China's Tech Giants Shine at Mobile World Congress

Voice of the World

By Staff Reporters

Sci-tech innovation has not only boosted the competitiveness of China's traditional industries, but also solidified their foundation and injected impetus for the development of new quality productive forces. China's achievements to promote innovation-driven development have subsequently been recognized globally.

Seeing the future at MWC Barcelona

According to *DIGITIMES Asia*, the commanding presence of Chinese tech giants like Huawei, ZTE, Honor and Xiaomi truly captured widespread attention at the Mobile World Congress (MWC) Barcelona 2024. These industry leaders showcased their latest innovations, underscoring the significance of Chinese players in the mobile communications landscape.

According to data from the MWC organizer GSMA, over 300 Chinese enterprises participated in MWC 2024, with Huawei retaining its position as the foremost exhibitor. Notably, this year marks China Telecom's inaugural appearance at MWC Barcelona, alongside the debut of Alipay, the popular third-party payment platform.

"Chinese firms have become an integral part of the exhibitors in Barcelona," said Sihan Bo Chen, greater China head of GSMA, an international mobile operator association.

Mats Granryd, director general of

China's tech receives attention at 2024 MWC Barcelona. (PHOTO: XINHUA)

GSMA, praised the impressive displays at Chinese booths. "If you go around and see what they are showcasing, it is really cutting-edge," he said.

"In recent years, Chinese enterprises have demonstrated formidable innovation and research and development capabilities. This surge is evident in significant investments in R&D, the establishment of global research centers, as well as the growing number of patents filed," said Luigi Gambardella, president of the Brussels-based international digital association ChinaEU.

"(This year's MWC) is not about mobile or digital only anymore. We are here to see the future," said Gambardella. He further highlighted the importance of Chinese companies' role at the event. "What we observe this year is

that Chinese firms are taking center stage," he said.

Over 300 Chinese companies participated in the event. "This prominent presence not only showcases the technological prowess of Chinese enterprises, but also underscores their commitment to pushing the boundaries of what's possible with 5G and AI," Gambardella added.

Green technology patents grow dramatically

A report by Bertelsmann Stiftung, an independent German foundation, found that over the past five years, China has increased the number of "world-class patents" in green technology from 11,000 to 37,000, putting it far ahead of other countries in the world, according to German business newspaper

Handelsblatt.

China has made a "rapid rise" over the last 20 years to become one of the leading research nations in green technologies. "In terms of research dynamics, no other country can keep up with China," as the country is "the most important driver of growth" in green technologies worldwide, according to the report.

In most categories, while China is among the top three research locations worldwide, it is already number one in the category "Sustainable consumables/recycling." The country has nearly doubled its global share in this category over the last five years to almost 40 percent. China has also more than tripled its world-class patents in green technologies to 37,000 since 2017, while the share of the U.S., Japan and the EU saw declines.

As Canada's *BNN Bloomberg* reported, China has overtaken the European Union in research related to clean-energy technologies. China led the number of peer-reviewed publications in areas including solar and wind power, as well as lithium batteries, heat pumps and carbon-capture technology in 2021. That's a reversal from 2010, when the EU led on publications in all those sectors except for wind, according to a research paper done for the bloc's executive arm.

"China is increasingly becoming a world leader in science and innovation, for several critical technologies," said the paper, adding, "The EU's exposure to China is becoming increasingly technological."

TikTok Ban Typical Sign of American Hegemony

By GONG Qian

On March 13, the U.S. House of Representatives approved a bill to force Chinese company ByteDance to sell off its video-sharing app TikTok within 180 days. Otherwise, the app would be banned in the country. This is an intolerable act by a nation that always preaches "free will, free speech."

Actually, from the Trump to the Biden administration, the U.S. has been flexing its muscles over the app for a long time, giving the cliched excuse of national security. But the consequence of the latest move would be much more severe than before. "This legislation has a predetermined outcome: a total ban of TikTok in the United States," TikTok said in a statement.

Even before the bipartisan bill was unanimously advanced by the House Energy and Commerce Committee on March 7, it faced a flood of backlash from TikTok's American users, with many contacting their representatives to stop a TikTok shutdown. The volume of calls from outraged TikTok users was so immense that some offices had to temporarily disable their phones, while others struggled to manage unrelated calls, according to the *Washington Post*. Currently, TikTok is used by 170 million Americans.

