

# The Impact of the Development and Utilization of We-Media in the Internet Era on Urban Tourism

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**Abstract:** *With the rapid development of the internet era, numerous online phenomena have emerged, among which We-Media stands as a highly representative entity. Leveraging its unique characteristics, We-Media continuously influences various aspects of our economy, politics, production, and daily life. Its impact on urban tourism development is particularly pronounced, bringing about changes that cannot be underestimated and benefits that are immeasurable. However, every coin has two sides. While bringing positive effects to cities, it also poses numerous challenges. This paper conducts an analytical study on the impact of We-Media utilization on urban tourism development and the corresponding measures to address the issues faced.*

**Keywords:** We-Media, Urban Tourism, Impact, Countermeasures.

## 1. Introduction

As the economy continues to develop and China enters a new era of socialism with Chinese characteristics, the principal social contradiction has also evolved. Achieving common prosperity in spiritual life has become a practical choice to continuously satisfy people's needs for a better life. With the improvement of living standards, leisure activities have become rich and diverse, and tourism has emerged as a primary choice for people. Cities leverage their own tourism resources to develop their economies. However, how to enhance a city's reputation and influence is a crucial aspect of promoting urban tourism development. In another domain, We-Media, as a major product of the internet era, strongly demonstrates its impact on urban tourism. Facing this effective pathway for development, how cities should respond is the main issue explored and researched in this topic.

## 2. Current Status of We-Media Development in the Internet Era

### 2.1 Concept of We-Media

We-Media refers to the dissemination of facts and news by the general public through the internet and other channels. It represents private, (should be translated as "grassroots"), ubiquitous, and autonomous disseminators who use modern, electronic means to transmit normative and non-normative information to an unspecified majority or specific individuals. The distinction between We-Media and traditional information media lies in its "novelty". We-Media has a broader dissemination scope and reaches a larger audience. This new media format transforms information transmission between tourism consumers and suppliers from one-way to multi-directional, enabling faster transmission, more precise targeting, and thus more effective marketing.

Currently, We-Media primarily consists of images, text, and videos. Images commonly include photos, animated graphics, live situations, etc. Text is mostly found in articles, WeChat public accounts, Weibo, and Xiaohongshu posts. Videos are mainly short videos and live streams provided by platforms

like Douyin, Kuaishou, and Xigua Video.

### 2.2 Characteristics of We-Media

As an emerging information dissemination tool, We-Media is gradually widely accepted by the people due to its characteristics of personalization, fragmentation, interactivity, wide dissemination, multimedia, and collectivity. Its fragmentation adapts to the modern fast-paced lifestyle, allowing people to quickly and intuitively receive information during their leisure time. Personalization is a significant advantage of We-Media, which not only transcends the limitations of traditional newspapers, news, and advertisements but also achieves more effective promotion through innovative methods such as animated cartoons, situational comedy product placement, or live interactive sessions. We-Media also possesses a strong collective characteristic, capable of transcending professional and geographical boundaries to reach various groups with its information. Dissemination is the core characteristic of We-Media, enabling enterprises to disseminate information to the public within the shortest time. These characteristics provide effective means for urban tourism development. If cities can fully leverage the advantages of We-Media, they can conduct comprehensive and efficient promotion, attract the attention of tourism consumers, and stimulate their desire to travel. For instance, platforms like Douyin, Xiaohongshu, and Kuaishou utilize short video marketing, which is not only convenient but also provides consumers with an immersive experience, allowing them to feel the ambiance of the city from home, thereby further promoting the development of urban tourism.

## 3. Impact of We-Media on Urban Tourism Development - Taking Zibo City as an Example

### 3.1 Favorable Impacts

3.1.1 We-Media: Timely Dissemination of Tourism Information, Boosting City Recognition

The six core elements of tourism - "eating, accommodation, transportation, sightseeing, shopping, and entertainment" - not only constitute the foundation of urban tourism experience but also reflect the necessary conditions for the long-term stable development of urban tourism. We-Media plays a pivotal role in this context, acting as a bridge between tourist demands and urban tourism operators, effectively transmitting consumer voices, prompting enterprises to continuously innovate based on market demands, refining investment planning and product supply, and driving the market supply and demand into a virtuous cycle. This, in turn, facilitates the gradual maturation of the six tourism elements and ensures that consumer demands are fully addressed. Taking Zibo as an example, We-Media platforms such as search engines, WeChat public accounts, Xiaohongshu guides, and Douyin short videos have disseminated multi-dimensional tourism information about Zibo, including scenic spot opening times, recommendations, route guides, and travel tips, providing the public with a rich platform for tourism information exchange. Notably, the rapid rise in popularity of Zibo-style barbecue has sparked the enthusiasm of tourists nationwide. The local government has responded positively by introducing a series of convenient measures such as providing free drinking water and snacks, expanding barbecue stalls, and launching "barbecue bus lines." These initiatives not only meet tourists' expectations but also precisely grasp group consumption psychology through We-Media promotion. Tourists directly experience authentic consumption through videos and articles, greatly enhancing Zibo's recognition, creating a warm atmosphere of "Welcome to Friendly Shandong," and simultaneously boosting the popularity of other scenic spots. As a result, Zibo has swiftly become an internet-famous city, not only skyrocketing its popularity but also significantly elevating its city image, promoting the city's comprehensive development.

