

# **What's in the name?**

**A behavioral study of the use of  
the URLs in China and the US**

(work in progress)

GigaNet 5<sup>th</sup> Symposium

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# How do URLs matter?

**>187,000,000**

Registered gTLDs at the end of Q3 2009

**>76,300,000**

Registered ccTLDs at the end of Q3 2009

**>\$100,000,000**

Domain name sales in 2009



**world summit  
on the information society**  
Geneva 2003 - Tunis 2005



السعودية .  
.pφ

.XXX

امارات .

مصر .

.brand

# **How do URLs matter for the user?**

## **Part 1: Questionnaire**

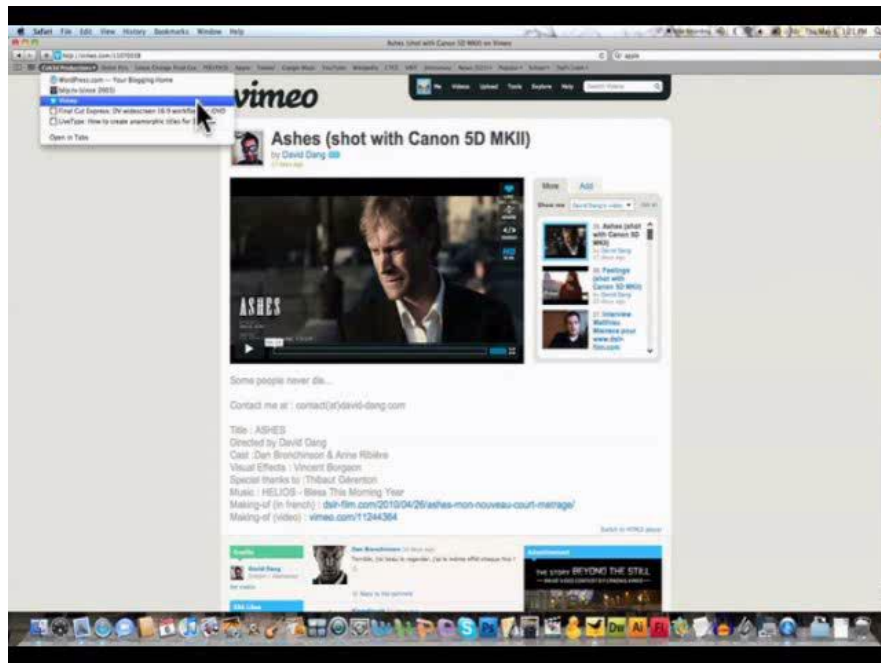
- Assessment of the technological environment
- Assessment of the internet-related skills
- Review of past online activities

## **Part 2: Structured observations**

- Recall of a daily routine
- Probes on past online activities

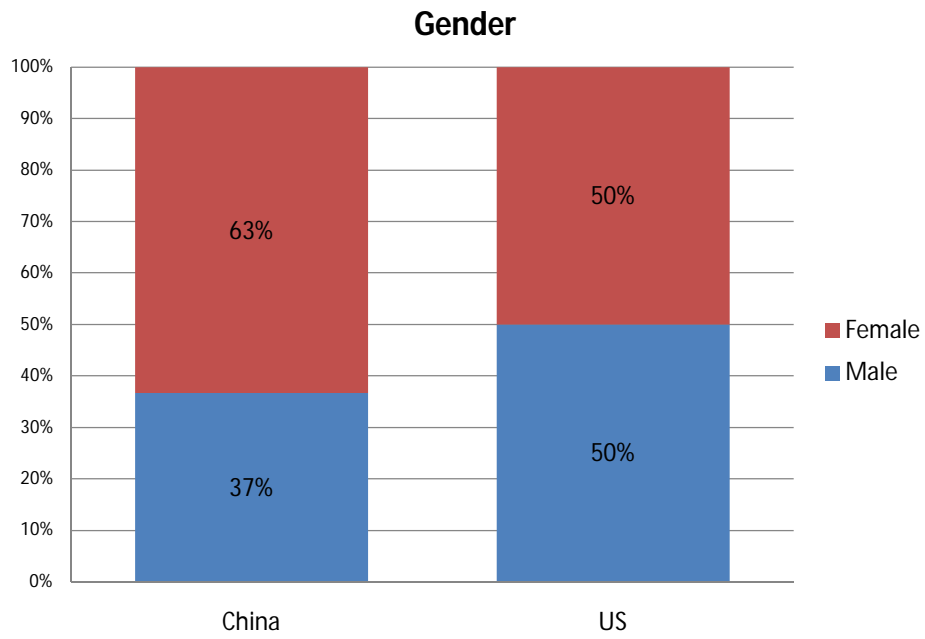
## **Part 3: Questionnaire**

- Knowledge of and attitudes to TLDs
- Demographic questionnaire



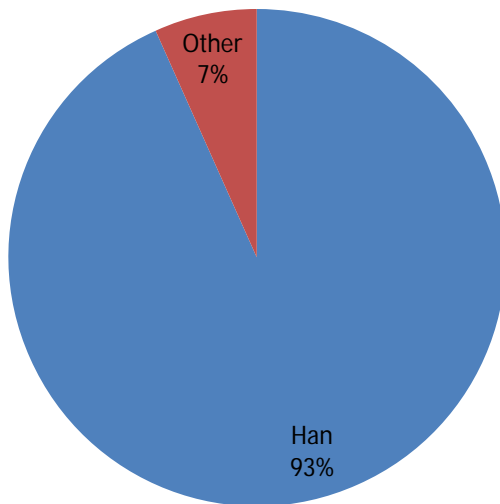
# **A few words about our participants**

