

# Sharing Insights to Address Challenges Effectively

## Dialogue

By LONG Yun & ZHONG Jianli

Malaysian Alain Chong, Vice Provost for Global Engagement and Partnerships and Professor in information systems at the University of Nottingham Ningbo China (UNNC), has spent over a decade in Ningbo city, contributing significantly to the academic community at UNNC. Prior to sitting down to talk to *Science and Technology Daily*, his content on China's major social media platforms had already gone viral, displaying his unique contemporary approach to research and engagement.

**Openness to new possibilities**  
As an active member of the information systems community, Chong has published over 100 articles, several in reputable journals, including the *Journal of the Association for Information Systems*, *Information Systems Journal*, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *Decision Support Systems*, and the *European Journal of Operations Research*.

His innovative spirit and openness to new possibilities have driven his interest in cutting-edge technologies such as social media, big data, and live streaming, and their impact on business and society in Asia.

When being asked about the key trends and developments in Information Systems that excite him most, Chong highlighted the significant advancements in AI and machine learning. "AI has been around for quite some time," he said, "but given the advancements in computing processing power and the amount of data we have, it's quite exciting where we are with AI."

He believes that AI has the potential to address many social challenges, including sustainability issues, climate change, and healthcare. "AI can make significant



Professor Alain Chong. (PHOTO: S&T Daily)

advancements in areas like biotech and the environment, advancing knowledge and benefiting society," he said.

He is equally interested in the transformative potential of blockchain and cloud computing, which he believes can enhance trust and traceability in business operations.

**Balancing his social roles**  
Chong is adept at telling stories about his research, making complex concepts understandable and relevant to students. He finds his dual role as a researcher and educator deeply rewarding. At UNNC, he integrates his research insights into his teaching, enhancing the learning experience for his students. Being a good teacher is integral to being a good researcher, said Chong.

"When I was a student growing up, my most common question to my math teacher was always, 'How is this relevant?'" he recalled. He emphasizes the importance of showing students the practical applications of their learning. "A good teacher must have good re-

search to share what is happening in the real world," he said, highlighting the complementary nature of teaching and research.

According to Chong, international cooperation is paramount for fostering a rich and diverse learning environment. He has seen firsthand the benefits of such collaboration both personally and professionally.

"International cooperation goes beyond just exchanging knowledge; it involves cultural immersion and understanding," he said.

At UNNC, the diverse faculty brings unique insights to teaching and research, enhancing the quality of academic endeavors. Chong highlighted that collaborating with colleagues from various backgrounds allows for innovative approaches to global challenges. "By sharing insights and resources, researchers can address complex global challenges more effectively," he said.

**An inclusive, nurturing environment**  
At the national level, China offers

numerous programs that researchers can apply for, providing research grants and other incentives to attract international talent or overseas returnees. "These incentives are vital," Chong emphasized. "They help researchers do their work because it's challenging to be successful in a new country without initial funding to get things started, whether it's getting PhD students or establishing company connections."

Chong highlighted that these schemes go beyond mere financial support. "It's not just about the money; it's about how it helps you settle in so you can focus on your work," he said.

According to Chong, the schemes facilitate research by providing a foundation that makes it easier to integrate into the academic environment. "Even as foreigners, we can apply for specific grants tailored for international researchers," said Chong, adding that, "This openness is not something you find everywhere."

Chong believes the inclusive funding policy is crucial for driving progress in science and research. This approach not only attracts international talent, but also fosters a diverse and dynamic research environment where innovation can thrive.

In addition, China's sincerity is not limited to this sphere. Relevant services the government provides are also impressive. For example, you can visit tourist sites for free during specific times.

"It's not a lot, but it makes you feel appreciated. There are discounts at certain restaurants and many services available through an app, like arranging for your children's schools and financial planning advice. These little things that the government does make a big difference," said Chong, adding it helps international researchers feel valued and supported.

