

Big data expo gathers experts, tech

Professionals and enthusiasts witness expanding capabilities and real-world applications of the field, **Chen Meiling** reports.

A robot in traditional Chinese garb wrote lines of poetry in calligraphy. Kids wore virtual reality glasses to explore Buddhist caves and historical museums. Self-circulating water systems connected to computer generated graphs of flow and pressure.

The first day of the 2017 China International Big Data Expo was full of fascinating machinery and high-tech novelty items.

The annual event was held for the third time since 2015 in Guiyang, capital of Southwest China's Guizhou province, from May 25 to 28, attracting big names in the IT industry like Tencent, Alibaba, JD and ZTE, 14 foreign researchers from the Silicon Valley, local big data companies and more than 1,000 big data appliance companies from around the world.

Yang Jian, general manager of Beijing Ganwei Robot Tech Co Ltd, founded in 2015, said the calligraphy-writing robot, made in half a year, is made to resemble Chinese philosopher Wang Yangming, from the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), both in appearance and in handwriting.

Full texts of *Chuan Xi Lu*, one of the major works explaining Wang's philosophy, were uploaded into the robot's database. When the audience asked a question, he would answer with a sentence from the book through speech synthesis, Yang said.

Mu Degui, deputy governor of Guizhou province, said at a forum at the expo that Guizhou sees big data as an engine of local economic and social development. It will explore a broader application of the technology in the next five years in commercial, political and civil affairs through promoting the digital economy and Internet Plus initiative.

"Big data will serve the transformation and upgrading of the economy and improvement of government regulations, and bring social benefits," said Mu, who is also a member of the Standing Committee of the Guizhou CPC Provincial Committee and head of the Publicity Department of Guizhou province.

In February 2016, the central government approved Guizhou's plan to become the national big data experimental zone.

In recent years, world-leading giants have conducted their big data projects in the province, including a government information-sharing platform co-developed with Alibaba, makerspaces constructed with Intel and chips and cloud computing projects with Dell.

Alibaba Group announced on May 25 its intention to build the company's first big data school in Guiyang, together

with the Guizhou Institute of Technology, to cultivate 10,000 undergraduates in five years.

The first group of students will be enrolled in autumn this year.

The unveiling ceremony of China's first big data application lab was held in Guiyang on May 25, focusing on research of government data's collection, analysis, sharing and security.

Since the standing committee of Guiyang's people's congress approved the government information sharing system in January, Guiyang has released 4.97 million pieces of information in fields including transportation, sanitation, finance and education, with more than 40,000 downloads and 120,000 visitors by May.

17k

companies

in Guizhou are involved in the big data industry

4.97m

pieces

of government public information Guiyang has shared as of May

The Cloud Guizhou application will also be linked to the national platform, marking the first Chinese province to bridge its data to the national system.

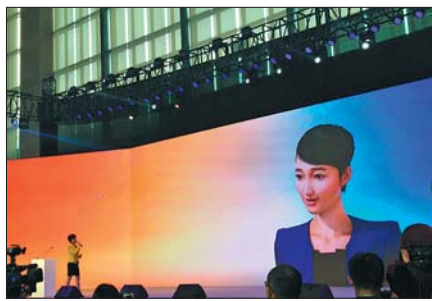
Cheng Xiaobo, director of the State Information Center, said it has become a trend to apply big data to economic development, social management and improvement of government services and regulations.

According to a big data development plan released by the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology of China in January, the income of big data products and services will surpass 1 trillion yuan (\$145.60 billion) by 2020 with an annual compound growth rate of about 30 percent.

Guizhou now has more than 17,000 big data companies, more than 200 business giants, 38 national and provincial research centers and 200 innovation and entrepreneurship teams.

Big data has also been used in the daily life of local people. The big screen of the booth of Electronic Guizhou showed an application released by the local government in early May to provide information of charging facilities for electric cars.

Zhao Yuanliang, secretary-general of a promotional society for construction of electric vehicle charging facilities, said the app can also monitor the distribution of charging facilities,



Clockwise from top: **A visitor** looks at a robot resembling ancient Chinese philosopher Wang Yangming writing Chinese calligraphy at the 2017 China International Big Data Expo; **Attendees** check out Qualcomm's VR system at the expo; **A visitor** tries out a car model made by Huawei to simulate traffic management using big data; **A virtual hostess** talks with a real hostess on stage at the opening ceremony of the Guizhou big data expo; **Visitors** at the expo test a facial recognition device. PHOTOS BY YANG JUN / CHINA DAILY

ties, the classification of users and frequency of different payment methods.

"We have learnt from some developed Chinese cities that already had charging facilities that drivers usually had to download several apps since each was operated by a different company," he said.

