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Today's View

Mandarin Corner: Autonomous Vehicles

Autonomous vehicle technology refers to vehicles that use sensory data of the surrounding environment to navigate without the use of human drivers. Examples of autonomous vehicle technology components include driver assistance systems, automotive radars, ultrasonic wave components, Light detection and ranging (LiDAR) system sensors, among many others.

According to **McKinsey & Company**, China is expected to become the world's largest market for autonomous driving, with related revenue from new car sales and transportation services set to exceed US$ 500 billion by 2030.

Chinese internet giant, **Baidu** has launched **Apollo project**, an open source platform for self-driving cars. Apollo provides an open, reliable and secure software platform for its partners to develop their own autonomous driving systems through on-vehicle and hardware platforms. Through **Apollo**, car owners will get a world-leading HD map service, an autonomous driving simulation engine and an end-to-end deep learning algorithm to accelerate innovation. In March 2018, Baidu received the permit for testing its autonomous cars on the streets of China's capital Beijing.

Similarly, China-based self-driving car start-up **Pony.ai** has unveiled **PonyPilot** – a test project for a product-ready autonomous driving fleet within a geo-fenced area in Guangzhou, making autonomous vehicle ride-hailing available to the public in China for the first time. Within a geo-fenced area, passengers

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Flipkart looks to relist inactive sellers to trim supply chain costs

Walmart-owned ecommerce company Flipkart is trying to relist inactive sellers on its platform to increase selection and optimally use regional hubs to speed up delivery and trim supply chain costs, sources aware of the matter said.

Source – The Economic Times

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Date – 8th May 19

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are able to hail a vehicle at any predetermined point using a mobile app and travel to any other predetermined point within the area. Through **PonyPilot**, riders are also able to follow along with the vehicle's location and decisions, gaining greater insight into autonomous vehicle technology.

Currently, PonyPilot is available to Pony.ai employees and select affiliates by invitation only, but the company plans to consider expansion in the future. Likewise, Alphabet's **Waymo**, a leading player in the global race to develop driverless cars, has opened an office in Shanghai's free-trade zone. The new unit of the driverless-car company will design and test autonomous-vehicle products.

With consumers increasing being open to adopting the technology and China's ability to push policies through quickly, we could well see the country leapfrog to the forefront of this autonomous vehicle segment.

Today's News

B2B tech start-ups fuelled by funding and advanced technologies

NetApp, a data management and hybrid cloud firm, in partnership with Zinnov, a global management consulting firm, Tuesday announced the results of their first-of-its-kind study titled, 'B2B Tech Start-up Ecosystem and Role of Corporate Accelerators in India'.

The study provides data-driven insights into the growth of B2B tech start-ups and the upsurge in both funding as well as the corporate accelerator programs in India over the last five years. According to the report, B2B tech start-ups have more than tripled (from 900 to 3200+) since 2014. This can largely be attributed to the spurt in the need for digital transformation of enterprises, financial institutions, hospitals, government, SMEs, etc. Also, the investment in B2B start-ups touched $3.7 billion in 2018, a steep rise of 364% from 2014.

Source – The Economic Times   READ MORE

Wipro, R3 develop blockchain prototype to enable digital currency in Thailand

Wipro said it has jointly with R3 developed a blockchain-based solution prototype to power digital currency in Thailand. R3 is an enterprise blockchain software firm. Wipro said the blockchain-based solution, aimed to enable digital currency for interbank settlements for a consortium consisting the Bank of Thailand and eight commercial banks in Thailand, and would facilitate de-centralized inter-bank real-time gross settlement (RTGS) using wholesale Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC).

This is a part of the first phase of Project Inthanon, an initiative led by the Bank of Thailand and eight participating banks and will use blockchain technology to build a proof-of-concept prototype for domestic fund transfer within the country's inter-banking system by issuing CBDC tokens.

Source – The Economic Times   READ MORE

This News Letter has been prepared with the assistance of G Balakrishna and Hema Kumar

Paytm Payments Bank opens on Visa, talks on for branded cards

Global payments major Visa has enrolled Paytm Payments Bank into its card issuing and payments network, and the Indian e-wallets provider is in talks to start issuing Visa-branded debit cards as well. Alfred F. Kelly, the CEO of Visa shared news of the partnership with Paytm in a recent call with analysts.

