

Launch of AI Lab to Advance Innovation and Technology in Hong Kong

A major Chinese technology company has partnered with a leader in facial recognition and a statutory body to nurture AI startups in Hong Kong.



Photo Credit: Eric Sin

Alibaba, SenseTime and the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation (HKSTP) launched the HKAI Lab ("Lab") in early 2018 to promote the frontiers of AI with cutting edge technology and expertise, and to empower startups to commercialise their new inventions.

Promoting AI technology has always been one of the major business objectives of the Alibaba Group. Given Hong Kong government's declared ambition to develop innovation and technology, the Alibaba

Hong Kong Entrepreneurs Fund has joined hands with Sense Time, which specialises in large scale facial recognition systems, and HKSTP to establish an AI lab at HKSTP to advance the AI frontier in the city. One of the first initiatives to be run by this lab is a six-month accelerator programme to nurture AI startups. The programme was commenced in September.

According to Cindy Chow, Executive Director of Alibaba Hong Kong Entrepreneurs Fund, the city has a strong pool of AI professionals and talent. "The objective of our fund is to foster the entrepreneurial spirit among young people who focus on innovation and technology and R&D development. With the support of HKSTP offering the venue of the Lab, together with the technical support from Alibaba Group and SenseTime, I believe we can help a lot of young entrepreneurs to make their dreams come true."

To attract both local and foreign entrepreneurs to enter the programme, InvestHK will promote the programme to its well established startup community network through various marketing channels and a range of startup-related events.

Comprehensive Support

Successful participants will be able to conduct their research in the Lab with support from the organisers. Jeff Zhang, CTO of Alibaba Group and director of the Lab, will provide valuable direction to the teams. SenseTime, based in Hong Kong, will provide technical support with their expertise in the areas of developing and deploying its AI technology and applications in different sectors and industries. Riding on Alibaba Cloud platform with a variety of scenarios

available, and under an environment that is equipped with high performance computing facilities, the teams can easily run their research and test in the Lab.

After completion of the six-month programme, participants can transfer to HKSTP's incubation programme. Through events organised by HKSTP, Cyberport and InvestHK, entrepreneurs can gain access to investors and like-minded individuals both in Hong Kong and overseas.

Talking about the future, Chow hopes to promote the Lab to more Hong Kong business organisations for their support in commercialising the projects initiated by the Lab.

Chow sees Hong Kong as an ideal platform for I&T projects. "With an open economy, a group of outstanding researchers in universities working on AI, plus strong intellectual property protection, Hong Kong has all the ingredients to flourish in innovation and technology."

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Executive Director
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