In 2016, Guizhou developed an app through which infor-

mation on charging facilities was gathered and managed by only one portal. The government can quickly know how many stations are located in one place and how often they are used to help in the planning of more charging facilities.

Chen Min'er, Guizhou's provincial Communist Party of China chief, said: "Driven by big data, the pattern of eco-

nomie and social development in Guizhou is undergoing profound changes. The capabilities and awareness of collecting and using big data have all strengthened among government departments, enterprises, experts and citizens."

The province will further practice the open development concept, and build and use the Cloud Guizhou platform to

accumulate more resources, Chen said.

"We will use data to bring flows of technology, supplies, talent and funds, so as to accelerate the construction of an open inland economic experimental zone."

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What they say



"We need to seriously think about trivial inference from data. The world is changing and there is too much data. Innovation outpaces our ability to consume. So the biggest challenge is our ability to ask the right questions. Big data has gotten more complex and we need to think about it from five dimensions: volume, velocity, veracity, variety and value."

Anthony Scriffignano, senior vice-president and chief data scientist of Dun & Bradstreet



"I think big data is all about the future because we are online 24/7. A lot of things have been put on the website. We are actively looking for partnerships in China and partners in Guiyang as well. Guiyang has been doing well with big data in finance and we want to see how we can cooperate in the future."

Or Perelman, COO and co-founder of ChromaWay



"The country recognizes the importance of big data development and it needs a platform. Guizhou big data expo is such a platform. Big data will be important fuel behind the development of society in the future, and artificial intelligence will rely on it too."

Zhong Chen, chief technology officer of JD



"Everybody is becoming a producer, an analyst and a user of data. How to share and make the best use of data so it can become the driver pushing society forward is the question we are facing now. We are lucky to take part in the reformation of society as a member of the big data industry, and we are willing to promote the prosperity of the data era. We also hope to shoulder more social responsibility in big data application, and create a healthy, positive data culture, constructing a diversified network."

Chen Gang, CEO of online travel guide website Mafengwo



"Guiyang's progress in big data has attracted global attention in only a few years, and it has become the flagship of the industry."

Wu Fushi, CEO, SAS China region



"Big data has great potential, and Guizhou is pioneering this industry. The province welcomes young people to start their career here and show their talent. The big data industry is very technical, so finding skilled professionals is the main problem. Guizhou needs to work on its talent pool, but I believe the problem will be solved gradually with the industry's development."

Yin Jian, professor at the data science and computer school of Sun Yat-sen University

New regulation expands access to government info

By **REN XIAOJIN**
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Guiyang, capital of Southwest China's Guizhou province, has put forward the country's first regulation on access to and sharing of government data.

The legalization of open data sharing is expected to accelerate the digital economy, as well as help governments to provide better services for the people. It will also encourage innovation, according to a report in People's Daily.

Since the data sharing platform of Guiyang's government was launched on Jan 18, millions of pieces of data, covering 51 government bodies, have been made open to the public.

"Without a large quantity of data, developing the big data industry will be nothing but a vague slogan," said Zhou Wenjie, deputy head of Gui-

yang's big data management and development commission. "Currently, the different levels of government have vast stores of data information. But access to them is very limited, causing a waste of resources."

"More importantly, it was not clear who would be responsible for government data and there was no regulation or law to follow. Therefore, those who have the data dare not share it, and those who use the data do not take responsibility, while the supervision departments have no idea what to do," Zhou added. "Furthermore, some departments will not share data because of their own interest."

Against such a background, some government departments in Guiyang have already experimented with building open access to its data, and they needed a regulation to comply with.

Li Zhong, head of the stand-



Chen Min'er (left), Guizhou's provincial Communist Party of China chief, applauds with Alibaba's Jack Ma at the opening ceremony of the 2017 China International Big Data Expo on Friday in Guiyang. DENG GANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

ing committee of Guiyang's provincial people's congress, said: "The government needs laws and orders for open data sharing, and they cannot oper-

ate on their own. The standing committee has acted proactively. The new regulation has clearly stated limits and boundaries, ridding govern-

ment departments of confusion and breaking patterns of self-protection."

The regulation has defined the concept of sharing and

open access to data. Sharing means different sectors of government can share the information, while open access means the data will be open to society.

"The value of data can only be activated when it is open and shared, which will lay the foundation for the industry," Zhou said.

However, sharing data is only the base. The key is data application, according to Chen Gang, Guiyang's Party chief and a member of Guizhou CPC standing committee.

"To collect new sources of data and expand new industry chains, Guiyang will open up sectors of data collection, storage, cleaning and circulation," he said. "The city will go on exploring data application scenarios in the fields of government administration, business and livelihood, and open a new road in the big data industry's development."