 关联公众号

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上线了
SXL.CN

<http://wx-mp.sxl.cn/>

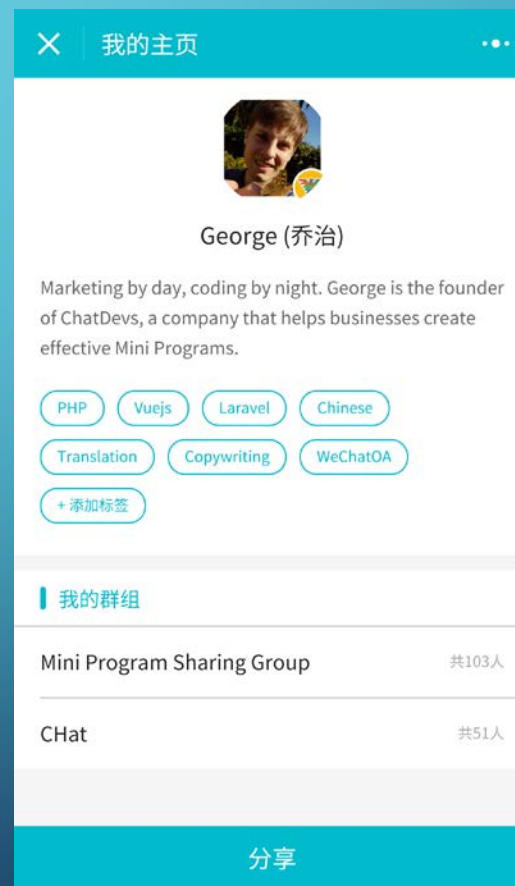
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Mini Program Case Studies

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Case Study 1: TeamUp 群组小助手

- Group information API use
- Viral group sharing
- Serves a direct and singular purpose
- Use it and leave it
 - And use it again later



Case Study 2: Pinduoduo 拼多多

- Full-fledged app (like Jingdong)
- Features customer service
- Get coupons depending on number of shares to groups



Case Study 3: Qunar Hotels 去哪儿酒店

- Business segmentation – hotels only!



Case Study 4: Anonymous Chat 匿名聊聊

- Extremely Viral
- 400,000 PV's in only 4 hours
- Great use case of sharing QR codes
- Shut down after one day



Aside: Why they were shut down

- Sharing QR codes was the main entry point. Relied too heavily on making users share
- WeChat doesn't like MP's with chat features



Case Study 5: YouDao Dictionary

- Automatically translates English search terms into Chinese
- Future of WeChat MP's, or barrier for smaller platforms?



Alipay Mini Programs?



MP Resources

- Developer Docs
 - Chinese - <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/debug/wxadoc/dev/demo.html>
 - English – <http://open.wechat.com>
- Developer Community
 - Official - <https://developers.weixin.qq.com/>
 - Non-official - <http://www.henkuai.com/forum.php>
- Mini Program Store
 - <https://minapp.com/miniapp/>

Thanks!

George Borrelli

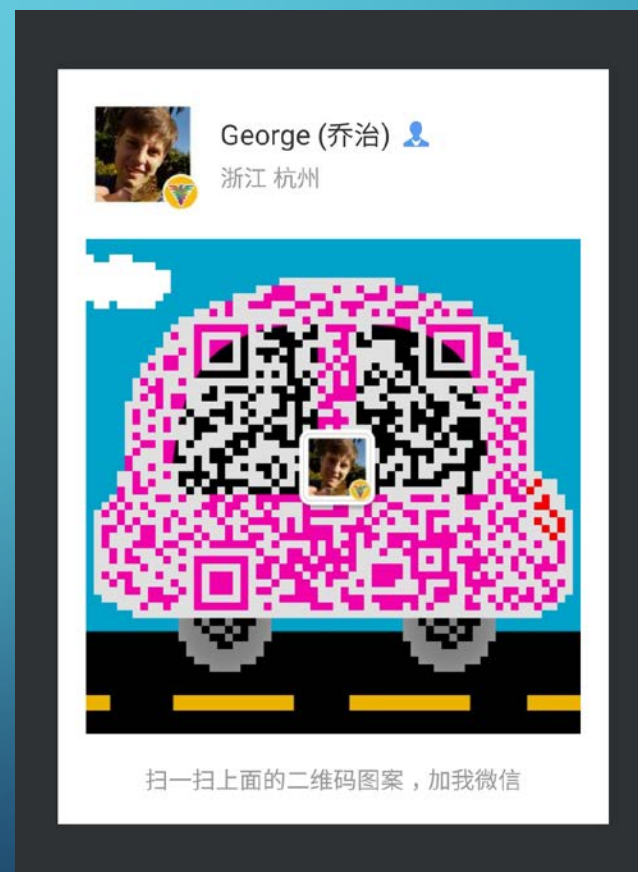
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