

# **WeChat, The Treadstone of an Orwellian Society?**

Cheng Guo - 11/7/2017



Picture source:

<https://www.techinasia.com/how-wechat-is-really-used-in-china>

Recently, a short video in New York Times caught my attention:

<https://www.nytimes.com/video/technology/100000004574648/china-internet-wechat.html>

At the end of the video, the narrator shared his worry about WeChat is helping Tencent become a super company limiting the freedom of human civilization. As we all know, WeChat is too powerful, and it interferes with our study life in many ways. While we are using WeChat, the company takes records of our information online, and sometimes people do not do good stuff with those data.

There is another significant reason why WeChat is suspected as a future Super Company, a dangerous tread-stone of the Orwellian society. It is so independent. No matter what data it collected, it only benefits itself. Different functions could use the data collected from another function and select preferences for the customer. If you always buy Ramen using WeChat online market, next time WeChat may give you the preference of a Japanese restaurant when you are selecting where to have dinner. Google also collects information about its user, but it sells the information to other online companies to make money. Google is like a component of a mutual relationship, even more precisely, Google needs the support of other

companies buying its information. Amazon also collects information, but it is a component of a commensalism relationship. Amazon needs sellers to maintain its function. What for WeChat? The answer is that WeChat is neither in a mutualism nor a commensalism relationship, it functions and gains benefits all by itself.

Functioning individually is the basis of Super Software controlling every aspect of our life. The amazing part of WeChat is that the developmental team of WeChat discovered the relationship between the different aspects of human life, and they make good use of it. Tencent, the company that developed WeChat, combines many software functions into one, making WeChat a HIVE, where different part works individually but benefit as a whole.

I believe what the narrator means in the video is that soon, Tencent, after collecting all the information from everyone around the world, becomes the "Big Brother" Company. It governs every aspect of our life, thus it becomes an online government, led by the owner of Tencent - A Chinese businessman named Pony Ma and his partner, the leader of the WeChat developmental team, Allen Zhang. However, is it the case?

There is one core flaw of WeChat - it cannot work off the grid. You could not do anything through WeChat when there is no Wifi. WeChat is never the tread-stone of an Orwellian society because it could never control any aspect of our life off the Internet? People say that there are infinite possibilities on the Internet, but the way I see it, there are infinite possibilities off the Internet. Trust me, my reader, there is no way online software could dominate our life.