BUSINESS

CreateAI banks on gaming and animation

AI seen reshaping content landscape through reduced production times

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Chinese applied artificial intelligence technology company CreateAI is doubling down on the gaming and animation industry as the rapid evolution of AI is reshaping the digital content landscape through reduced production times and enhanced efficiency, while also expanding creative possibilities.

"In the creative digital content industries, particularly video games and anime, we see AI as a tool to be used by humans," said Cheng Lu, president and CEO of CreateAI, in a recent exclusive interview with China Daily, highlighting that generative AI will enable people to create their own anime series or even video games in the future.

Lu said this new technology brings two major shifts. First, it empowers users and fans to generate content that was previously impossible without AI-generated content or AIGC. Second, AI significantly enhances and streamlines existing workflows, as AIGC and other AI tools can accelerate the development of animations and games, improving efficiency by anywhere from 20 percent to 90 percent, depending on the project type.

"As a content developer focused on video games and anime, we believe compelling storytelling and high-quality graphics are essential to creating products that appeal to a global audience. To achieve this, we integrate various technologies, including motion capture and AIGC," Lu said.

The company has invested heavily in new technologies like motion capture and AI to make higher quality content more efficiently, and also launched Asia's largest motion capture center in Beijing.

"We built this studio primarily for our flagship project, *Heroes of Jin Yong*, a triple-A game adapted from works of Jin Yong (Louis Cha). At the same time, the facility is also available for third-party use. We hope this initiative helps elevate the overall quality of digital content produced in China," Lu said.

CreateAI has also announced the launch of the studio version of Animon.ai, the world's first anime-specific AI video generation platform. "Animon.ai is trained and tailored specifically for anime production, which means it delivers higher quality, better consistency, and motion that authentically reflects the anime style," he said.

The platform also focuses on building a community around user-generated content as Lu believes that anime fans will enjoy sharing their work and collaborating with each other.

When asked about concerns over AI replacing human creators, he believes that AI could benefit humans by allowing creators to develop more content, and that it's more about how it changes the development process rather than replacing human jobs.

"AI expands the creativity of human beings, allowing us to create things that were previously difficult or time-consuming. It helps streamline production so creators can focus on what truly matters: storytelling and innovation."

Lu said he is very optimistic about the prospects of China's gaming and animation industry as China is already the world's largest video games market, and Chinese studios are increasingly producing content for global audiences, as demonstrated by recent world-class content like *Black Myth: Wukong* and *Ne Zha 2*. "We believe China is well-positioned to become an even bigger player on the global stage."

Revenue of the domestic games market reached 168 billion yuan ($23.58 billion) in the first half of the year, up 14.08 percent year-on-year, according to a report released by the China Audio-Video and Digital Publishing Association.

The report said independently developed Chinese games in the overseas markets exceeded $9.5 billion, up 11.07 percent from a year earlier. The United States, Japan and South Korea continued to be the main overseas markets for Chinese games, accounting for 55.63 percent of total sales.

As for overseas expansion plans, Lu said the company has operations in Japan, given its importance in animation, and also has plans to work with global IP. "We are always open to collaborating with top-tier IP that has strong local domestic appeal and global potential."

Unlike live-action content, games and animation transcend cultural and linguistic barriers more easily, offering a unique opportunity for Chinese content to reach international audiences, he added.

Safer rail transport

Employees from Taiyuan North Railway Station in Shanxi province work on phase-II of the concentrated overhaul of the Shijiazhuang-Taiyuan Railway. China Railway Taiyuan Group launched the move in a bid to ensure safer rail transport.
BAI MINGHAO / FOR CHINA DAILY

Briefly

Online payments up during holiday

Chinese online payment clearinghouse NetsUnion and card payment giant China UnionPay reported robust growth in online payments during the National Day and Mid-Autumn Festival holiday, central bank data show. During the eight-day holiday that concluded on Wednesday, online payments via the two platforms hit 13.26 trillion yuan ($1.86 trillion), up 1.86 trillion yuan from last year's holiday.