# Sample characteristics: gender

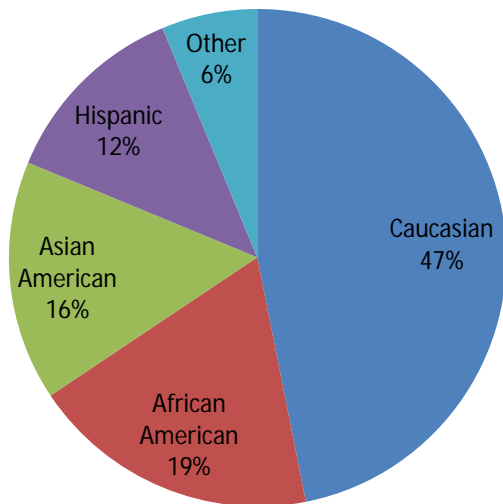


# Sample characteristics: ethnicity

China

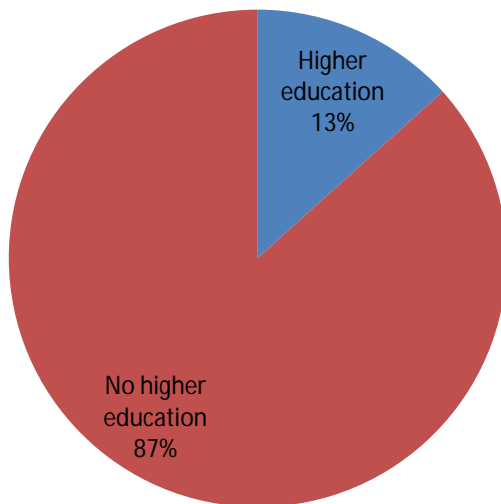


USA

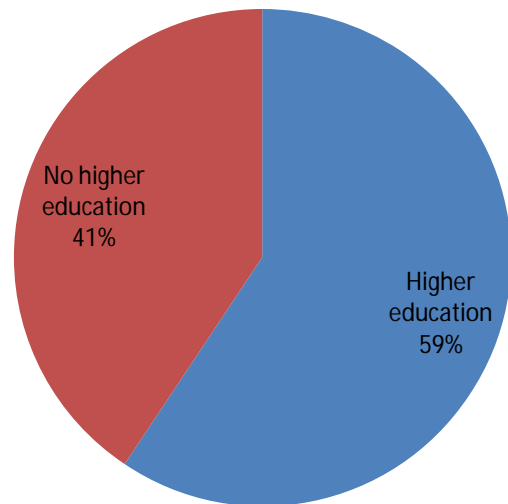


# Sample characteristics: education

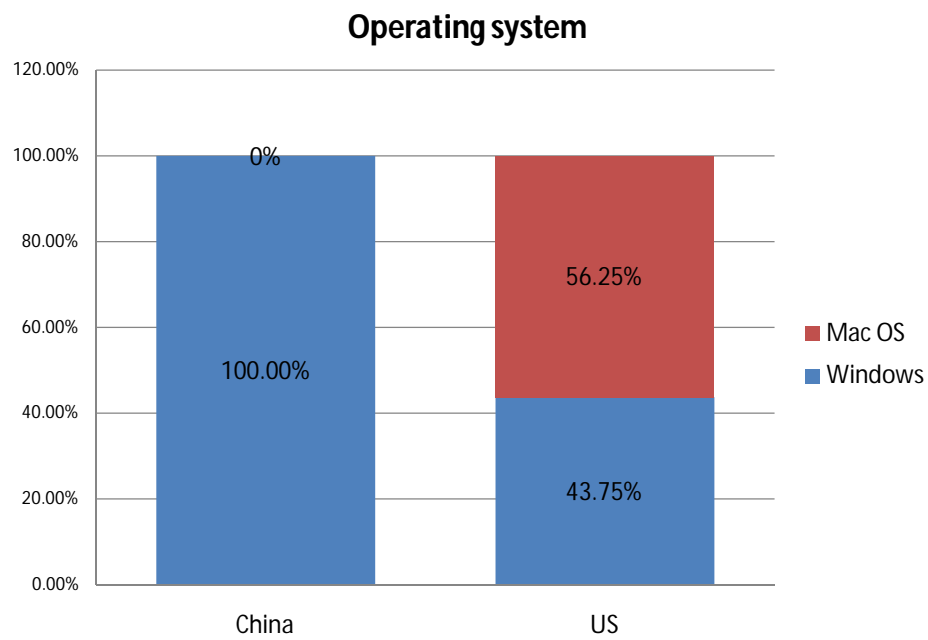
Parents education China



Parents education US

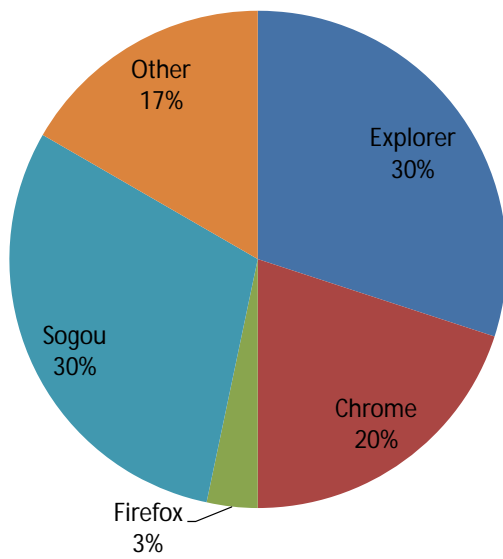


