Guizhou's digital industry attracts resources from across the globe

Latest technology is playing a pivotal role in creating a new economy with greater efficiency

By LI YOU
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Companies in Guiyang, Guizhou province are taking advantage of the city's push to integrate big data with the real economy by using the technology to increase efficiency, while the entire city rallies to turn itself into China's "digital valley".

The provincial capital announced on April 20 that it expects its "digital valley" goal, a term inspired by Silicon Valley in the United States, to be achieved by 2020 through the establishment of a comprehensive big data industrial system in the city.

Big data is playing a pivotal role in transforming the way that businesses operate as well as acting as a major driving force in the upgrading of traditional industries.

The benefits of big data can be seen most apparently in traditional enterprises that are now using the technology.

Laoganma, a China's best-selling chili sauce, is produced in Guiyang by Laoganma Special Flavor Foodstuffs. Its founder Tao Huabi established the company in 1997 and until recently, the company has operated using a traditional food production business model.

From humble beginnings selling her chili sauce at the roadside, Tao's spicy condiment is now on the market in more than 72 countries and regions around the world.

In recent years, Laoganma has seized upon the latest technologies and implemented the use of big data throughout the entire production, distribution and sales chain of its business.

The company has established a big data operation center to manage the purchase of raw materials, production, digital quality control and production efficiency.

Laoganma also uses big data to monitor and analyze market sales for all of its products so that it can ensure new stock is being produced and that shelves in sales outlets are never empty.

According to the company, the use of big data technology contributed to a jump in annual output value from 4 billion yuan ($626.50 million) in 2015, to 5 billion yuan in 2017.

Laoganma is just one of the successful examples of enterprises in Guizhou that have benefited from the adoption of big data for precise analysis and meticulous management, said Li Zaiyong, executive vice-governor of Guizhou.

In recent years, Guizhou has built up a broader and more diverse economic system by promoting the integration of big data with the real economy, Li added.

"Last year, we helped a total of 4,738 companies to achieve industrial upgrades with the support of big data technology, which has boosted the development of a group of companies operating in traditional industries," Li said.

The Guizhou government is promoting its big data strategy in its high-tech zone by establishing big data technology innovation test areas, which support small, medium and micro-sized enterprises in their research, protect their intellectual property and promote the commercialization of high-tech products.

Guiyang has set a goal to attract more than 10,000 big data enterprises, establish five national pilot demonstration projects and cultivate more than 10 big data brands by 2020.

At present, the added value of the digital economy accounts for 33 percent of the province's GDP. Through these projects, the city hopes to increase its big data revenue to 100 billion yuan by 2020 and create 70,000 jobs.

"We should continue to promote the integration of big data technology with all walks of industry, and then to promote the upgrade of traditional and real economy," said Sun Zhigang, Party secretary of Guizhou.

In order to attract international attention to Guizhou's efforts in big data development, the province has established the Guiyang International Big Data Expo, which has been held for three straight years in the city.

The event has grown to become a weather vane for the world's big data industry and a platform for influential industrial leaders. In 2017 it was upgraded to a national-level expo.

The 2018 expo, to be held from Saturday to Tuesday, will focus on the digital economy and the development of big data. The number of participants is expected to exceed 50,000 with 388 corporate exhibitors.

To date, Facebook, Google, Intel, Dell, Alibaba, JD, Huawei as well as China's three major telecoms operators — China Telecom, China Mobile and China Unicom — have announced their participation in the event.

Zhang Xiaohang, deputy inspector of the internet bureau at the State Council Information Office's information development office, said that this year's expo will be bigger and better than ever.

The event will gather the necessary resources for the development of Guizhou's industrial and big data systems which is of great significance to the development of China's big data industry, Zhang said.

Guiyang International Big Data Expo has grown to become a weather vane for the world's big data industry and a platform for influential industrial leaders. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Young people experience VR product during the Guiyang International Big Data Expo. YANG JUN / CHINA DAILY

Little robots captivate young attendees during the Guiyang International Big Data Expo. YANG JUN / CHINA DAILY

Big Data Plaza in Guiyang has gathered a large number of companies and talented professionals.

Big data collection expands public service efficiency

By HAN LU
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As part of its efforts to become a critical hub for the development of big data in China, Guiyang has been integrating and applying the technology into every aspect of day-to-day living including public administrative services, healthcare and poverty alleviation.

The capital of Southwest China's Guizhou province has been pushing hard in its development of big data technologies in recent years as part of its effort to become China's "digital valley".

Behind this push is Guizhou Provincial Party Committee, which aims to apply big data across the board to all public services to make them more smart and efficient, and to contribute to improving the livelihoods of local residents.