Critics have raised their concern that the legislation is unconstitutional. The American Civil Liberties Union said in a statement that it has repeatedly explained that banning TikTok would have profound implications for the U.S. constitutional rights to free speech and free expression because millions of Americans "rely on the app every day for information, communication, advocacy, and entertainment."

Ramya Krishnan, a staff attorney at the Knight First Amendment Institute at Columbia University in New York, told Business Insider that citing national security is "not a get out of jail free card." Krishnan said the First Amendment protects Americans' right to access the social media platforms they prefer. If the government aims to justify a ban, it must prove that the privacy and security issues it raises cannot be tackled through narrower means.

"And the government simply hasn't done this," said Krishnan, adding that a ban on TikTok would set a dangerous precedent for how we regulate free speech online.

Many experts say the latest legislation, described as the most potent threat by many foreign news outlets, is closely related to the 2024 US presiden-

tial election.

Ironically, while the U.S. government is wielding the stick to disturb the normal commercial activities of TikTok and curb its development, it is leveraging the app's influence, especially on young people, to win political support and votes. According to a report by the Pew Research Center in January, 33 percent of U.S. adults said they use TikTok, up 12 percentage points from 2021. Obviously, the U.S. politicians have realized its significance in shaping people's thoughts and behavior in political campaigns.

President Joe Biden's 2024 presidential campaign began using TikTok in late February, seen as an attempt to reach young voters. It has continued using TikTok, despite the president saying he would sign the bill that could ban the application.

Even Brendan Carr, a Republican member of the Federal Communications Commission who favors a TikTok ban, told Politico that Biden's using TikTok is most fundamentally hypocritical.

For TikTok, it seems all the compliance it did in the past is to be in vain. In the past years, the company took concrete action to adapt to various policy restrictions by the U.S. government while dealing with the groundless accusations by U.S. politicians that the Chinese government was forcing it to share its American users' data. So far, the U.S. government hasn't provided any evidence of that allegation.

To address U.S. regulatory concerns over data integrity, TikTok's most significant effort was to move its U.S. users' data to U.S. tech company Oracle's cloud platform in 2022. A year later, TikTok announced its 1.5 billion USD "Project Texas," promising to hand its control over data to Oracle, with the source code overseen by an in-house committee approved by the U.S. government called TikTok U.S. Data Security. However, it was still unable to reassure the U.S. legislators.

The House of Representatives will not be satisfied with TikTok's pacifying attempts until the widely popular app is transformed into an American company. With the China-U.S. competition having risen to an unprecedented level, TikTok's real "sin" in their eyes is that it is owned by a Chinese company.

Using state power to suppress a multinational company is bound to undermine fair and reasonable market competition. It will also call into question the international investment in the U.S.

Free Flow of Global Data Should be Protected

Comment

By TANG Zhexiao

The White House briefing room published a fact sheet on February 28, announcing that the U.S. President Joe Biden signed an executive order to "protect Americans' sensitive personal data from exploitation by countries of concern."

According to the fact sheet, the executive order will direct the Department of Justice to develop regulations prohibiting data brokers from carrying out transfers of troves of sensitive personal information to so-called "countries of concern," including China, Russia, Iran, North Korea, Cuba and Venezuela.

The sensitive information includes genomic data, biometric data, personal

health data, geolocation data, financial data and other kinds of personally identifiable information.

The U.S. government said the sale of Americans' data "raises significant privacy, counterintelligence, blackmail risks and other national security risks."

Biden's order indicated a trend, in which countries are increasingly trying to control data for their protection and economic benefit, according to *The New York Times*, adding that the executive order is also "the latest escalation of a digital cold war between Washington and Beijing."

CNBC also reported in a statement, comments by Attorney General Merrick B. Garland that adversaries are exploiting Americans' sensitive personal data to threaten their national security and purchasing this data to blackmail and surveil individuals.

Actually, the concept of national security is being overstretched by the U.S., and these practices are discriminatory, clearly targeting at certain countries.

The Chinese government takes data privacy and security very seriously, said China's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning on February, 29. "We have never asked and will never ask any company or individual to collect or provide data, information or intelligence located abroad against their local laws for the Chinese government."

On April 21, 2022, China proposed the Global Security Initiative, which has been widely welcomed and warmly received by the international community. It is an inspiring example that shows China is effectively safeguarding a fair, open and non-discriminatory business environment, and works with others to for-

mulate universal data security rules to enable orderly and free data flows around the world.

