

Speech by S for IT at Hong Kong International Artificial Intelligence Summit 2018 (English only) (with photo)

Following is the speech by the Secretary for Innovation and Technology, Mr Nicholas W Yang, at the Hong Kong International Artificial Intelligence (AI) Summit 2018 today (November 30):

Professor Zhang (President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Hong Kong, Professor Zhang Xiang), Professor Qiu (President of Tsinghua University, Professor Qiu Yong), Professor Tan (Deputy Director of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Mr Tan Tieniu), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. I am honoured to join you here at the Hong Kong International Artificial Intelligence Summit 2018.

It is most timely for the University of Hong Kong and Tsinghua University to work together to discuss the future of AI, an important topic for all human beings. I am also pleased to know that the two universities are planning a new co-teaching programme on computer science with AI elements. Such a programme would help nurture more talent and promote closer collaboration between Hong Kong and the Mainland in the area of AI.

AI is very much under the spotlight in the global arena of innovation and technology today. The impact of AI can now be seen from hotline chatbot to driverless vehicles to AlphaGo. AI has fundamentally changed the way we live, work and communicate.

The major driving force of AI today is big data with data analytics. Big data is made possible by the significant decrease in computer memory pricing, the increase in computing power over the past few decades, and by the advancement in cloud computing and ubiquitous Internet connectivity.

Data analytics, together with AI and big data, can help humans deal more effectively with uncertainty, and make better decisions. More importantly, the adoption of AI and robotics technology releases human capital from difficult, dangerous and dirty jobs, so that humans can focus on better and higher value-added work, thereby driving business growth, increasing productivity, and improving our daily living.

Hong Kong is well positioned to develop AI and transform itself into a regional AI hub. We have one of the world's best infrastructure, open and efficient market, agile and creative talents, free flow of information, as

well as excellent global connectivity, with mobile and broadband penetration rates among the highest in the world.

Moreover, according to Scopus, universities in Hong Kong as a whole ranked number three globally in terms of producing the most highly cited and impactful research on AI.

Industry in Hong Kong has started to develop products and services based on AI, such as computer vision and cloud computing platforms in the areas of facial recognition, large-scale semantic image segmentation and classification. One of our local unicorn start-ups, SenseTime, has been entrusted by the national Ministry of Science and Technology to establish the National Open Innovation Platform for Next Generation Artificial Intelligence on Intelligent Vision, the fifth member of China's AI national team, following Alibaba, Baidu, Tencent and iFlyTek.

We are also working at full steam to build a research cluster focusing on AI and robotics technologies in the Hong Kong Science Park. We aim to pool together the world's top scientific institutions and technology enterprises to collaborate with our local universities and research institutions. This cluster will commence operation in the second half of next year.

Last but not least, I am sure our distinguished speakers and guests will further share with us and enlighten us with their insights on AI at the Summit. I wish the Summit today a great success.

Thank you very much.