# Sample characteristics: OS

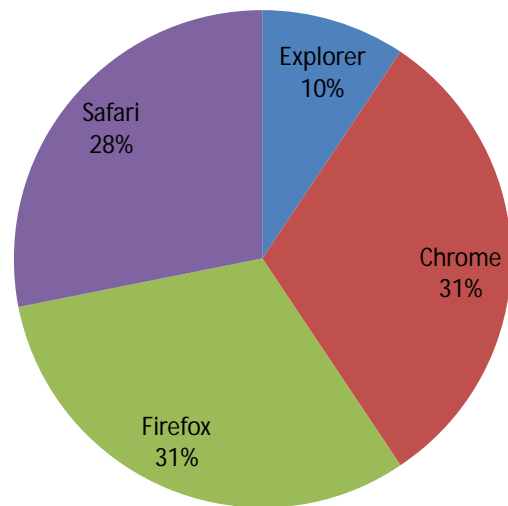


# Sample characteristics: Browser

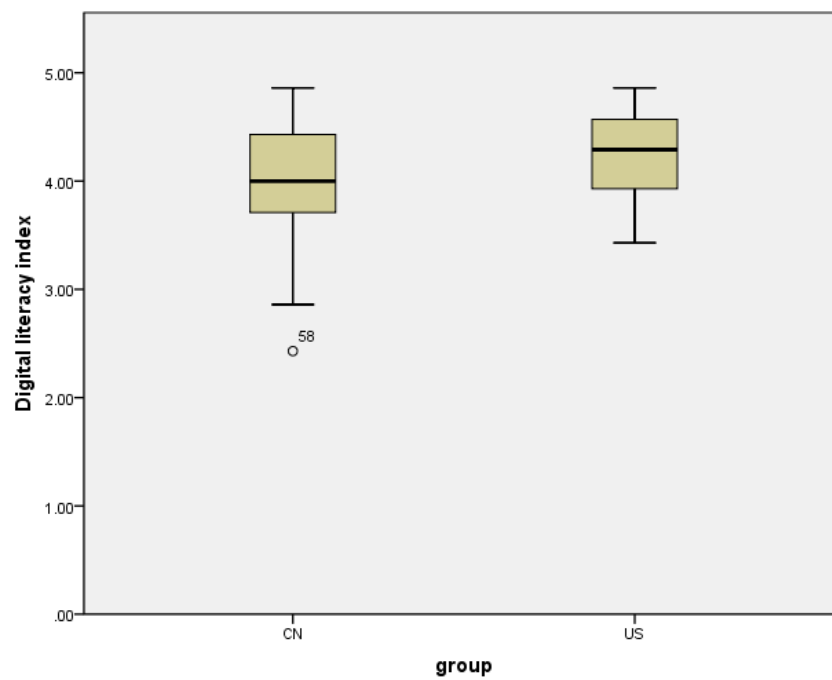
China



USA

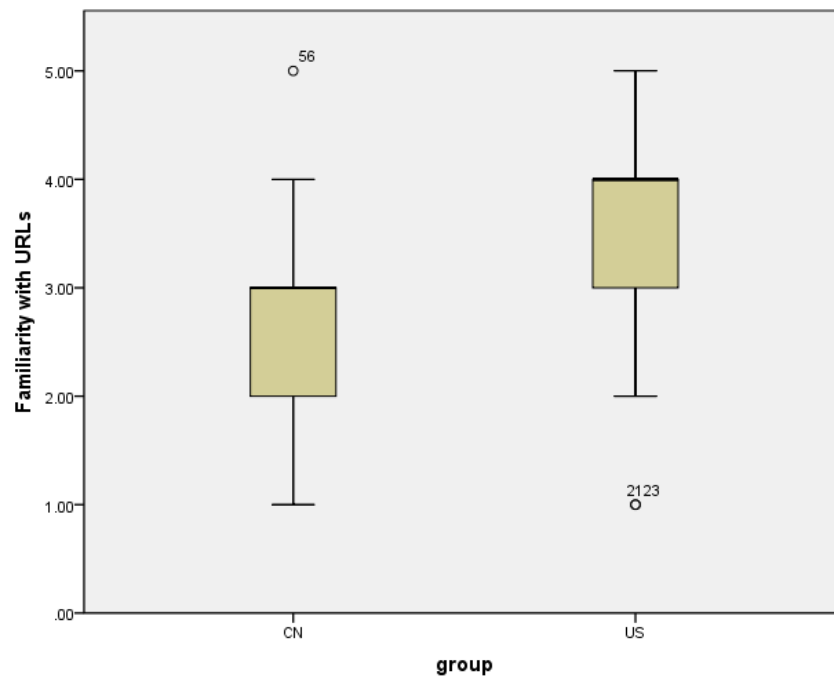


# Sample characteristics: dig. literacy

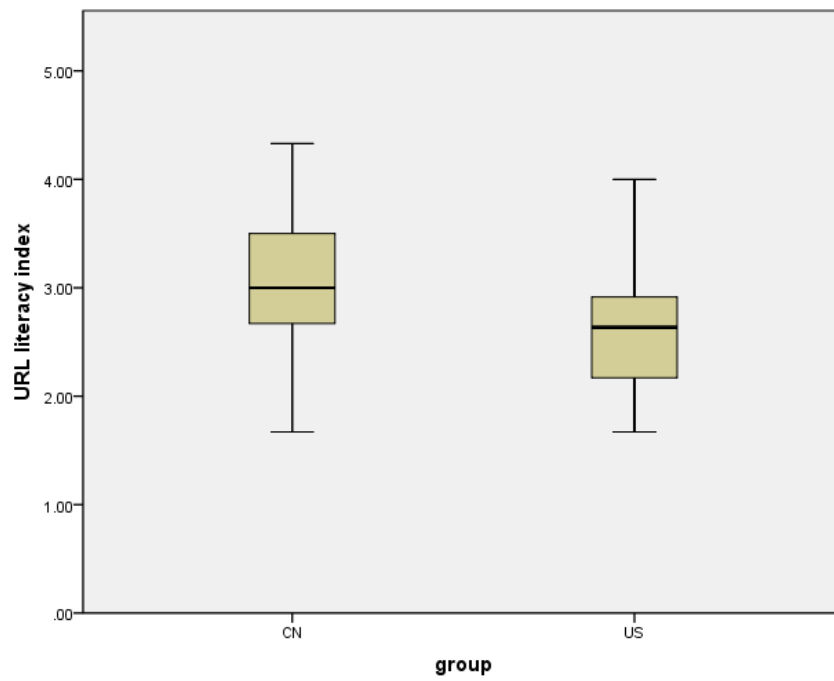


# **Preliminary results and observations**

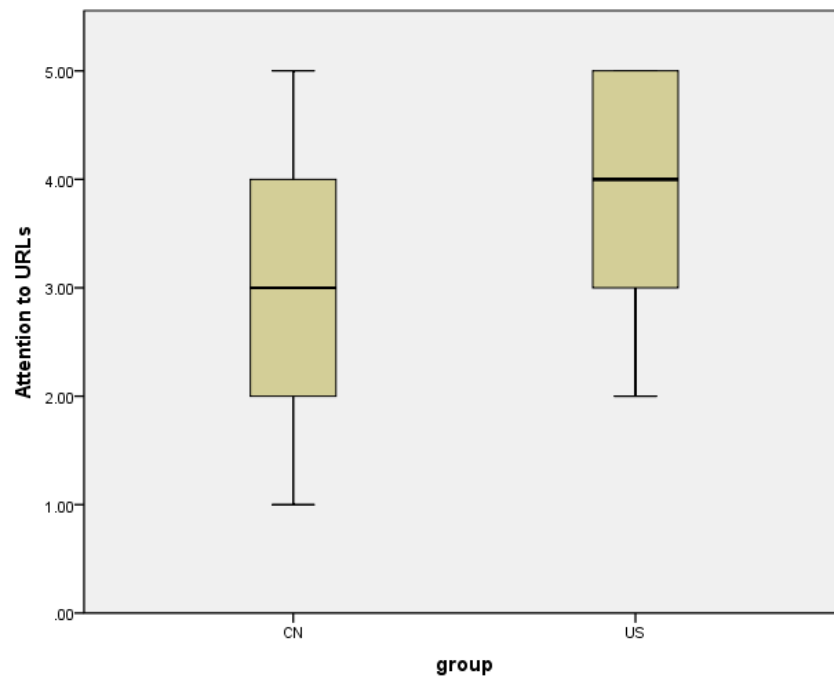