If the U.S. truly cares about data security, it can publicly endorse this initiative or make similar commitments, said Mao.

The U.S. withdrawal its cross-border data flow proposal on the WTO negotiating table maybe a preparation for its executive order on cross-border data flow, Zhou Nianli, professor of China Institute for WTO Studies and member of National Working Group on Digital Trade, told news portal Yicai in an interview.

"We [China] often emphasize that data security is the bottomline, and to avoid information immobility, development needs should be considered while ensuring security," Zhou explained, adding that non-development also leads to insecurity.

Hi! Tech

New Large Models Claude 3 Join in AI Race

By GONG Qian

In early March, Anthropic, an American AI startup formed by some researchers who quit OpenAI, revealed a suite of AI models known as the Claude 3 model family. The family includes three state-of-the-art models in ascending order of capability: Claude 3 Haiku, Claude 3 Sonnet, and Claude 3 Opus.

"This is the Rolls-Royce of models, at least at this point," Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei said in an interview, Reuters reported.

This is the first time that Anthropic has offered multimodal support. The three models can power live customer chats, auto-completions, and data extraction tasks. They have sophisticated vision capabilities on par with other leading models. Users can upload photos, charts, graphs, technical diagrams and other types of unstructured data for analysis and answers.

The most intelligent model, Opus, outperforms its rival models GPT-4 from OpenAI and Gemini 1.0 Ultra from Google on various benchmark exams for AI systems, such as undergraduate-level expert knowledge, graduate-level expert reasoning, and basic mathematics, the company said. It demonstrates a near-human degree of comprehension and fluency in handling intricate tasks, pushing the boundaries of general intelligence.

Anthropic said Claude 3 can summarize up to about 150,000 words, approximately the size of a book like Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows, CNBC reported. Its previous version could summarize only about 75,000 words. Users can input large data sets and ask for summaries in the form of a memo, letter or story.

By contrast, ChatGPT, when it came out in 2022, could cope with only about 3,000 words.

Wuhan Optical Valley Air rail. (PHOTO: VOG)

'Flying Train' in the Sky

By QI Liming

The first "flying train" is operating in Optics Valley in Wuhan of central China.

The train called "Optics Valley Photon" is a suspension monorail train. Its rail is supported in the air by steel structure columns, and the train body is suspended below the rail beam, which makes it look like it is flying. That's why it's also referred to as the "air train."

The train's advantages include low manufacturing cost, short construction

time, environmental adaptability and offering a great view of the surrounding landscape with its 270-degree view.

It is also good for saving energy. The lightweight body and other low-carbon technologies reduce its energy consumption by 15 percent per 100 kilometers.

Designed for both commuting and sightseeing, the "Optics Valley Photon" aerial rail train has a fully automatic driving function. Besides, it has integrated face recognition and two-dimensional code scanning for smart traveling.

Technology Revitalizes Intangible Cultural Heritage

In addition to individual artisans, collaborative initiatives between technology companies and cultural institutions have also played a significant role in empowering cultural inheritors.

For example, the collaboration between Tencent Cloud and the Gansu Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism has resulted in the development of a big data platform targeting the ICH of Gansu, which digitizes, preserves, and showcases a wide range of ICH resources. The platform not only facilitates the preservation and promotion of Gansu's cultural heritage but also provides economic opportunities for local artisans and communities.

Ensuring the future of preservation

According to Li Qiong, a teacher at Hunan University of Humanities, Science and Technology, certain ICH projects face challenges such as high technical difficulty, intense labor, lengthy duration, and low income, leading to a scarci-

ty of willing learners. "To address this, various measures must be implemented to enhance the social and economic status of inheritors," said Li.

Such measures are being implemented, for example, to preserve Suzhou embroidery, usually considered the best of all Chinese hand embroideries. According to Yao Jianping, an inheritor of Suzhou embroidery, "Nowadays government departments have revitalized the embroidery industry in ethnic areas through training and setting up classes and long-term twinning, and a large number of villagers have been able to make a good living through their manual labor."

In addition to policy support, online platforms, such as live streaming and short video apps, have become popular channels for promoting traditional crafts and engaging with younger audiences, further revitalizing the cultural heritage sector and ensuring its sustainability in the digital era.