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## Wenlin Institute, Inc. SPC **Management Discussion and Analysis** *for the fiscal year July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2016*

### **Preface**

This MD&A (management discussion and analysis) is an official document, prepared by Wenlin Institute, Inc. SPC for the general public as required for Social Purpose Corporations in the state of California. Wenlin Institute's report is due by October 28 each year, 120 days after the end of our fiscal year, which ends on June 30. This document is organized in accordance with California Corporations Code Section 3500(b).

### **1. Objectives**

Wenlin Institute's immediate objectives for fiscal year 2015-2016 included:

- attract, support and cultivate a large team of skilled contributors comprised of both paid staff and volunteers;
- make the web-based versions of our software and dictionaries ready for publication;
- enable ongoing collaborative improvement and expansion of the dictionaries;
- complete and publish a number of collaborative dictionary and textbook projects in progress;
- raise funds through increased sales, grants and fundraising to support the sustainable growth of the Wenlin ABC project and its contributors;
- partner with other educational ventures to integrate Wenlin and ABC with a variety of multilingual tools for education and research.

### **2. Actions Completed**

We put our new organizational structure as an SPC to good use, especially for building our team of collaborators, including by far the largest group of volunteers we've ever had working directly for the Institute. We recruited volunteer software developers from several universities, and volunteer educators to work on sound recordings.

To enable this large group of developers to collaborate effectively, we switched from our old version control system, *svn*, which we had been using for ten years, to *git*, which is currently very popular with programmers. It's hosted on *gitlab.com*, which, in addition to version control, provides an integrated set of web-based software tools for collaborative project management. We put a lot of time and energy into learning about *git*-based workflows, and how to work as a relatively large and widely-dispersed team. We greatly increased the hours we spend in group video-conferences, often screen-sharing to work on technical challenges.

We spent the majority of our development time making the dictionaries, and the tools for accessing them, web-based. We were successful in bringing Wenlin's web-based dictionaries

and software to a small group of lexicographers who are now actively engaged in editing and enlarging the dictionaries.

We created a new website *wenlincdl.com*, featuring open source JavaScript tools, and an application programming interface (API), enabling developers around the world to take advantage of *Wenlin Character Description Language* (CDL). We made the website public in Fall 2016. We worked at combining the CDL tools with the wiki software for the web-based dictionaries.

We signed agreements, with Robert S. Bauer, and with the University of Hawaii Press, granting us exclusive rights to Dr. Bauer's forthcoming *ABC Cantonese-English Dictionary*, to be published in print by UH Press, and in electronic media by us and our partners.

Two volunteers, female and male native speakers of Mandarin, made recordings of their pronunciations of tens of thousands of words from the *ABC Chinese-English Dictionary*, especially for us to combine with future editions of the dictionary. We wrote web-based software to enable the sound-recording work. The sound-recording work is on-going.

We made progress developing a Wenlin app for Android, still not quite ready for publication. The mostly-volunteer development team undertook a revised approach, which will result in a more native-Android interface than our earlier approach.

As always, we continued to spend a large part of our time and energy on supporting current users of our software and dictionaries on the Mac and Windows desktop platforms.

### **Products Improved:**

September 2015, we published a revision of the *ABC Dictionary of Chinese Proverbs* (*Hàn-Yīng Yányǔ Cídiǎn* 汉英谚语词典) by John Rohsenow, now including full form characters as well as simple form characters and Pinyin.

April 2016, we published version 4.3 of our main product, *Wenlin Software for Learning Chinese*, for Mac and Windows. We released both a free edition (*Wénlín Miǎnfèibǎn* 文林·免费版), and a deluxe edition (*Wénlín Wánzhěngbǎn* 文林·完整版) featuring the latest update of the *ABC Comprehensive Dictionary*. August 2016 (just after fiscal year 2015-2016), we published versions 4.3.1 and 4.3.2, with further improvements to both the software and the dictionaries.

### **New Products Released:**

April 2016, we published, after many years of work, the Wenlin ABC HDC (*Hànyǔ Dà Cídiǎn index*) add-on: integrated with the *ABC English-Chinese/Chinese-English Dictionary*. Based on the *ABC Chinese Dictionary Series* print edition: *An Alphabetical Index to the Hànyǔ Dà Cídiǎn* by Victor H. Mair.

August 2016 (just after fiscal year 2015-2016), we published our electronic edition of Dr. Axel Schuessler's *ABC Etymological Dictionary of Old Chinese* (EDOC), as an add-on for *Wenlin Software for Learning Chinese 4.3.2*.