*This article is also contributed by UNNC.*

## My China Story

# Cultural Nuances Exchange to Navigate Different Cultures

By LONG Yun & GONG Qian

Seventeen years ago, when Alexander Scott English arrived in China from the U.S., he was barely able to speak Mandarin. But despite the challenges, he made a life-changing decision to come to China and live there.

In 2023, English became an associate professor of psychology in the College of Liberal Arts at the Wenzhou-Kean University (WKU) in Wenzhou, east China. The WKU is a landmark project in China-U.S. educational cooperation.

Reflecting on his early days in China, English, who is dedicated to advancing cross-cultural communication, said he was fortunate to establish a deep connection with the Chinese. Despite the initial language barrier, he met with understanding and kindness from the people, which helped him integrate into the community. This early support laid the foundation for his enduring affection for China.

Initially, curiosity brought him to the country, but it was "the warmth, kindness, happiness, and friendliness of the Chinese" that made him stay. "Why would I leave a place where I'm happy and people make me feel good?" he said.

English enjoys traveling in China and learning about the cultural diversity directly from local residents. He says China boasts countless beautiful landscapes and cultural treasures waiting to be discovered. Its beauty extends far beyond the major cities people are familiar with.

Following the philosophy of live and learn, he decided to pursue a Ph.D. in China. Having witnessed China's significant transformation over the years,

English's perspectives on cross-cultural studies have evolved. Initially focused on foreigners adapting to life in China, his research now encompasses broader adaptability themes, such as responses to technological advancements and economic shifts. Currently, his focus is AI and its impacts on people's lives.

Working with Chinese colleagues and students has provided English with invaluable insights. Fluency in Chinese has deepened his understanding of Chinese culture and enriched his interactions with students and peers.

Conflicts are a natural part of human interaction. According to English, while it is unrealistic to expect people to change their ideas, minds, and values immediately, fostering understanding, openness, and acceptance can help individuals grow together and appreciate each other.

He is adept at setting differences aside and finding common ground. As a cross-cultural psychologist, English worked with his team to facilitate smoother transitions for foreigners like him so that they adapt to new environments and find a sense of belonging.

Through cross-cultural training, he prepares individuals from both the United States and China for the cultural nuances they may encounter. His training sessions integrate practical insights derived from his research, helping newcomers to China and Chinese students prepare for overseas experiences.

English sees himself as a cultural ambassador, acting as a bridge between China and the U.S. and sharing insights about modern China to help foreign visitors and experts navigate a different cultural landscape.



Alexander Scott English (left) and his father. (COURTESY PHOTO)

# After Mission Chang'e-6, Earth-Moon 'Bridge' Gets New Life

## Science Outreach

By SHI Shi & ZONG Shihan

On June 25, the Chang'e-6 probe touched down on Earth, bringing back the first samples from the moon's far side. As a communication bridge be-

tween Earth and the moon, the Magpie Bridge-2 relay satellite played a crucial role during this mission. But now that the mission is over, will it be in operation?

According to Yang Yuguang, vice-chair of the International Astronautical Federation's Space Transportation Committee, prior to the Chang'e-6 probe's journey to the moon, the pre-positioned Magpie Bridge-2 had already conducted various tests on its 24-

hour elliptical lunar orbit. While the probe was collecting samples, the relay satellite provided it with over 20 hours of relay communication support daily.

After the probe's return, Magpie Bridge-2 will continue to operate. "The Magpie Bridge-2 relay satellite will remain online to meet the needs of long-term missions. Researchers have planned a 'frozen' orbit for it, finding a balance under complex gravitational conditions to achieve maintenance-

free orbit operation. This can greatly reduce propellant consumption and enable it to have a long lifespan," Yang said.

When not performing relay missions, the satellite will not be idle but serve as a science and technology experiment satellite. It will collect data from the moon and deep space, laying the foundation for the development of future lunar communication and navigation systems.

# Pedal Power Exploration of Chinese Civilization

## Expats Activity

By Staff Reporters

On July 2, 31 teachers and students from the U.S. and 12 teachers and students from China participated in the 2024 Sino-U.S. Youth Cycling Event called "Wander along Beijing Central Axis".