### 3.1.2 We-Media: Facilitating Self-Improvement of Tourism Cities

The Zibo Municipal Government has simultaneously introduced multiple policies to protect tourist rights and optimize the tourism experience. During the "May Day" holiday in 2023, Zibo's tourism bookings increased by over 2000% compared to the previous year. Facing the challenges of the tourism peak, the government responded swiftly by increasing sightseeing vehicles, barbecue-themed bus lines, optimizing tourism maps, and upgrading facilities around scenic spots to ensure reasonable prices, promptly adjusting unreasonable policies feedback by tourists. These series of measures reflect the city's self-improvement in urban construction, further enhancing Zibo's attractiveness and recognition, increasing tourist return rates, and elevating the city's image and competitiveness.

### 3.1.3 We-Media: Driving Tourism Development and Assisting City Transformation

Zibo, a city dominated by heavy industries, holds the second position in economic status within Shandong Province, only after Jinan and Qingdao. However, with the transformation of the domestic economic structure, Zibo's heavy industries have faced challenges, leading to a decline in economic benefits. Since the end of 2022, Zibo-style barbecue has unexpectedly

gained popularity through platforms like Douyin and Xiaohongshu, bringing new vitality to the city and attracting a large number of young tourists, especially university students. Subsequently, Zibo's ceramics industry, Mount Tai scenery, Pu Songling Memorial Hall, and Confucian culture have gradually gained attention, becoming new tourist hotspots and opening up new paths for urban economic development. The economic benefits brought by We-Media have not only promoted the development of Zibo's tourism industry but also provided new impetus for the city's transformation, marking an important step for Zibo on the path of urban development and transformation.

## 3.2 Negative Impacts

### 3.2.1 Lack of Diversity in Reporting Content

While the "Zibo BBQ" phenomenon is popular, the excessive focus of self-media reports on Zibo has led to most tourists encountering only "BBQ"-related content when searching for Zibo. Due to the existence of personalized recommendation systems, tourists have difficulty accessing diverse information about other attractions in Zibo. The repetitive and uninnovative promotional video content can easily lead to visual fatigue for tourists, making it difficult to stimulate their enthusiasm for tourism. Furthermore, the promotion overly emphasizes scenery and geographical location, neglecting the cultural connotations behind the attractions. As a city with a long history and culture, Zibo's charm extends beyond BBQ and includes rich cultural resources such as the hometown of Fuxi and the birthplace of Longshan culture. However, current self-media reports on Zibo are mostly limited to BBQ, lacking deep introductions to other scenic spots and cultures.

### 3.2.2 Vague Account Positioning and Redundant Information

Zibo conducts tourism marketing on new media platforms such as Douyin, Xiaohongshu, Weibo, and WeChat official accounts, but the content of these official media accounts is not targeted. For example, although the "Zibo Cultural Tourism" official account is positioned to promote tourism in Zibo, a large amount of its video content is not directly related to Zibo tourism, lacking targeted introductions to scenic spots and Zibo culture. This situation of redundant information and unclear positioning reduces the communication and interaction between tourists and Zibo tourism, making it difficult to gain recognition from tourists and essentially causing the loss of potential tourists, which has a negative impact on Zibo tourism.

### 3.2.3 False Promotion Causes Tourist Disgust

In tourism promotion and marketing by self-media, some internet celebrities and businesses pursue playback and readership while neglecting authentic feedback on tourist attractions and their surrounding environments. When tourists arrive at the attractions and find that the reality does not match the promotion, it leads to negative feedback, affecting the healthy development of city tourism. For example, in the case of the Zibo Liaozhai Garden, tourists reported discrepancies between the park's opening hours and the promotion, with the promotional content significantly different from the actual scene, resulting in a weak experience. Although the Liaozhai

Garden subsequently issued an apology letter and adjusted measures, the false promotion still had a negative impact on Zibo. The government and the city have limited monitoring capabilities in the online boom, and self-media information spreads extremely quickly, making it difficult to timely control misleading guidance and poor marketing, which can easily lead to tourist disgust with the city.

#### **4. Utilizing Self-Media to Optimize the Tourism Development Strategy of Zibo City**

##### **4.1 Diversified Reporting and Deep Exploration of City Culture**

When leveraging self-media for city promotion, Zibo should focus on the diversity and depth of content. The long-term development of tourism is inseparable from the deep exploration of city culture. Therefore, Zibo can capitalize on the popularity of self-media to report and introduce other scenic spots and city cultures beyond "Zibo BBQ". Strengthen the promotion of the historical, cultural, scientific, and artistic spiritual values behind Zibo's attractions, creating an environment where city culture and tourism are highly integrated.

