

## New technology allows shoppers to pay with their faces

Chinese shoppers will soon be able to free up their hands, thanks to new technology that enables consumers to pay with their faces.

“We have finished an experiment for facial recognition payment and it will be used in the near future,” said Chen Jidong on Monday, who is in charge of biometric identification technology at Ant Financial, the affiliate financial service of Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba.

Alipay is now testing the technology. According to a video demonstrating the facial recognition payment system, shoppers can complete payment in just two steps: facial scanning and entering the last four digits of their mobile phone numbers.

While many viewers marvelled at the technology, some web users were worried about security.

Chen told Xinhua that Alipay will ask users to blink, smile, shake their heads or make other movements while using the service to differentiate real people from photos or videos.

Chen said that user authorization will be required to use facial recognition payment, but didn't give an exact date for when the service will debut.

Facial recognition payment was listed among 10 breakthrough technologies by the MIT Technology Review earlier this year.

In 2015, Alipay started using a face-detection system for customer log in. The technology has also been used by other Internet companies such as Baidu and Tencent.

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## Chinese provincial legislator under investigation

Wei Minzhou, a senior legislator in northwest China's Shaanxi Province, is being investigated for severe disciplinary violations, the Communist Party of China Central Commission for Discipline Inspection said Monday.

Wei has been vice head of the Shaanxi Provincial People's Congress Standing Committee since January 2017.

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## Protecting youth from online suicide game

Chinese police have extended surveillance of social media, after the recent spread of the "Blue Whale" suicide game targeting the country's youth.

Drawing a blue whale on a piece of paper, or carving it onto your body, and watching horror movies are just part of the game, which began in Russia. It demands players complete 50 tasks in 50 days, with the last task to commit suicide.

"If I carve a blue whale on my arm, will it leave a scar? Can I still become a police officer with that scar?" a primary school student in Wenzhou, east China's Zhejiang Province, asked his mother.

He told her his classmates were talking about a game called Blue Whale, which "sounded cool."

The alarmed mother contacted police. Their investigations into the game found a group on instant messaging service Tencent QQ inviting people to take part.

"Those who would like to join in the game must get up 4:20 a.m. tomorrow. I will send you a horror movie and you must watch it alone, or face the consequences," wrote the group's founder Xiao Yang (pseudonym).

Xiao, who called himself vice president of Blue Whale's China bureau, listed 50 tasks, including "cut your arm along the vein with a razor," "stab your hand with a needle repeatedly," "go to the roof and sit on the edge dangling your legs," "don't talk to anyone all day" and "accept the date of your death."

In Ningbo, also Zhejiang Province, 12-year-old Han Jing (pseudonym) founded a similar group last Saturday, and uploaded three photos of her self-harming.

When asked why, she replied: "I am not good at school, and don't have friends. I feel frustrated."

Chen Long from Zhejiang police's cyber security team told Xinhua that the spread of the game has been unprecedented, "in some ways like a cult." There are currently no legal means for direct conviction and punishment of game organizers and players, he said.

Police shut down Xiao's QQ group, and made him sign a declaration that he would not reopen it.

Han Jing and her parents have been receiving psychological counseling.

Zhang Zhihua from China Communications University, said prior to the spread

of the game, at risk youth could meet others via the Internet and encourage or assist each other to commit suicide.

“But the game adds a level of sensory experience. Players gain attention by posting evidence of self-harming. In a sense, Blue Whale is like a step-by-step suicide guide for teenagers,” said Zhang.

“Teenagers need psychological support, especially when faced with the pressures of study, society and family obligations. Otherwise, they can feel life is overwhelming and meaningless,” he said.

The Beijing office of the Cyberspace Administration of China has confirmed that while Blue Whale is spread online, it is effectively an offline game.

Zhu Wei from China University of Political Science and Law has attended the office’s briefing on the game as a legal consultant.

“I don’t think it is a game. It is organized like a cult. It gives adolescents an excuse to do extreme things and show off,” he said.

Zhu said measures have been taken on to stop its spread. Police are monitoring any mention of the game of live-streaming sites and message boards. Once messages or discussions concerning the game are detected they are immediately removed.

“Websites have been very cooperative as it concerns the lives and mental health of Chinese youth,” he said.

In Hangzhou, capital of Zhejiang, the education authority has issued a notice to all primary and middle schools asking them to inform parents about the game.

If schools find their students are taking part they must report this to local police. They should also open a hotline to provide psychological counseling for both students and parents, the authority said.

Zhu said that authorities should be aware of what games and activities are popular among teenagers as the Internet allows these things to spread rapidly. “Measures must be taken as soon as harmful messages appear,” he said.

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## [China launches investigation into online porn, fake news organizations](#)

Four teams of inspectors are undertaking a month-long investigation into online pornography and fake news organizations across 11 Chinese provincial-level regions.

The investigation, which will finish May 26, aims to clean up “harmful” information online, targeting live-streaming, cloud service providers, mobile apps and websites circulating pornographic content, the National Office Against Pornographic and Illegal Publications said Monday.

Inspectors are also tasked with looking into news blackmailing, fake news, journalists and media organizations, said the statement.

Jointly launched by China’s various anti-pornography, publicity and Internet-related authorities, the investigation is being carried out in areas including Beijing and Shanghai municipalities, as well as provinces of Guizhou, Jiangxi and Shaanxi.

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## [China announces birth of 1st panda twins this year](#)

A panda in southwest China has given birth to the first set of captive-bred twins this year.

Sichuan Province’s Chengdu panda research base announced Monday that the male twins were born on April 24. They have passed the critical first month of life and are very healthy.

The cubs weighed about 110 grams at birth and have grown up to 852 grams and 844 grams respectively in their first month, according to the base.

Staff bottle fed the cubs with stored milk from other female pandas for the first nine days until the mother panda, ZhiZhi, could breastfeed them.

Pandas are an endangered species due to their extremely low fertility rates in the wild. In captivity, they often give birth to twins and sometimes even triplets.

There are fewer than 2,000 pandas in the wild, mostly in Sichuan. More than 400 currently live in captivity.