

Digital Intelligence at the Core: Yangpu Shapes the Future City



By Mao Xinhui

Digital and intelligent technologies are rapidly reshaping the economy and society. As China's digital economy enters a new stage, shifting from rapid expansion to more intense competition and value creation, Yangpu District is seizing the opportunities presented by the upcoming 15th Five-Year Plan period. The district is accelerating the integration of the digital and intelligent economies, with artificial intelligence playing a central role.

A 700-meter street has become a real-world testing ground for AI applications. Drones are redefining urban logistics from the sky. Specialized events focused on AI and human resources are helping businesses overcome challenges and accelerate transformation. Together, these examples offer a glimpse of Yangpu's vision for the future and its efforts to build a new growth model driven by digital intelligence.

Driving Industrial Upgrading and Building a New Digital-Intelligent Economy

With digital intelligence as its guiding principle, Yangpu is accelerating the transformation of its digital economy into a more advanced digital-intelligent economy. The district is positioning itself as a strategic partner to businesses, with government and industry working closely together to support leading companies as they explore new AI-driven business models and opportunities. At the same time, Yangpu is fostering the growth of innovative enterprises with the potential to become future industry leaders.

University Road, a 700-meter-long street stretching from Zhixing Road to Guoding Road, offers a glimpse of this transformation in action. Recently, "Orange Adventure," the world's first commercial physical AI concept store, opened on the street. Operated throughout by AI agents developed by Sunmi, the store uses AI for everything from customer ordering to business analytics, allowing products to be tested and refined in a real-world commercial setting.

Earlier, the same street attracted crowds when several humanoid robots took part in public demonstra-

tions, interacting with visitors through high-fives and heart gestures. During the May Day holiday, they became one of the area's most popular attractions. While these two examples may seem unrelated, they point to the same trend: University Road is evolving from a trendy side street into an important proving ground for applying digital intelligence to the real economy.

At the same time, Yangpu is leveraging the concentration of corporate headquarters along its waterfront area and strengthening a value chain-driven approach to industrial development. Leading companies such as Meituan, Douyin, and Bilibili are attracting a growing ecosystem of upstream and downstream businesses in fields including large language models and cloud services. Official data show that Yangpu's "1+2+3+4" innovation-driven modern industrial system, with the digital economy at its core, is taking shape rapidly. Three industrial clusters each valued at more than RMB 100 billion have largely been established. Through industry chain-focused investment promotion, the district has attracted 2,673 new companies, accounting for 40.5 percent of all newly introduced enterprises. A full-spectrum industrial ecosystem, where businesses of all sizes grow and develop together, is also emerging at an accelerating pace.

Strengthening Key Enablers to Unlock New Momentum for the Digital-Intelligent Economy

To support the development of the digital-intelligent economy, Yangpu is strengthening the integration of key resources, including data, application scenarios, and talent, while continuing to improve its support systems. Through major platforms such as the East Shanghai Talent Hub, the district is promoting the efficient flow and optimal allocation of critical resources, including innovation spaces, real-world application scenarios, and data.

In the area of talent support, the Yangpu District Human Resources and Social Security Bureau has rolled out a series of coordinated initiatives. Recently, the "You + Intelligence, Empowering Business Incubation" AI and Human Resources Industry Fo-

rum, organized under the Xiao Yang You+ Club program, was held at the China (Shanghai) Public Training Center for Entrepreneurs. The event highlighted the role and service framework of the Yangpu Digital-Intelligent Human Resources Incubator, which focuses on supporting startups in the human resources sector through digital and intelligent technologies. By attracting providers of AI-powered HR solutions and AI technology developers, the incubator aims to nurture a new generation of startups with strong core competitiveness. The event also introduced a range of advanced computing tools and digital service platforms to participating companies, provided in-depth guidance on key financial and tax issues facing the human resources industry under China's new Value-Added Tax Law, and offered one-stop advisory services through a dedicated Xiao Yang HR Public Consultation Zone. Together, these initiatives are accelerating the digital and intelligent transformation of the human resources sector and providing strong talent service support for the continued growth of Yangpu's digital-intelligent economy.