"We are working with Paytm Payments Bank to offer our debit credential solutions to enhance their offerings to their rapidly expanding customer base," Kelly said. Visa could leverage Paytm's plans to grow the card payments market in India through this partnership and benefit in the long run, he said.

Source – The Economic Times

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Amazon beefs up cloud business, data center infrastructure in India

Amazon is beefing up its data center infrastructure and cloud services business in India as the clamor around data localization grows louder every day. The company has infused around Rs 1,380 crore into its local data center arm, Amazon Data Services India (ADSIPL), documents sourced from business intelligence platform Paper.vc showed. Apart from its online retail business, Amazon operates ADSIPL and Amazon Internet Services (AISPL). Cloud services platforms such as AWS offer data storage, computing power and other functionalities to startups, large businesses and government organizations for a fee.

Source – The Economic Times

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IIIT develops solution to safeguard social media users from falling prey to automated face analysis

Researchers at the Indraprastha Institute of Information Technology (IIIT) Delhi have developed a solution to safeguard social media users from being an easy prey to automated face analysis algorithms that analyse images on social media platforms and bombard with suggested advertisements. They have developed the solution using machine learning (ML) that confuses a family of predictive artificial intelligence (AI) algorithms and prevents misuse of images.

This prevents AI driven algorithm that does predictive analysis of visual images, especially individual photographs, from unwanted advertisements. "Several websites display advertisement based on the outcome of facial analysis including age, gender and ethnicity of the person," said Saheb Chhabra, one of the researchers at IIIT Delhi. "In several cases, advertisement companies crossed the line which results in anxiety and depression. For example, showing slimming facilities if the person looks overweight in the image on social media site."

Source – The Economic Times

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Starbucks joins hands with Microsoft to leverage blockchain technology

After coffee giant Starbucks hinted at leveraging blockchain technology, last year, the company has announced that it will be working with Microsoft on numerous projects. The projects will range from using machine learning to gather customer preferences, to connecting coffeemakers in stores to the internet to blockchain services for tracing coffee, reported news portal, Geek Wire.

Talking about the latest alliance, Satya Nadella, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Microsoft used Starbucks as a company that had one consistent theme which increased hiring of software engineers at companies outside the industry that are embracing high tech solutions, Nadella was quoted as saying. He further added, "They are coming together to completely take what is that iconic experience that is Starbucks and incorporating digital throughout."

Source – Crypto News

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Myntra rolls out a virtual Comic Con experience

Online fashion store Myntra has partnered with Comic Con India to roll out a virtual Comic Con experience on its platform in between May 8-12. The five-day event will offer comic-related merchandise like apparel, footwear, accessories, and collectibles like superhero action figures, comic books, posters and mugs among others. The company claims that it will offer more than 10,000 products covering some of the popular superheroes like Superman, Batman, Iron Man, Captain America, Hulk, Deadpool, Harry Potter, Mickey Mouse, Spiderman and Wonder Woman.

Source – The Economic Times

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IAN invests Rs 2.5 crore in PR solutions startup Wizikey

Technology-focused public relations solutions startup Wizikey has raised Rs 2.5 crore from the Indian Angel Network (IAN), the country's largest and oldest angel funding network.

"Public relations is one of the most potent tools that can help businesses organically garner market credibility and increase consumer mindshare. However, a majority of businesses are shying away from PR, for lack of a transparent and nifty platform. Wizikey was launched to address this exact market gap," Aakriti Bhargava, co-founder of Wizikey, said in a statement.

Source – The Economic Times

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Gurgaon-based CollegeDekho raises $8 million

Education technology company CollegeDekho has closed $8 million (about Rs 55.5 crore) in fresh equity financing from existing investors GirnarSoft and Man Capital, the investment arm of London-based Mansour Group, the latest funding round after it raised $2 million in February last year.

"We want to put this money behind geographical expansion, technology and branding," Ruchir Arora, co-founder and chief executive of CollegeDekho, said. "We will now be getting into the tier-2 and tier-3 cities, particularly education hubs such as Pune, Jaipur, Nagpur and Bhopal, among others."

Source – The Economic Times

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