



Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts

**EDUCATING THE PUBLIC TO VALUE GEORGE TOWN'S
UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE BUILDINGS THROUGH
MOBILE APPLICATION**

Teh Han Yi

**Bachelor of Applied Arts with Honours
(Design Technology)
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**EDUCATING THE PUBLIC TO VALUE GEORGE TOWN'S
UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE BUILDINGS THROUGH MOBILE
APPLICATION**

TEH HAN YI

This project is submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Applied Arts with Honours
(Design Technology)

Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SARAWAK
2017

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Abstract

Nowadays, most of the heritage areas in George Town, Penang become business districts, opening a lot of modern café and Homestay due to the external influences. This shows Penangites are less concern in the heritage's sustainability and Outstanding Universal Value. Therefore, George Town could lose UNESCO heritage status due to lack of public historical awareness. In this study, qualitative and quantitative research strategies such as questionnaire survey, pilot testing and interview are used to collect data. The findings of the study indicate that most of the Penangites are not aware of the historical and cultural among themselves, In order to solve this problem, "Penang Heritage Trails" mobile app is developed to exploit the knowledge and information about the history of Penang heritage buildings to increase public historical and cultural awareness. For the further development, interactive elements could be applied to the mobile application, creating a two-way interaction to the user. The interactive media becomes popular and it is used widely in education applications and interactive marketing campaign nowadays.

Abstrak

Kebelakangan ini, kafe moden dan homestay didirikan bak cendawan tumbuh selepas hujan di tapak warisan dunia George Town, Pulau Pinang. Hal ini berlaku disebabkan kekurangan kesedaran tentang nilai warisan dalam komuniti penduduk Pulau Pinang. Dalam kajian ini, strategi penyelidikan kuantitatif dan kualitatif seperti kaedah temu bual, pemerhatian, soal selidik dan 'pilot testing' telah digunakan untuk mengumpul data. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa kebanyakan penduduk tempatan Pulau Pinang tidak mengetahui sejarah dan budaya sendiri. Jadi, untuk mengatasi masalah ini, aplikasi mudah alih "Penang Heritage Trails" yang mesra pengguna dilancarkan. Dengan itu, pengetahuan dan maklumat tentang bangunan warisan di Pulau Pinang mudah diperolehi. Untuk melanjutkan perkembangan aplikasi, media interaktif boleh digunakan untuk mewujudkan interaksi dua hala antara pengguna. Jadi, pada masa kini, media interaktif memainkan peranan yang penting dalam aplikasi pendidikan dan kempen pemasaran untuk meningkatkan kesedaran dan penghayatan terhadap seni dan budaya dalam komuniti penduduk Pulau Pinang.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.0 Introduction

Penang is an island rich in multi-culture and colour. Meanwhile, George Town is the heart of the Penang, known as the 'Pearl of the Orient' because it has an array of historical buildings and surrounded with natural sightseeing view. On 7 July 2008, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recognises George Town as World Heritage Site due to the well preservation of these heritage buildings, showing the fusion of eastern and western influences. However, the influences reflect the country's colonial past and mixed-heritage during the past and now can be clearly exhibited through those historical buildings.

There are more than 200 years of history in George Town, making it becomes a town full of stories from the 18-century to nowadays. During the colonial era, the year

between the 1800s and early 1900s blended George Town from a small island to a famous port then to a diverse city.

During the colonial period, the British had been handed down a number of impressive British-classical characteristics old buildings like the Penang State Museum, Penang City Hall, Fort Cornwallis, Penang Supreme Court House and local residential buildings. Those iconic buildings play an important role, as they are the reflection of the past history. Therefore, a proper restoration and maintenance are necessary to retain back those historical buildings from losing in the modern city nowadays.

1.1 Statement of the problem

The problem statement of this research is currently, most of the heritage areas in George Town become business districts, opening a lot of modern café and Homestay due to the external influences. Hence, Penangites are less concern in the heritage's sustainability and Outstanding Universal Value. Therefore, George Town could lose UNESCO heritage status due to lack of public historical awareness.