Light industry sees solid expansion

During the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25), China's light industry expanded steadily, with output continuing to grow, according to the China National Light Industry Council. In 2024, China had 140,000 light-industry enterprises exceeding the designated size, which provided 17.92 million jobs. The sector's exports reached $925.4 billion, accounting for 25.9 percent of the country's total export value and ranking first among all industries for the fifth consecutive year.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

Exhibitors seen at the 3rd Linyi Trade City International Sourcing Conference for Belt and Road Cooperation in Linyi, Shandong province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Linyi showcases logistics, trade center

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The 3rd Linyi Trade City International Sourcing Conference for Belt and Road Cooperation opened on Friday in Linyi, Shandong province, attracting over 2,000 buyers from nearly 100 countries and regions.

The event, running Oct 10-12, underscores Linyi's growing role as a pivotal hub for international trade under the Belt and Road Initiative.

"Over the years, we have witnessed the Belt and Road Initiative becoming a major engine for connectivity, mutual benefit, and shared development among participating countries. It has brought the world closer together and injected new vitality into global trade," said Muhammad Hanif Khan, director of the World Chamber Network.

As the "logistics capital of China," Linyi stands out for its solid industrial foundation, well-developed logistics system, and strong supply chain advantages, making it an important trading hub both in China and across the world, he said.

Zhang Baoliang, Party secretary of Linyi, said Linyi is focusing on leveraging BRI cooperation to drive its market internationalization and integrate into both domestic and international economic circulations.

Robust trade figures from the first eight months of this year highlight this momentum. Linyi Trade City recorded 78.18 billion yuan ($10.9 billion) in foreign trade import and export value, a year-on-year increase of 4.2 percent.

The city's formidable logistics network serves as a critical backbone for its trade vitality. With over 3,000 logistics routes covering the nation, Linyi boasts logistics costs that are 20 to 30 percent lower than the national average.

International logistics channels have also seen significant growth. During the first eight months, the city dispatched 336 China-Europe freight trains. Linyi Port handled more than 125,000 twenty-foot equivalent unit containers for sea freight, marking an 8.6 percent increase compared to the same period last year.

To cater to the diverse demands of international buyers, the conference features dozens of sessions, including the Linyi Trade City foreign trade premium product expo, a dedicated matchmaking session for Malaysian international buyers, as well as specialized sections for food products, hotel supplies, and daily-use ceramics.

"The intended transaction volume for the foreign trade premium product expo alone is expected to exceed 200 million yuan," said Sun Bao'an, who is in charge of the Linyi Trade City foreign trade premium product expo.

Urban renovation sees rosy outlook

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As Chinese cities enter a new era driven by urban regeneration, property developers focusing on high-quality development of existing urban areas are finding themselves better positioned than ever, senior executives of Shanghai-based Shui On Land Ltd said.

Aiming at playing a proactive role in stabilizing economic growth, boosting consumption, and advancing the nation's transition toward high-quality development, urban renovation is projected to reach a market size of about 20 trillion yuan ($2.81 trillion) during the 15th Five-Year Plan period (2026-30), according to the Economic Daily.

"China's urban development is shifting from large-scale incremental expansion to a stage focused on improving the quality and efficiency of existing ones, which requires vigorously advancing urban regeneration to optimize urban structure and functions," Zhang Yan, an official with the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development, was quoted as saying during a news conference in September.

"Since 1985, Shui On Land Ltd has been focusing on urban regeneration and high-quality development in the Chinese mainland. From the central government's recent policy signals and measures supporting these priorities, we see new opportunities emerging as urban renewal continues," said Wang Ying, chief executive officer with Shui On Land Ltd.

According to Stephanie Lo, vice-chairman of Shui On Land, China's urbanization rate has reached 67 percent, but in the new era of high-quality development, the benchmarks for measuring urban value are shifting, driven by a series of fundamental changes.