# URLs: familiarity



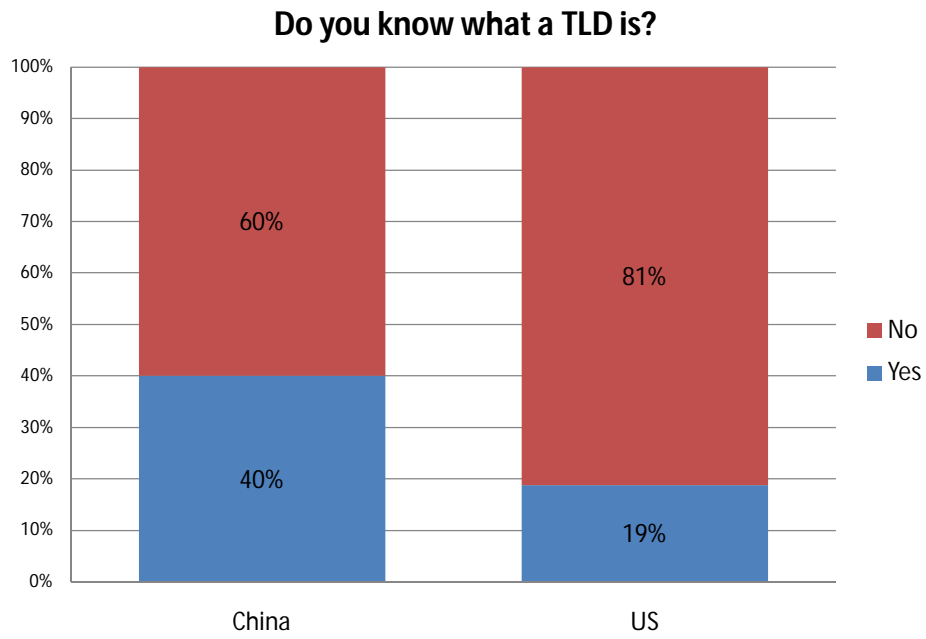
# URLs: literacy



# URLs: attention



# TLDs: familiarity



# URLs: recall

<u>TLD</u>	<u>USA</u>	<u>China</u>
.org	21	10
.edu	28	8
.gov	32	13
.cn	0	22
.us	2	0
.au	1	0
.fr	2	1
.hk	0	9
.jp	2	5
.kr	2	0
.ru	1	0
.tv	5	1
.tw	0	2
.uk	7	2

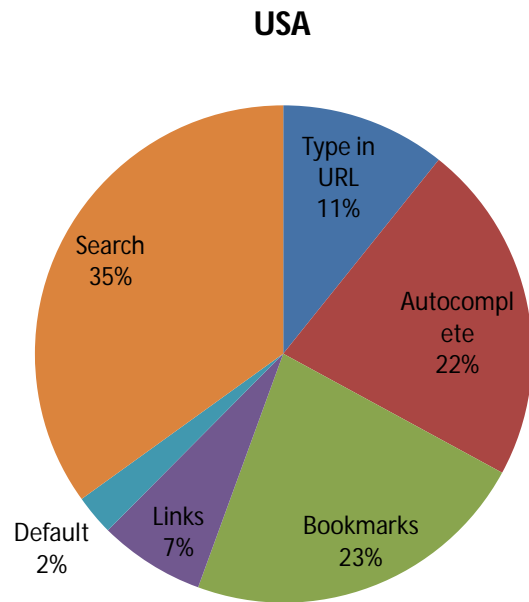
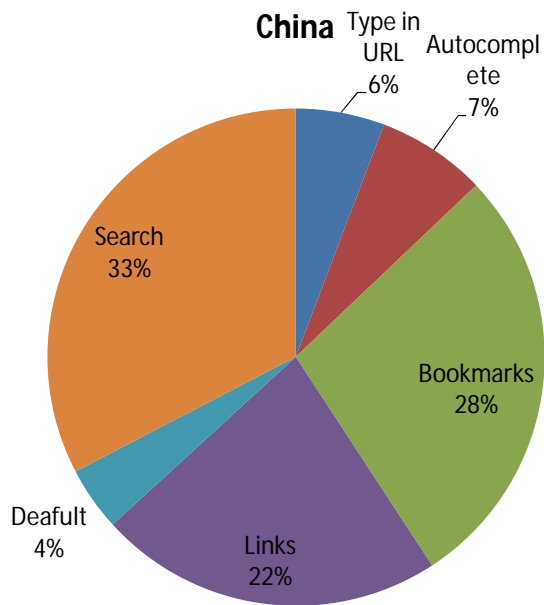
***“Websites ending with .gov.cn belong to China, while others ending with .gov are more official.” (CN)***

***“... [those] ending with .gov are international.” (CN)***

***“I think that they're like different governments. Like I guess .ca is California. Or maybe different countries. I really have no idea for that, I guess. I think it'd probably be like the ending would be where the government's at. (US)***

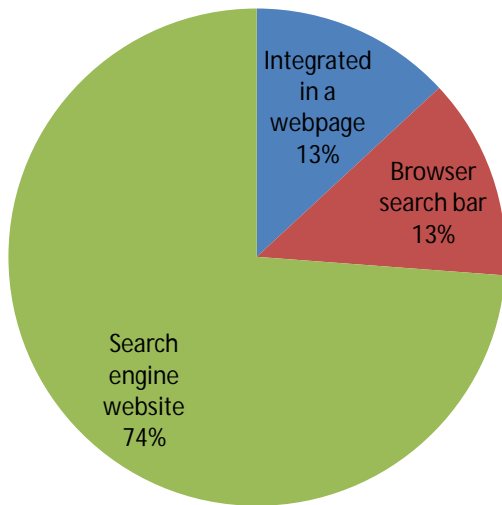
**How do they surf?**

# Ways of arriving to a webpage

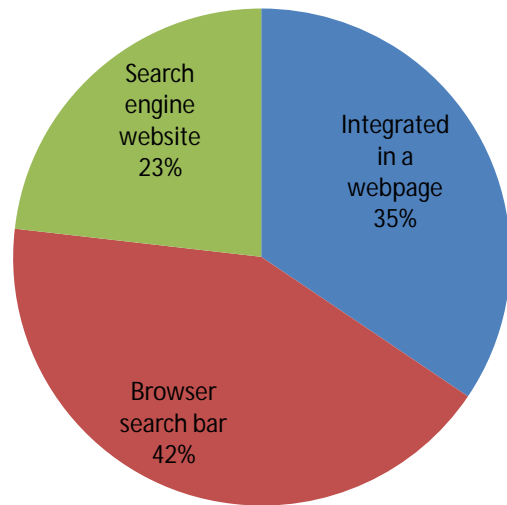


# Search

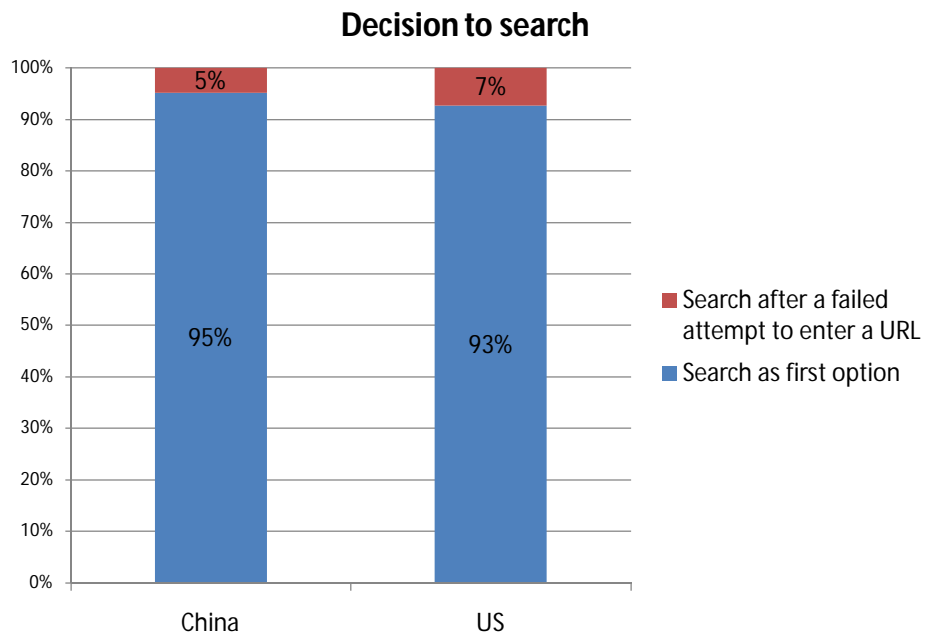
China



USA



# Search

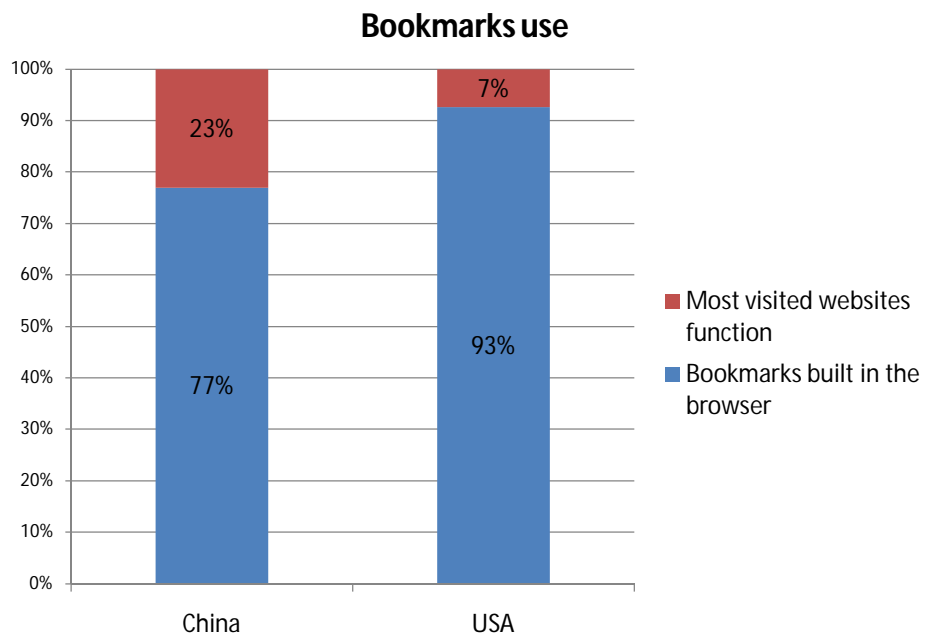


## Search

- Interpretation of search page elements
- Tacit and contextual knowledge
- Jumping off points

***“I usually want a government statistic... The URL is a part of my decision... I don't want just .com .net.” (US)***

# Bookmarks

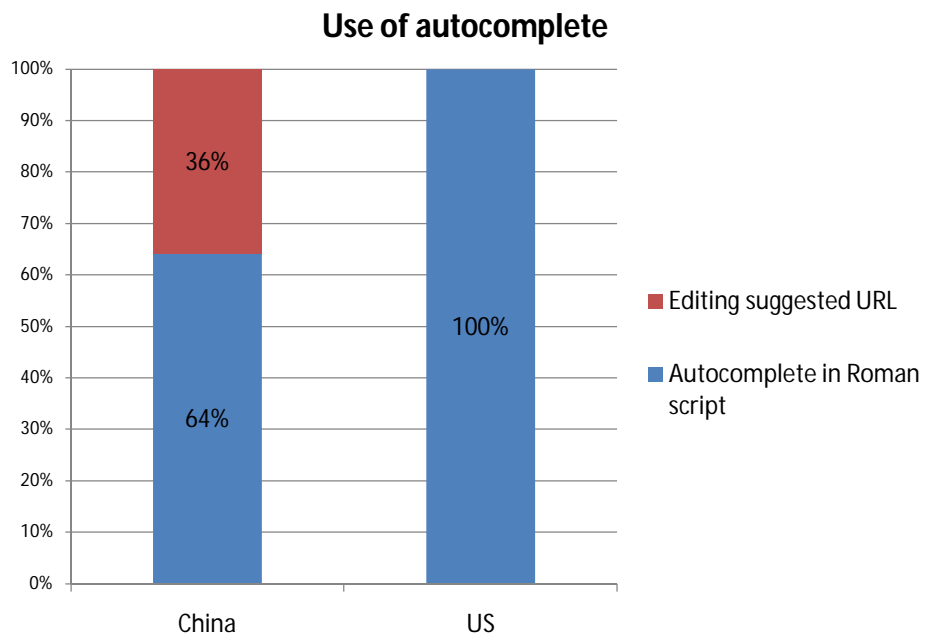


***“I save frequently used websites as bookmarks and use a search engine to find those hardly used.” (CN)***

***“That's in my bookmarks. I said, I'm not going to memorize that site.” (US)***

***“I remember the website's name, not the URL. I can access this website with a search engine by its name.” (CN)***

# Autocomplete



***“I type in 'F' and Facebook comes up. I don't bookmark it because that's all I need to do.” (US)***

***“I always go there [Facebook], so its like the first one on the drop down.” (US)***

# Links



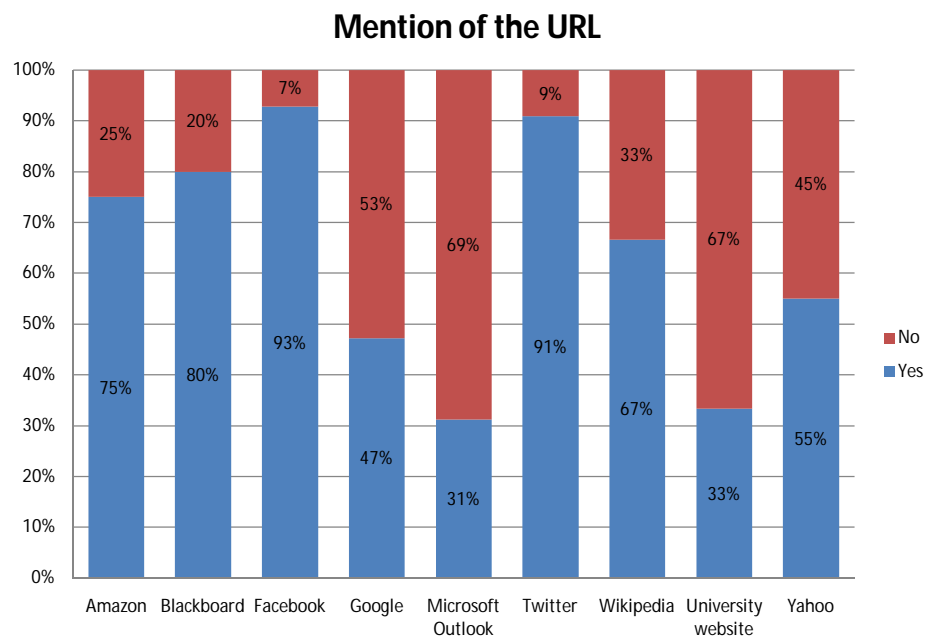
# **Familiarity and making sense**

***“If there was like .gov. something else I wouldn't click it because I wouldn't know if it's reliable... [So what would .gov.ca be?] I would consider it spam.” (US)***

***“I'd like to trust websites ending with .org, cuz they are more reliable” (CN)***

***“If there was like .gov. something else I wouldn't click it because I wouldn't know if it's reliable... [So what would .gov.ca be?] I would consider it spam.” (US)***

# URL as a brand



# Context

**“My closer friends, I feel like I can trust them not to put up something bad, whereas people I'm not so close with, I don't want to go to what they have, because I don't know what they're putting up there.” (US)**

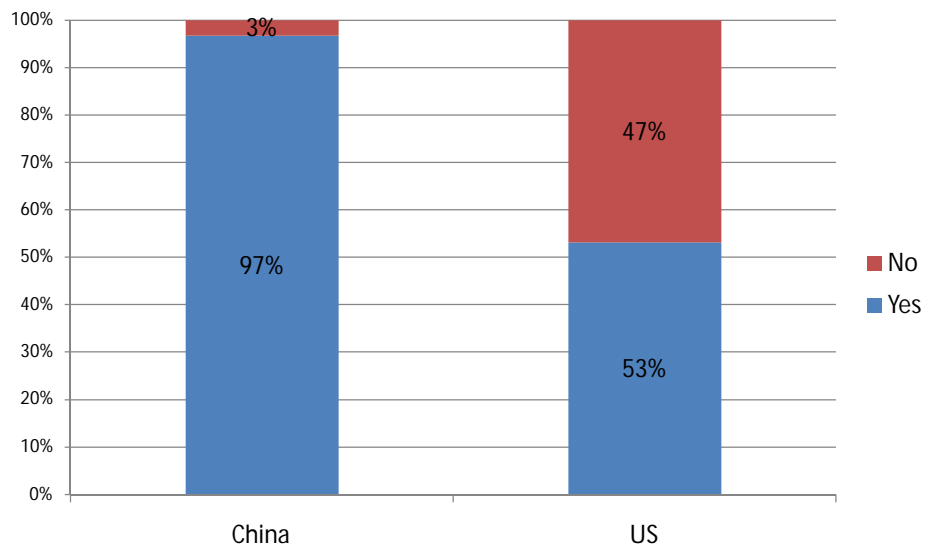
# **Simplicity**

***“I was shown the comic, and it was the funniest thing I've seen in my entire life. And then they said, ‘You would like this site.’ It was one of those things that I just got hooked on... I approximately remembered it [the URL of the site], then Googled it, then bookmarked it.” (US)***

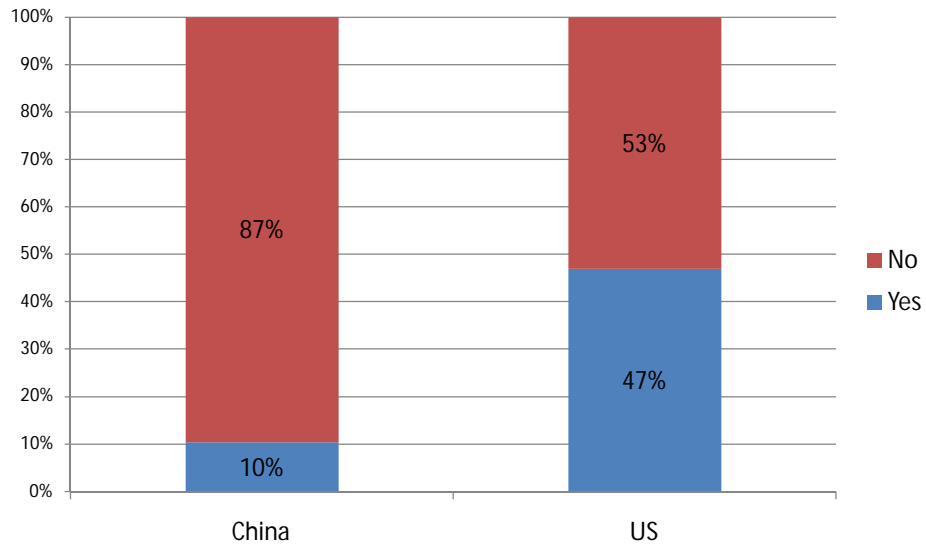
***“I think URL which is short or related to its website's pinyin name is easy to memorize.” (CN)***

**English please**

### Do you ever access websites in languages other than English/Chinese?



### Would you follow a URL that is not in English characters?



# Thank you!

## Special thanks

- Crystal Calabrese
- Justin Zupnick
- Si Fan
- Veronica Maidel

A version of these slides will be available at: [www.thinkmacro.org](http://www.thinkmacro.org)

