



Liu Yuzhu (left), director of the State Administration of Cultural Heritage, speaks at the Ministerial Forum during the Fifth World Internet Conference on Thursday. PHOTOS BY ZOU HONG / CHINA DAILY

Harness digital tech for tangible results

Forum participants offer suggestions on how to leverage cyberspace advances for greater social and economic progress



By embracing digital technologies and innovative ideas, the ancient Palace Museum is gaining new vitality. We are now the most popular museum in the world, with 16.7 million visitors last year, about twice the number of the Louvre in France. We also have continuously expanded our display and exhibition space, while attracting new audiences on digital media. We have developed a wide range of mobile applications, introducing artifacts as well as Chinese history and culture to the public, to reach and engage more people.

Shan Jixiang, director of the Palace Museum



Chinese entrepreneurs have lots of ideas and the zeal to take risks and put these ideas into practice. I think we have a lot to learn from the (Chinese) entrepreneurs. Hopefully, we can learn from these and our experiences, both the positive and negative aspects. We

can solve most of the problems if we join hands. **Viviane Reding**, member of the Luxembourg Parliament and former vice-president of the European Commission



Leveraging digital technologies to make education more accessible is one of the keys to closing the gap. Different from physical classrooms, digital or online education offers a way to boost teaching productivity. Education resources can flow across borders, and different levels of educational institutions can also cooperate with each other more deeply. Technological advances will give birth to a new human-machine collaboration system in education, which will involve personalized learning and intelligent interactive teaching methods.

Wu Zhaohui, president of Zhejiang University and an academician of the Chinese Academy of Sciences

We are taking concrete steps to reduce the digital divide. We aim to provide fiber connectivity to all local government areas in Nigeria.



We are also working to bring down government taxes and levies associated with rolling out broadband infrastructure in our country. Chinese companies like Huawei have played an important role in helping our push for digital inclusion and expanded access.

Garba Shehu, senior special assistant on media and publicity to the president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria



We are happy to be a part of this global event. Access to digital use is becoming increasingly important in our day-to-day field activities, whether economically, politically or socially, in exchange of information and research.

Agak Achuil Lual, first undersecretary of the Ministry of Trade, Industry and East Africa Community Affairs of the Republic of South Sudan

The more we use digital technolo-



gies, the more we should make sure that every citizen has the knowledge and skills to seize the opportunities provided by the technologies. Our vision for Singapore is to be a Smart Nation — a nation where people live meaningful and fulfilled lives, enabled by technology, offering exciting opportunities to all of us. To achieve this, we must turn a digital divide into a digital multiplier. Specifically, we are trying to provide universal digital access to each citizen, ensure lifelong digital literacy through inter-generational teaching, and encourage citizens' active digital participation in contributing ideas that could make the lives of Singaporeans better.

Gabriel Lim, permanent secretary of the Ministry of Communications and Information of the Republic of Singapore



The internet is a powerful tool for us to make our work more efficient. We have invested heavily in the



Guest speakers greet each other at the Ministerial Forum on Thursday.

internet. And we hope to use the internet as a way of forging better partnerships with our international counterparts. It is very nice for nations and government officials like us to meet our counterparts and discuss about the world internet. China is leading the way as a global power and as your good neighbor and friend, I am glad to be here and listen to what China has to say. Nowadays the internet is the greatest equalizer because the rich and the poor can access the same thing which helps bridge the gap. I think making sure that

mobile phones are affordable to everyone, especially those in far-flung areas, can be a great way to narrow the gap, because it is a very useful tool for the government to deliver basic services and let everyone learn and experience what is happening outside their communities.

Ramon L. Cualoping III, assistant secretary and chief brand integrator of the Presidential Communications Operations Office of the Republic of the Philippines

Expanding internet coverage must



be on the top of the agenda for making information services more available to a larger population. China Telecommunications Corp is capable of bringing fiber broadband to 320 million households with its 1.3 million base stations throughout China.

Gao Tongqing, vice-president of China Telecom Corp Ltd

CHINA DAILY

Experts: China has a key role in helping bridge internet divide

By LIU YUKUN and ZHOU LANXU in Wuzhen, Zhejiang

China's unique experience in dealing with the digital divide is important to the world, as the country has been successful in promoting the internet in less-developed areas and can bring that insight to other countries and economies, a veteran industry expert said.

"China is unique in the sense that it has several hundred million people in the cities where they master digital technologies, in many cases, pioneering in the world. But there are also several in rural, less developed areas, more than you can think of, who are embracing the most up-to-date technologies to better their lives," said Robert Lawrence Kuhn, chairman of the Kuhn Foundation, in an interview with China Daily during

the Fifth World Internet Conference on Wednesday.

"China can play a special role because when you deal with concepts like digital divide, where you have areas that have enormous penetration and enormous sophistication and other areas that do not, like the situation on a global scale and with some countries, you can learn from China's past experiences because the country was that way," Kuhn said.

Speaking of tech development in China's less developed areas, Kuhn mentioned that internet use in poverty alleviation impressed him the most.

"For instance, the concept of 'Taobao villages', where villages that had no access to any economic development other than through middlemen who sold their arts, crafts and agricultural products, can offer insights to many developing countries. Compared with the

past when middlemen made big profits but people in the rural areas got very little, the development of e-commerce offers the villagers a platform where they can sell directly to the consumers and realize larger profits.

"That is absolutely terrific and a dramatic transformation for society. I think the Wuzhen summit's efforts to bring together people with similar mindsets from China and other countries are very commendable," Kuhn said.

Invited as a guest speaker at the Ministerial Forum during the internet conference on Thursday, Kuhn also shared his view on the digital divide and its relations with culture, economy and people's lifestyle.

"(Eliminating the digital divide) is not only about (improving) network infrastructure, but also cultural and educational aspects that teach people to use the inter-



Robert Lawrence Kuhn, chairman of the Kuhn Foundation, speaks at the Ministerial Forum on Thursday.

net and promote digital literacy," Kuhn said.

Echoing Kuhn's remarks, Wei Jianguo, vice-chairman of the China Center for International Economic Exchanges, said that China can lead the world in bridging the digital divide, as its internet technologies have developed rapidly over the past years, with its application of technologies

ranking among global industry leaders in many areas.

As of June 2018, the total number of internet users in China reached 802 million, lifting the country's internet penetration rate to 57.7 percent, up 13.6 percentage points from five years ago, said a report from the China Internet Network Information Center. The rate is 3.3 percentage

points higher than the global average, official data showed.

The digital divide could do harm to financial inclusion, therefore hindering economic development and the improvement of people's living standards, experts said.

Rural residents, low-income groups and seniors often lack adequate digital skills to understand and benefit from digital financial services, said Li Dongrong, head of the National Internet Finance Association of China.

In the era when digital financial inclusion is becoming more popular, teaching digital financial-related knowledge to those groups will bring benefits to their lives, Li said.

Eliminating the digital divide is also needed in the education sector. It helps balance educational resources as students in less-developed areas and less highly-ranked

schools can have equal access to information and services through the internet, on the premise that the gap is shrinking, Tan Songhua, a consultant at the Chinese Society of Education, said earlier at a forum.

"Students from less developed areas and remote areas are more eager to learn from the internet, and communicate with the outside world through the internet," said Tan.

"The divide between people who have internet access and those who do not is deepening existing inequalities ... If we do not invest seriously in closing this gap, the last billion will not be connected until 2042. That's an entire generation left behind," said industry expert Tim Berners-Lee in an article published in The Guardian.

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