"Currently, we face some major transformations and challenges," Lo said.

"The first is that economic growth is moving from investment-led to consumption- and innovation-driven, requiring efforts to stimulate new consumption, nurture new business models, and attract creative talent.

"The second is a shift in urban development from large-scale incremental expansion to upgrading existing properties, and the third is to deal with new social trends, including increasingly diverse family structures and deepening population aging.

"Another one is how to enhance cities' livability and resilience in coping with extreme weather events, such as heatwaves and heavy rainfall ..."

In short, the traditional urbanization model driven by scale and speed is no longer sustainable, and the future of cities will depend on whether they can truly be people-centered, offering systemic solutions that support healthy and diverse lifestyles while promoting innovation, inclusiveness, and resilience, she added.

"The future of urban development must be people-centered. Human needs are diverse and constantly evolving, which is why we are adopting more ecological, sustainable, and inclusive community solutions to ensure the long-term progress of urban regeneration," Wang said.

According to Wang, over the past two decades, Shui On Land has operated 12 projects in five Chinese cities including Shanghai, Chongqing, Wuhan of Hubei province, Foshan of Guangdong province, and Nanjing of Jiangsu province. While still positioning Shanghai as its home market, the Hong Kong-listed company seeks new urban regeneration opportunities in the Yangtze River Delta region and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, regions with a concentration of talents and strong international appeal.

Nationwide, urban regeneration has maintained robust momentum. In the past two years, around 60,000 projects have been launched annually across eight major tasks, with investment exceeding 2.5 trillion yuan, reported Economic Daily.

"Urban regeneration aims at transforming urban development approaches and achieving high-quality growth," said Yan Yuejin, deputy head of the Shanghai-based E-House China R&D Institute.

Data from the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development show that more than 60,000 urban regeneration projects were carried out nationwide in 2024 alone, with total investment reaching around 2.9 trillion yuan.

Changzhou a hub for Sino-Swiss partnership

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Ypsomed, a leading Swiss developer and manufacturer of self-injection systems for liquid medications, has significantly boosted its initial investment plan in Changzhou, Jiangsu province, tripling its commitment and highlighting its strong confidence in the city's potential with substantial additional funding.

In October 2022, Ypsomed Group established its first Asia-Pacific production base in the Changzhou high-tech zone — Ypsomed Medical Devices Manufacturing (Changzhou) Company — focusing on the research, development, production and assembly of medical injection pens and needles.

By April 2023, the Changzhou production base project had completed its registration process, and construction officially commenced in September. Remarkably, the main structure of the plant was completed in just 14 months. The group further committed an additional 100 million euros ($115.73 million) to a new project.

Currently, 47 Swiss-invested enterprises, including Ypsomed, have established a presence in Changzhou.

Changzhou is among the cities in the Yangtze River Delta region with the highest concentration of Swiss enterprises.

In recent years, cooperation and exchanges between Changzhou and Switzerland in manufacturing, technology, commerce and other fields have become increasingly close.

The Swiss Center in Changzhou, founded in 2000 and operational since last year, is designed to support Swiss companies investing and developing in China. With business service centers in Shanghai, Tianjin and Changzhou, it has facilitated the entry of over 450 foreign enterprises into the Chinese market.

Not far from the Changzhou Swiss Center, the Sino-Swiss (Changzhou) International Industrial Innovation Park opened in 2019.

In 2017, the Changzhou municipal government signed a strategic cooperation framework agreement with the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology to promote Sino-Swiss industrial collaboration.

In 2019, the Changzhou high-tech zone signed a strategic cooperation agreement with the Swiss authorities, officially launching the Sino-Swiss (Changzhou) International Industrial Innovation Park.

Wang Yitian, director of the European and US investment promotion department of the Changzhou National High-tech Zone Commerce Bureau, said that Changzhou continually enhances its service awareness by providing one-stop services during the approval process. All procedures, including account openings for foreign enterprise projects and handling related certificates, are free, with a dedicated service team offering full support.