The committee's main focus for the technology has been using it to carry out targeted poverty alleviation, helping those who might have difficulty visiting a doctor in person and speeding up government administrative services, Sun Zhigang, secretary of the Guizhou Provincial Party Committee, said at the symposium on surveying the big data enterprises in April.

The joint venture Zhu Minsheng service platform was established by the Guiyang government and Digital China Holdings in February 2017. Its role is to put more government services, archives and administrative processes online to provide greater convenience to residents who need to make enquiries or process applications or registrations for things such as business certificates, taxation or legal matters.

The one-stop platform also provides more than 170 pubic services covering medical services and education, and is integrated across 16 government departments and 21 enterprises, and can be accessed via the official website, mobile app or through social media platform WeChat.

The interactive Zhu Minsheng platform not only processes a vast amount of services, but also logs user information, feedback and experiences so that the data can be used to improve the systems' effectiveness over time.

Baiyun district in Guiyang has established an online health database and archives for more than 189,000 residents. So far, it has collected 23 million diagnostic and therapeutic records from 630,000 hospital visits, and is enabling the district to provide medical services faster and with greater efficiency.

The database is especially useful for residents who live in the district's rural areas and remote villages, and for whom travelling all the way to the closest hospital is a major obstacle. Now that a vast amount of medical services and diagnoses can be made online or by telephone, it has provided greater convenience to those living far away from more central areas of the city, according to the government.

As a result of its efforts, the government in Guiyang has collected large amounts of data focused on poverty alleviation, civil affairs, health planning, statistics and land resources and used it to target people in the lowest income areas and help improve their lives. So far it has collected more than 6.9 million data entries in order to form and understand the full picture of poverty in the area.

Big data is also being used to promote a more balanced development of regional education and to improve the transportation network across the whole city.

Liu Jun, a public servant in Guiyang, said that in the past two years, the government has provided many free lectures to explain and popularize big data, and that is has been covered extensively in the local news.

"Almost all people working in the Guiyang public sector are familiar with the importance and the contribution of big data," Liu said.

Global artificial intelligence contest gives real challenge to developers

By HAN LU

To help accelerate the development of artificial intelligence technologies and ecosystems, the organizing committee of Big Data Expo, the world's first big data themed expo, launched a global AI competition on Jan 19.

The 2018 China International Big Data Fusion Innovation and Artificial Intelligence Global Competition is seeking innovative AI entries that integrate big data and the internet as well as useful applications in the real economy.

Big data plays a key role in AI in that it is the core technology used for data support. The development of AI is intertwined with big data, as big data provides the building blocks for AI to be able to successfully learn and improve.

The organizing committee said it hopes that leading AI enterprises from home and abroad can establish international AI platforms for exchanges and build an ecosystem for big data integration and innovation.

The competition is divided into six sub-contest areas, including China, the United States and Israel, and so far has attracted 1,116 projects from 15 countries and regions, more than 50 top experts and over 100 investors from all over the world in the field of AI.

After more than three months of selection, a total of 24 winning teams passed the semi-final competition from six sub-contest areas and joined the final on Friday in Guiyang, China's "digital valley".

With those resources acting as a bed rock for the competition, the thousands of entrants are expected to benefit from more established research on more than 20 innovative AI projects and an open innovation platform aimed at fostering economic and social development in the sector.

The competition is of great significance to Guizhou in its pursuit of becoming a hub of big data development, speeding its opening up as well its overall competitiveness.

"The rapid development of Guiyang in the field of AI has been recognized by a large number of entrepreneurs in the recent years," Zhang Ruocong, investment director of Sinowisdom investment company in Zhejiang province, said at the 2018 China International Big Data Fusion Innovation and Artificial Intelligence Global Competition's Hangzhou sub-contest.

Zhang added that, as investors, they will choose a better entrepreneurial environment and Guiyang has an obvious advantage in the development of AI.

"Some excellent AI projects were created under the help and policy support from the government, such as the facial recognition technology created under the cooperation with Sensingtech Corporation, and the cloud-based call center built with IT company iFlytek, which will attract more and more investors to Guiyang," he said.

In addition, Intel Corporation, Guiyang and the China AI industry innovation alliance will work together to build an open AI innovation platform and Guiyang will provide data from 10 fields to promote the faster development of enterprises. Many AI teams have expressed willingness to join in the platform before its official operation.

The 2018 China International Big Data Fusion Innovation and AI Global Competition is launched on Jan 19, aiming to accelerate the development of AI technologies and ecosystems.

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