Internet and industry key focus of int'l exposition

By XU JINGXI

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China's economy can take advantage of a new growth model by combining its manufacturing industries with internet technologies, experts and officials said at a recent expo.

The second China (Guangdong) International Internet Plus Exposition held in Foshan, Guangdong province, last week attracted 613 domestic and foreign enterprises to showcase their latest achievements in using information technology to both upgrade their businesses and improve people's lives. To ensure that it maintains

a competitive industrial edge, China last year unveiled its Made in China 2025 plan, which is an initiative to comprehensively upgrade the country's industry.

Premier Li Keqiang has stressed that "Internet Plus" is central to the plan, which aims to transform China's manufacturing mode by applying information technologies such as big data and cloud computing at every link along the industry chain.

"China is a manufacturing power and has robust Internet growth. Combining the manufacturing and internet sectors will speed up the rate at which we can transform the mode of economic development," Zhou Ji, president of the Chinese Academy of Engineering, said at the opening ceremony of the four-day expo on Oct 20.

He added: "Integrated with the internet, the advanced manufacturing and modern service industries will become new engines for China's economic growth."

China now has about 721 million internet users, more than any other country, according to a report released by the United Nations Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development on Sept 15.

Guangdong has more websites and mobile internet users than any other province or autonomous region, according to Zhu Xiaodan, governor of the province. It is also an important man-

ufacturing base and international trade hub, boasting the largest GDP of any province in the country.

"Guangdong will take the opportunity afforded by the Internet Plus expo to step up efforts to integrate the internet with industries and to encourage innovation and entrepreneurship," Zhu said at the opening ceremony.

"Guangdong aims to become an important base for the internet economy, a model for applying IT to public services and a center for innovation and entrepreneurship in the internet sector in China," he added.

Wision Furniture is a Guangdong-based manufacturer that has added innovations to both its production methods and sales strategies, enabling it to



Visitors experience the smart home exhibits during the Foshan Internet Plus expo. ZHOU CHUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

613

enterprises

from China and overseas show cased their technologies and products at the event



中国(广东)国际"互联网+"博览会



adapt to the trend of customized consumption.

Offering a range of services, from home measuring to furniture design, manufacture and delivery, the company has tapped into a market with rich potential and is currently seeing annual growth of around 20 percent. This is in stark contrast to most businesses in the traditional furniture industry, many of which have registered zero growth over the past few years, according to Li Lianzhu, president of Wision.

The internet has made it possible for the company to receive numerous orders in a single day from customers across the country. While this has helped drive the company's growth, it has also provided a stern challenge in terms of the need to produce a high volume of customized furniture using traditional methods.

"That's why intelligent manufacturing is necessary, which will make it possible to produce customized products on a large scale and at affordable prices for customers and acceptable costs for us," Li said at a forum during the expo.

He Dongdong, vice-president and chief process and IT officer of Sany Group, proposed a potential big-picture solution to the challenge of producing customized products on a large scale.

"In the future, the whole industry chain will be one big 'factory', with every single factory connected in a network and making various parts of a product," He said.

"In this way we can make full use of the manufacturing capacity all over the country, improving productivity and reducing costs," he added.

He stressed that in order to realize this vision, the manufacturing sector will need to devise a universal language that can rapidly communicate customers' requirements to

He added that a network developed around big data and cloud computing should be established to connect factories and ensure efficient communication.

Chinese internet companies are also helping manufacturers to get closer to consumers and stay abreast of the latest market trends.

For example, e-commerce giant JD.com has 180 million active users and the big data about their consumption needs is valuable to the website's suppliers.

"What we do is to create scenarios based on our big data to show our manufacturing partners what is currently selling best," said Leslie Liu, vice-president of JD Smart, a subsidiary of JD.com.

City looks to event to realize net gains

By XU JINGXI

The second China (Guangdong) International Internet Plus Exposition closed on Sunday in Foshan, Guangdong province, attracting 319,000 visitors.

Having hosted the four-day event for the past two years, Foshan has built connections with top enterprises and research institutions, both in China and from abroad.

This will help the city to grow into "an innovation hub in the manufacturing industry in China", according to Lu Yi, Party chief of Foshan.

High-level guests attending the expo's opening ceremony on Oct 20 witnessed the signing of agreements for 20 key projects, including an innova-tion center, which will be built in Foshan's Nanhai district. The center aims to attract to the city Israeli companies and research institutes with advanced technology in the fields of manufacturing, the internet of things, medical care and agriculture.

A total of 613 domestic and foreign enterprises, as well as delegations from Germany, Japan and Israel, came to the event to showcase their latest technologies and products. The German delegation also

brought nearly 20 projects in

the fields of biomedicine, auto parts and machinery, which it presented to a Sino-German investment forum during the

expo.

Foshan is a manufacturing hub in the Pearl River Delta, with a gross industrial output value that reached almost 1.3 trillion yuan (\$191 billion) in the first eight months of this

The city is competitive in a range of sectors such as machinery, non-ferrous metallurgy, home appliances, and textiles and ceramics, all of which are traditional manufacturing industries that require updating through information technology.

The government has been encouraging local manufacturers to embrace technologies such as mobile internet, cloud computing, big data and the internet of things to realize the goal of smart manufacturing.

Holding the Internet Plus expo is also part of the campaign.

"Through hosting the Internet Plus expo, we hope to attract high-level professionals and advanced technologies, both from across China and around the world, to Foshan. This will help the city to develop into an Internet Plus manufacturing hub," said Zhu Wei, mayor of Foshan.



Local officials, scientists and business representatives unveil the plaque for the Foshan Robotics Innovation Center during the expo ZHOU CHUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

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