As mentioned in the Malaysia National Heritage Act (2005), “buildings that are categorized as heritage buildings are believed to be more than 50 years old. Those buildings should be preserved, protected, and enhanced from being lost forever.” (Rani, 2005, p. 300).

Yet, in Malaysia, the cultural awareness is not strong enough to aware public to play their role as a citizen to protect those heritage buildings as other countries like Japan and Korea.

Tweed & Sutherland (2007) stated that, the preservation of heritage is not about contributing to the environment, but it helps to build an identity and cultural for a place. Therefore, conservation of historical buildings plays an important role in the community to sustain urban development. For example, Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society is a new treaty for ratification on cultural heritage, which establish with the European community on 1 December 2009. As mentioned by COUNCIL (2005), one of the aims of this convention is to sustain human development and quality of life as their goal.

1.2 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to sustain urban development in the city of Penang through understanding the history of historical buildings. In the past, lots of shophouses have been transformed into high-rise condominiums and commercial buildings like a shopping mall. This is due to the fast development in a modern city.

In Malaysia, there are a lot of old buildings and mansions, which are abandoned due to the poor maintenance and preservation. As reported by Jamshed (2016), there are a lot of small villages transformed into a modern area like Kampung Baru, Kuala Lumpur. For your information, Kampung Baru was the first area colonized by the British in the

past. Nonetheless, now it faces the impending crisis due to the clash with the modern and traditional culture.

As time goes by, economic successfully modernize the country, thus people forget their identity, heritage and culture has been passed to them. Preservation of historic buildings is vital to understand our nation's history. Therefore, public awareness has to be enhanced in the community. As said by Ismail, (2016), the preservation of historic buildings has to start early because there is no chance to renovate or to save a historic site once it's gone and we never knew what will be valued in the future.

Therefore, sustaining urban development in a modern city is important because historical buildings bring memories of history and reflecting of the civilization. Besides, it is significant for citizens to realize where they stay and be proud of their city, creating a sense of belonging and appreciate what they have right now.

1.3 Objectives of the research

The research objectives of this study are listed as below:

1. To investigate the historical awareness in George Town, Penang.
2. To analyze the levels of public understanding in George Town's historical buildings.
3. To evaluate the most effective medium to increase the public awareness to preserve historical buildings in George Town, Penang.

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions are used to determine the goal and information of this research. The research questions of this study are listed as follows:

- Q1: What are the factors that cause public lack of historical awareness nowadays?
- Q2: Why the public understanding of UNESCO buildings is an endeavour to save those heritage sites?
- Q3: What is the most suitable medium to increase the public awareness to preserve historical buildings in George Town, Penang.

1.5 Research Scope

This research considers Penangites and people who work in the heritage field. In order to deepen the understanding of the community, a public survey is conducted in the George Town heritage area to further study the factors that caused the lack of public historical awareness.

Hence, this study will focus on the historical buildings in George Town, Penang. Therefore, Penang citizens are the target respondents in this research. As mentioned in the Department of Statistics Malaysia, Official Portal, the population of 31.7 million in Penang which includes Seberang Prai and Island. However, this study will use survey administered to 270 respondents from Penang, by using to the survey sample size calculator method.

1.6 Limitation of the Research

Penang government and NGO play an important role to increase the public awareness by organizing few related campaigns. Through their experiences, those related surveys and comments could be collected from the personnel. However, meeting with the respective personnel might take a longer time as they have a packed schedule.

Lastly, due to the limitation of the software, user testing is limited to test on a variety of mobile app and website. The prototype only can be opened on the IOS phone if you install “Flinto Viewer” app from the App Store.

1.7 Rationale of the study

This study concerns about the knowledge and history part of the UNESCO building in George Town, Penang. Therefore, an effective platform is needed to educate the public, especially Penangites, raising their awareness to protect those heritage buildings in George Town, Penang.