Taking Zibo's Zhoucun Ancient Commercial Town as an example, this is an ancient commercial street with a history of several hundred years and is known as "China's Living Museum of Ancient Commercial Buildings". Through self-media platforms such as Douyin, introducing the historical background and cultural characteristics of Zhoucun Ancient Town in the form of short videos not only promotes the hometown but also allows the outside world to understand that Zibo not only has BBQ but also many famous cultural ancient towns. This kind of promotion allows the public to learn about the city's latest developments and changes in the first place and effectively promotes the city.

##### **4.2 Clear Positioning and Effective Information Filtering**

When using self-media for tourism promotion, Zibo should have clear positioning and showcase tourism-specific products, scenic spots, cultures, and architectures in its official accounts. This allows tourists to quickly understand the relevant content of Zibo tourism in one account and enhances interaction between tourists and the official account. At the same time, official media accounts should reduce or avoid redundant information, filter the published content, and ensure its accuracy and relevance.

The short videos published in the account should also focus on innovation and incorporate contemporary elements. For example, on Douyin, some "Douyin users" create music promoting BBQ, using vlogs to appreciate Zibo from the blogger's first-person perspective, and some even add funny voiceovers to enhance the video's appeal. Such innovative approaches can attract more public attention. Currently, in the era of big data, incorporating different contemporary factors and hot topics allows big data to push videos to targeted audience groups, achieving "precise" delivery. Therefore, precise positioning and innovation of accounts become key.

##### **4.3 Establishing a Professional Marketing Team to**

##### **Enhance Information Credibility**

Zibo can create official accounts on major platforms such as Douyin, Kuaishou, Weibo, and Xiaohongshu, and assign dedicated personnel to manage them, forming a professional city promotion self-media team. This allows the city's current status and appearance to be truthfully reflected to tourists in videos. The official account should not only promote scenic spots, cities, and cultures but also comprehensively consider lodging, transportation, and dining for every tourist coming to Zibo. Through dedicated personnel, false promotion can be avoided to some extent, enhancing control over marketing content and increasing the credibility of scenic spot marketing information.

Effective marketing should not only focus on the quantity of video releases but also on their quality. It is necessary to grasp the actual needs of tourists and produce city videos that meet the requirements according to the travel needs of most tourists. At the same time, cities should grasp the fragmented and concise characteristics of self-media during the marketing process, choose short and attention-grabbing titles, and stably and continuously publish works to ensure exposure and views through the content of marketing videos.

To conduct self-media marketing more professionally, Zibo can introduce and cultivate a professional self-media team to make the marketing content professional, regular, innovative, and sustainable. At the same time, through big data analysis and research, targeted marketing can be carried out for different groups, travel preferences, and demands, making the marketing content more targeted.

##### **4.4 Improving Tourism Reception Facilities and Enhancing Tourist Experience**

Zibo should strengthen the construction of supporting facilities in transportation, lodging, and other aspects and vigorously cultivate the tourism service industry. For example, optimize cultural tourism public transportation services, increase many customized bus lines such as the "Spring Flower Viewing Line", "BBQ Line", and "Autumn Leaf and Red Sun Line", providing convenience for tourists visiting Zibo. At the same time, expand the city's reception capacity and build hotels, homestays, and other related lodging facilities nearby and around tourist attractions.

Additionally, Zibo should strengthen cooperation and control with some platforms, enhance the unified division of tourism products, and unify the market prices of tourism products. By strengthening the price monitoring and early warning mechanism, monitoring, summarizing, and reporting sample hotel and guesthouse prices daily, analyzing and studying daily price trends, and promptly responding to and handling abnormal price fluctuations. This can avoid adverse impacts on city construction due to some merchants overcharging and harming consumer interests.

At the same time, the city should continuously improve infrastructure construction from its own perspective, such as increasing basic transportation routes like buses and taxis; enhancing the environmental sanitation of scenic spots and increasing resting facilities and public toilets; strengthening

safety facilities such as fire protection equipment, security equipment, and surveillance equipment; and enhancing the promotion of scenic spot cultural characteristics to meet people's spiritual needs. In response to the phenomenon of a sudden increase in tourists, relevant departments should propose corresponding policies, provide services such as seats and free water to waiting tourists during queuing, so that tourists can feel the city's enthusiasm and cultural atmosphere even during the waiting process.

## 5. Conclusion

In today's era of rapid internet development, self-media is increasingly accepted by the public, and the development of self-media in urban tourism also provides opportunities for growth. Taking Zibo City as the subject of this study, self-media not only promotes the development of urban tourism but also facilitates the overall progress of the city. It attracts foreign investment and talent, injects vitality into the city, drives the development of tourism-related industries, increases the proportion of the tertiary industry, and promotes urban transformation. However, the utilization of self-media also poses challenges for urban tourism development. For urban tourism, it is particularly crucial to correctly leverage the advantages of self-media. The organic integration of traditional and new tourism promotion methods, the summarization of feedback from tourists, the correction of deficiencies in development, the perspective and attitude that cities should adopt when facing development opportunities brought by self-media, and the timely handling and resolution of drawbacks in the rapid development of urban tourism are all issues that cities need to consider. Only by correctly addressing the impact of self-media on urban tourism can cities achieve further development.

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