Spanning 7.8 kilometers, the Beijing Central Axis starts in the south of the city from the Yongding Gate and ends with the Drum Tower and Bell Tower in the north.

This axis is lined with the majority of Beijing's notable historical structures.

Before the trip began, the participants climbed the Drum Tower together, learned the stories behind the cultural relics, enjoyed breathtaking drum performances and took in the magnificent scenery of the Central Axis.

The cyclists set out from the Bell and Drum Tower Cultural Square and

rode south along the central axis of Beijing. Along the way, they experienced an unforgettable cultural journey, visiting Jingshan Park, Qianmen Street, Small Courtyard Meeting Hall, Yongdingmen Park and other cultural sites.

The American teenagers were all impressed by the beautiful view along the route and were amazed to see scenes of China with their own eyes what they had only seen previously in documentaries.

They also climbed up to Wanchun Pavilion in Jingshan Park, overlooking the majestic Forbidden City, and listened to the Chinese students' accounts of Chinese history.

Combining cycling with in-depth sightseeing, culture was experienced in an immersive way that allowed both the American and Chinese youth to witness the cultural charm of Beijing's central axis.

In addition, this event promoted international exchange between Chinese and American youth and fostered their friendships.

# Global AI Governance Takes Center Stage at 2024 WAIC

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However, from a global perspective, AI development also faces major digital divides in infrastructure construction, civic literacy, and governance, Xue added. These issues require the joint efforts of the global community for resolution.

Turing Award winner Raj Reddy, emphasizing that new technologies bring both opportunities and challenges, urged a positive attitude towards these changes and cautioned against abandoning progress due to fear. Reddy said AI should be used across various fields to enhance human cognitive abilities and improve work efficiency.

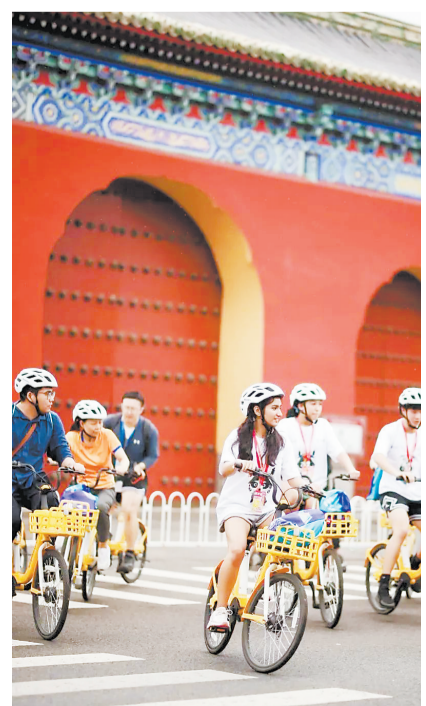
One of the crucial goals of AI ethical governance is to use AI to promote the inclusive development of society as a whole, said Zhang Wang, vice president and chairman of AI Ethics and Governance Committee of Sense Time Group, a Chinese tech company. He proposed the AI ethics concept of "balanced development," which includes safe and controllable technology, a people-centered approach, and sustainable development.

The pace of AI innovation must be carefully balanced with the need for responsibility in how AI is developed. The best approach to achieve the balance is to work together globally, said Sassine Ghazi, president and CEO of Synopsys, a U.S. electronic design automation company.

"Global collaboration will enable people worldwide to benefit from the incredible advancements that AI is bringing while ensuring that those amazing new capabilities are deployed responsibly," Ghazi said.

In his address, Li noted that China has made positive explorations and contributed constructive ideas and solutions to the global development and governance of AI.

China launched the Global AI Governance Initiative in 2023 and proposed a resolution at the 78th UN General Assembly to enhance international cooperation on AI capacity building, which was unanimously adopted on July 1. The resolution aims to help all countries, especially developing ones, equally benefit from AI development and bridge the digital divide.



Dozens of teachers and students from the U.S. and China participated in the 2024 Sino-U.S. Youth Cycling Event of "Wander along Beijing Central Axis" in Beijing. (PHOTO by Beijing People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries)