



D-economy gets Chinese characteristics

Online, connected and integrated — economic sectors, several industries, emerging fields ride the technology wave

By CHENG YU and HU MEIDONG in Fujian

In the "new era", digital economy, or D-economy, with Chinese characteristics is becoming an integral part of real economy, potentially emerging a role model for the rest of the world.

Perhaps, nothing exemplifies this trend more than the advent of the "digital identity" (D-ID for short, or virtual ID) for citizens.

The D-ID promises to rationalize existing multiple IDs — passport, social security card, library card, local transport card, what have you.

What's more, the day when the D-ID can incorporate all of them on a single chip-based card, or even in a quick-response or QR code, may not be far off, industry experts said.

First things first. Digital economy refers to the use of the internet, and technologies like cloud computing, big data and artificial intelligence in a variety of industries and sectors to drive economic growth in the digital era.

That era went futuristic in the city of Fuzhou in eastern Fujian province now, as the local government unveiled a D-ID system.

The chip-based D-ID enables citizens to establish or authenticate their identity through a unique smartphone-based QR code that can be scanned.

"China has arrived at a turning point in the 'new era' where citizens not only live in a physical world but have a digital life. Everyone can be a

"digital citizen," said Wang Jing, CEO of Newland Hi-Tech Group Co Ltd, a Chinese wireless telecommunication technology company that developed the Fuzhou D-ID system.

"Unlike the common QR code, advanced technologies have been applied to this system to ensure it can't be copied or tampered. The system has been divided into several zones and all data is encrypted for privacy and security. Only certain terminals (workstations) at administrative authorities can read the data," she said.

D-ID is just one shining example of how digital economy is adding value to real economy in China.

"Digital economy is driven by deep integration of the next generation of information and telecom technologies with real economy. It's not only an important part of building a 'smart society' but a key driver of a digitalized, internet-enabled and artificial intelligence-powered society," said Chen Zhaoxiang,

“The ultimate test for digital economy's effectiveness is whether or not it is serving ordinary people's life needs.”

Wang Xing, chairman and CEO of Meituan-Dianping

vice-minister with the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology.

Small wonder, China has made the development of digital economy a top priority. The government has launched many initiatives in the past few years toward that end. These include "Internet Plus", "Made in China 2025", further promotion of deep integration of the internet, cloud computing, big data and AI with the real economy, and building the country into a cyber-power.

The strong impetus led to a boom in China's digital economy.

Latest data from the China Academy of Information and

Communications Technology showed that the scale of the country's digital economy hit 27.2 trillion yuan (\$4.31 trillion) last year, accounting for almost 33 percent of the nation's GDP (which was 82 trillion yuan in 2017, up 6.9 percent year-on-year).

The ongoing process is seeing major internet players striving to reshape people's livelihoods. They are revamping the physical consumption experience and innovating the manufacturing sector using novel technologies.

For instance, Meituan-Dianping, China's largest provider of on-demand online services spanning food delivery, hotel bookings, travel,

entertainment ticketing, is integrating big data, artificial intelligence and cloud computing. This integrated platform offers people all-in-one life experiences.

People can find nearby restaurants, reserve hotels, order take-outs, book a film ticket, all with a tap on a smartphone screen. The company also entered the ride-hailing sector recently to link dining with transportation where users can directly book a taxi where they reserved a restaurant table for lunch/dinner.

"The ultimate test for digital economy's effectiveness is whether or not it is serving ordinary people's life needs. We hope to serve a total of 1 billion people each day through technological innovations. We would like to help people to 'eat better, live better,'" said Wang Xing, chairman and CEO of Meituan-Dianping.

With 320 million active users using its platforms and more than 4 million merchants listed on it, the Beijing-based company said it will

start trial operations of its driverless delivery vehicles this year. It will also promote the service on a large scale in 2019 to make the dream of 24-hour delivery a reality.

Not just the services sector, even the manufacturing sector has been benefitting from the rise of D-economy.

New technologies and initiatives such as "Made in China 2025" have helped upgrade China's manufacturing sector.

Major cloud operators including China Aerospace Science and Industry Corp and Sany Heavy Industry Co Ltd are building industrial internet platforms. The larger goal is to set up a network of combined, advanced machines with internet-connected sensors and big-data analytics. Such a network will help companies to bolster productivity, efficiency and reliability of industrial production.

China Aerospace Science and Industry Corp, for

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Talking Business

Shining star of the tech that transforms

By OUYANG SHIJIA
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Guizhou province — oh, what a transformation it has witnessed! Technology can truly transform an economy in a short time indeed.

There was a time when the southwestern province evoked mental images of a remote, less-developed area — home to verdant mountains, ethnic minorities, and, wait for it, poverty. Not any more.

I first set foot in Guizhou's capital city Guiyang last May to cover the 2017 China International Big Data Expo.

When I was there, I did find verdant mountains and ethnic minorities in local media images and stories. And I also found something extremely amazing: home-grown high-tech that strengthens businesses and government services alike.

A wide range of digital technologies are applied in the province. Not only in the business sector but in the emerging e-governance sector and civil services.

I learn the advent of the high-tech sector is benefiting both the local government and the common people.

For instance, during the big data expo last year, Alibaba Cloud, the cloud computing arm of internet behemoth Alibaba Group Holding Ltd, unveiled a plan to set up, in association with the Guiyang Municipal Public Security Bureau, a joint block data center and a cloud platform project.

The twin projects will offer more robust computing power and smarter artificial intelligence algorithms, which will be used to improve a variety of public- and private-sector services.

For instance, with the help of cloud computing and artificial intelligence technologies, cars featuring fake licenses will be identified automatically, according to the Guiyang Municipal Public Security Bureau.

In 2016, with the use of big data analysis, crimes like burglaries and robberies in Guiyang dropped by almost 6 percent.

Li Zaiyong, a member of the Standing Committee of the CPC Guizhou Provincial Committee and the secretary of the CPC Guiyang Municipal Committee, said during the first Digital China Summit held in

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Golden online era dawns for cloud, big data, AI

By CHENG YU and HU MEIDONG in Fujian

China's digital economy, or D-economy, has entered a "golden era" and has become a new economic growth engine, said an expert from the China Academy of Information and Communications Technology, a government think tank.

The internet, and technologies like cloud computing, big data and artificial intelligence, or AI, are helping transform several industries and sectors, thereby driving economic growth, he said.

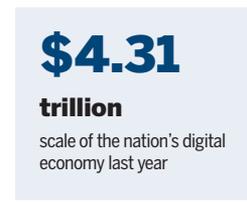
"The country's digital economy has stepped into a new phase, with the focus shifting

from high-speed growth to both quantity and quality development," said Lu Chuncong, director of the Policy and Economic Research Institute, at CAICT.

The nation's digital economy generated 27.2 trillion yuan (\$4.31 trillion) in scale last year, up 20 percent year-on-year and higher than that of China's overall economic growth of 6.9 percent in 2017, CAICT data showed.

"Digital economy's contribution to GDP (which was 82 trillion yuan) exceeded 33 percent last year," said Lu.

The contribution of digital economy to gross domestic product is expected to



approach or even surpass the corresponding figure in developed countries.

According to him, China's technology innovation has helped transform industry from a follower to a world leader, with the information technology and telecommunications sectors contributing the most.

The country's ongoing shift to the 5G technology, for example, marks important progress of D-economy.

China lagged behind some other countries in issuing 4G and 3G licenses. But in 5G, the nation has played a crucial role in partnering with other countries to finalize global standards.

"5G is just a few steps away from commercial use, with companies competing and cooperating with each other to establish a beachhead in the technology," said Xiang Ligang, CEO of a telecoms industry website.

5G devices will be ready for commercial applications in China in 2019. We'll be among

the first batch of countries to issue 5G licenses in the world, most likely between the second half of 2019 and the first half of 2020.

In addition, the burgeoning digital economy has played an important role in creating jobs. Last year, 171 million people worked in China's digital economy-related sectors, accounting for 22 percent of the total employment.

"However, China still lagged behind in some core technologies compared with developed countries, which requires us to accelerate core technology breakthroughs," said Lu.

He said the country should bolster basic technologies



Visitors interact with a robot at the 2018 AI products expo in Suzhou, Jiangsu province, on May 10. WANG JIANKANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

while also mapping out the next generation of technologies in advance. It should also expand channels linking basic research and technology innovation.

"The country is expected to

increase investment and encourage more industry-oriented investments in key and weak areas," said Lu.

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