In Yangpu, real-world application scenarios are becoming the primary driver of technological innovation, and the work being done by Meituan offers a particularly strong example. As of March 2025, Meituan had launched 55 drone delivery routes worldwide and completed more than 520,000 orders. Regular drone services in business parks, university campuses, and other locations have increasingly become part of everyday life. Even more notably, the acoustic positioning technology jointly developed by Meituan and Tsinghua University was created in response to the real-world needs of urban low-altitude logistics. The technology has already been integrated into flight control systems and is expected to be deployed in future autonomous delivery operations.

In addition, the Yangtze River Delta's first intercity low-altitude public transport route, operated by Shanghai New Air Helicopter and linking Pinghu, Haining, Yuecheng, and Keqiao, has officially entered service. Using a high-frequency, small-capacity operating model, the

route offers one-way fares starting at RMB 398 per passenger, marking a new stage in regional transportation integration through coordinated air and ground mobility.

Putting Digital Intelligence to Work for People and Building a More Caring City

The benefits of the digital-intelligent economy should ultimately be shared by everyone. In Yangpu, digital intelligence is being used to improve urban governance and enhance quality of life, ensuring that innovation delivers not only technological progress but also meaningful benefits for residents.

In 2025, Yangpu further strengthened the operating framework of its "1235" digital urban governance platform, enhancing its ability to monitor, issue early warnings, and respond quickly to emerging issues. The district has expanded the use of digital governance applications, including construction site supervision, smart inspections, and intelligent hotline dashboards, with the goal of creating a city that can sense, respond, and better serve its residents. To date, the platform has integrated 1.8 billion public data records and processed nearly 297 million data requests. It has also launched Shanghai's first intelligent application for construction waste management. From real-time monitoring of construction sites to AI-assisted analysis of public service hotline data, digital technologies are making city governance more precise and efficient.

At the same time, Yangpu continues to strengthen its Warm Yangpu Senior Care initiative by promoting the use of smart care robots, rehabilitation support devices, and other technology-enabled services for older adults. Building on the full rollout of its "Property Management + Elderly Care" pilot program across all 12 subdistricts, the district now has one of the highest numbers of community patient companions in Shanghai. Eleven senior care professionals have successfully obtained Shanghai residency, and its "Senior Canteen Plus" integrated service model has been recognized and promoted by China's Ministry of Civil Affairs. From smart nursing homes to neighborhood-based eldercare service centers, digital technolo-

gies are bringing high-quality services closer to seniors and helping ensure that the benefits of innovation are shared by all.

Seizing AI Opportunities to Build a Stronger Digital-Intelligent Growth Engine

As new opportunities emerge in the age of artificial intelligence, Yangpu is turning its development vision into concrete initiatives and translating plans into action. Through these efforts, the district continues to expand its industrial capabilities and create new room for growth.

From a single street to an entire island, from one drone to a broader innovation ecosystem, Yangpu is steadily advancing the digital-intelligent economy with patience, persistence, and long-term commitment. What began as early momentum is now evolving into sustained growth.

On Fuxing Island, development of the Global Makers Island is gathering pace. The first 30,000 square meters of space will soon come into operation, while 12 innovation incubators, including SuDu Technology and Plug and Play China, have already moved in, helping to advance the OPC Super Individual Community initiative. Along the waterfront, the role of the Changyang Riverside Innovation Belt as a specialized industrial hub continues to grow. Major projects, including the Shanghai Technology Center of Meituan and the New Generation Industrial Park of Bilibili, are expected to begin operations soon.

As one of the key areas supporting Shanghai's development as an international innovation center, Yangpu is using the digital economy as its primary growth engine, driving its transformation from an industrial district into a hub for digital innovation. The district's software and information services sector accounts for nearly one-fifth of Shanghai's total industry revenue, while more than 8,000 digital enterprises have established a presence in the area. Three industrial clusters valued at more than RMB 100 billion each are also taking shape. Behind these figures lies a clear reflection of Yangpu's thriving digital economy and its continued efforts to foster a business-friendly environment. (Some images used in this article are file photos.)