### 3. Actions Planned

We look forward to making some of our web-based dictionaries, and related web-based learning tools, available to the public for viewing and editing, on our website, by mid-2017. This will be the fruition of many years of work. Many details of this plan remain the same as described in last year's MD&A, and won't be repeated here. So far, that plan is working out well. Some abridged dictionary entries will be accessible free of charge and anonymously. Full access to the unabridged dictionaries will be available by low-priced monthly subscription.

The specific dictionaries include the three main ones that come with the deluxe edition of our desktop software, namely: the *ABC Chinese-English Comprehensive Dictionary*; the *ABC English-Chinese Dictionary*; and the *Wénlín Zìdiǎn* (字典 'character dictionary'). Others will follow soon, or may even be published simultaneously, especially Dr. Bauer's *ABC Cantonese-English Dictionary*, which was mentioned above and is discussed further below.

Editing these particular dictionaries through crowdsourcing will be possible for the first time. Quality control is a vital concern. We're addressing it, in part, by the use of built-in wiki features for saving the histories of all entries, and wiki software extensions specifically designed for quality control. At the same time, we're building a team of lexicographers to maintain quality and promote harmonious collaboration.

In order to publish the dictionary website successfully, we still need to do a lot of software development. We'll strive to keep our team motivated, productive, happy, and growing.

We'll make arrangements with other organizations also to publish the dictionaries on their own websites.

We'll release a Wenlin app for Android.

We'll work on both print and web editions of the *ABC Cantonese-English Dictionary*. For the print edition, we'll provide UH Press with a typeset draft for peer review by December, and follow up with drafts for the proofreading team managed by ABC Series Editor Victor Mair. We'll build indexes, do consistency checking, input corrections, and do the final typesetting for the first print edition, under the direction of UH Press.

For the web edition of *ABC Cantonese*, we'll provide similar treatment for Cantonese and Mandarin in many ways, using the same wiki interface, character animations, etc., except of course where actual differences between the languages/dictionaries makes different treatment appropriate. The Cantonese dictionary is smaller than the Mandarin one. By design, common Cantonese words that are essentially the same as Mandarin words except for pronunciation were excluded from the first edition. Ideally, all such entries should still eventually be included, with Cantonese pronunciations and examples, subject to the user's preference for displaying them or not. We plan to launch a Kickstarter fundraiser campaign to help fund our work on the Cantonese dictionary website. Our ambitions include addition of sound recordings, Cantonese texts suitable for learners with dictionary links for instant look-up, flashcards, and the ability to input characters by Cantonese pronunciation or by handwriting recognition.

## 4. Decision Making and Evaluation

Following our reorganization the previous year as an SPC, we've continued to make decisions generally by consensus, through meetings and and communication by videoconference, email, and telephone.

The main decisions in this year involved carrying out the technical and organizational tasks that had already been planned the year before (or earlier), based on our perception that the web will be the primary medium for both creation and usage of dictionaries. According to plan, web-based development and team-building were at the top of our list. We worked on the tasks that were clearly facing us.

As in the year before, there were not a lot of fiscal decisions to be made. We saved some money by switching to gitlab.com for version control, issue tracking, etc., though our decision was based on their usefulness more than their affordability.

In May 2016 we did a survey of Wenlin users and gathered a lot of information, constructive criticism, and suggestions. Interestingly, 12.5% of the *Wenlin Wanzhengban* users who responded to the survey answered "yes" to "Are you an instructor of Chinese language?" Overall, the responses were consistent with our expectations and with our plans.

## 5. Expenditures

Total expenditures for the fiscal year were \$151,976, categorized as follows:

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| \$ 84,300 | Services, Salaries, Commissions                |
| \$ 21,939 | Royalties (paid to University of Hawaii)       |
| \$ 8,392  | Taxes  |
| \$ 6,536  | Postage, Shipping, Handling                    |
| \$ 2,334  | Office expenses, Hardware, Software, Inventory |
| \$ 1,875  | Rent (office)                                  |
| \$ 4,397  | Internet services                              |
| \$ 1,708  | Accounting services                            |
| \$ 3,543  | Transportation, Travel                         |
| \$ 414    | Telephone                                      |
| \$ 14,326 | Bank loan repayment and bank charges           |
| \$ 1,213  | Advertising                                    |
| \$ 999    | Other  |

These expenditures were incurred in furtherance of achieving our special purpose objectives, and the total is very close to that of the previous fiscal year.

We estimate that our expenditures over the next three fiscal years will be larger. We anticipate revenue growth and will re-invest most of it on improving our products and services to fulfill our educational mission. We hope to allocate additional funds, generated through sales, grants and fundraising, to hiring additional workers.

## **Conclusion**

This was a year of steady progress, building on what we established with the big reorganization and planning of the previous year. As hoped, some of our long and arduous efforts finally came to fruition, and many more are now on the verge.