1.8 Conclusion

This chapter explains the statement of the problem and the purpose of this study. As mentioned, the problem statement of this research is currently, most of the heritage areas in George Town become business districts, opening a lot of modern café and Homestay due to the external influences. Hence, Penangites are less concern in the heritage’s sustainability and Outstanding Universal Value. Therefore, George Town could lose UNESCO heritage status due to lack of public historical awareness.

As mentioned by Ismail (2016), The United States National Trust for History Preservation said that preserving old buildings is not only benefiting for a community's culture as well as its local economy to a country. They believe that old buildings bring intrinsic value and different standards in term of architectural perspective. Besides top up the value of community, it can boost up the economy of the city through tourism sectors. Those colonial architectures can be a tourist attraction for the buildings and heritage sites, respectively.

Last but not least, everyone should value those heritages as a part of our nation's history as mentioned by Nazri Aziz, Malaysia Tourism Minister in the article written by Chu, "If the community loses the awareness to protect those heritage buildings and values, everyone has to wait another 100 years to have heritage buildings." (2014).

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the related literature and case studies from other researchers. In order fully understand this research, introduction of Penang, a brief introduction of UNESCO, understanding of user interface and user experience as well as usability testing of mobile application will be written to give a better comprehension of this study.

2.1 The Introduction of Penang

Penang is a city mixed over 200 years' global and colonial history, yet modern-day. According to Fernández (2015), he mentioned that the heart of Penang, George Town is one of the largest cities with 600,000 inhabitants in Malaysia. During the Napoleonic Wars, British start trading post and settlement here. Therefore, they named this island as George Town after Britain's King George III. At the same time, Penang goes through

the transformation over the past centuries, from the late 18th century, which from the beginning of the British colonial until today. As you see, nowadays, George Town is a full development city in the field of economic and living style.

On July 7 2008, Melaka and George Town are awarded the title of UNESCO World Heritage Site under the category of Cultural Heritage. This is because Melaka and George Town represent the living multicultural heritage communities and architectural treasures. Besides, as mentioned by Fernández (2015), from the past few years, George Town does an excellent job to preserve the cultural and historical heritage to bring out the historic buildings in various styles and architectural legacy, representing the multiple ethnicities in this island. However, Nor'Aini and Tan (2008) also stated that Penang State Government did a lot of hard work to successfully evaluate listed on the UNESCO World Heritage City List in 2005.

Due to the well preservation of the heritage architecture and multi-living history, Penang becomes a good platform for multicultural to exchange the idea and experience in local people and tourists. Therefore, the Penang State Government cooperates with representative NGO to organize variety art festivals yearly to increase public awareness about the existing art and history now. Concurrently, this is another way to preserve our art and history for the next generation.

2.2 The Role of UNESCO

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, also known as UNESCO, it is a worldwide norm and international in educational policy development.

After the Second World War, a solution had made in order to build a better world with a better understanding between each country, having better communication with the community as well. Therefore UNESCO was established after the meeting between the UNESCO and the Council of Europe.

As mentioned by Rauner (1999), which has been stated by Courtney and Kutsch (1980), at the early stage, the UNESCO priority was “education for living in a world community” (p.94). As time changes, Rauner (1999) said that in the year of 1940 to 1969, UNESCO starts to concern small group of people in the community such as children, the handicapped, adult learners and women.

After realizing the important of culture understanding, there are five strategic objectives settled by the World Heritage Convention, which are Credibility, Conservation, Capacity-building, Communication and Communities. These objectives show that heritage is actively constructed and maintained in the present if and only if it is handed down from the past. Preservation and protection of heritage is the initial step to save our cultural and identity of a country.

2.3 The UNESCO World Heritage Site in George Town, Penang

The UNESCO World Heritage Site in George Town is divided into 2 sections, the Core Area and Buffer Zone. It covers 259.42 hectares in a total of the land area. The Core Area is protected by 109.38 hectares and surrounded more than 1,700 buildings. The boundary starts from North and East, which is from Love Lane to the Northwest and Gat Lebu Melayu, Lorong Carnarvon and Lebu Carnarvon to the Southwest corner. However, Buffer Zone has covered an area of 150.04 hectares. It is bounded by the sea,