

October 2018

What's Happening in the Disruption World?

Chinese Internet sector looking attractive after recent sell down

The Chinese Internet sector bore the brunt of selling this year as investors took profits. Chinese technology stocks like Alibaba (-4.5%¹), Tencent (-20.2%²), Baidu (-2.4%¹), JD.com (-37.0%¹) were down as earnings were revised downwards. These companies continue to invest and build their eco systems and infrastructure, and as a result, guided for lower operating margins and profits. (Source: Bloomberg, ¹Year-to-date 30 September 2018 & in USD terms, ²Year-to-date 30 September 2018 & in HKD terms).

Leading US insurance provider John Hancock (Manulife subsidiary) adds fitness tracking to all policies

One of the largest life insurance providers in North America will no longer offer policies that do not include digital fitness tracking. John Hancock – an international partner of Vitality - will now sell only "interactive" policies that collect health data through wearable devices such as a smartwatch. However privacy advocates have warned that insurers could use tracking data to punish customers who fail to meet targets – with some critics saying the announcement was "creepy" and "dystopian" (Source: BBC, Digital Journal, 22 September 2018).

Ant Financial expanding technology services to institutions and corporates

At Alibaba Investor Day conference, Ant Financial talked about serving the corporate market and positioning as a technology enabler to complement financial institutions. The company indicates that payment accounts for about 50% of its sales, technology services to partners for 35-40% and financial services for below 10%. It partners with 200 financial institutions including about 100 banks, 60 insurance companies and 40 asset managers to serve consumers in wealth management, insurance and financing, and has hundreds of Cloud clients. (Source: www.pymnts.com/news/b2b-payments/2018/ant-financial-technology-banking/, 20 September 2018).

Self-driving cars can handle neither rain nor sleet nor snow

Bloomberg wrote a story on how self-driving cars still cannot handle poor weather such as fog, rain or snow. It cited how WaveSense, a Boston-region start-up, has built a sensory system that scans 10ft underground and analyses the earth materials within. By combining the sensory data with data from existing autonomous technology (GPS/INS, radar, cameras), it keeps vehicles on track specifically in bad weather and when road markings are unnoticeable. This of course does not resolve the issue of detecting incoming vehicles. It will likely be many years before regulators allow vendors to try to demonstrate viability in low visibility conditions; this is why the warmer locations dominate current testing sites. (Source: Bloomberg, 17 September 2018).

Why Facebook just gave you a “trustworthiness rating”

Facebook is apparently now assigning users a trustworthiness score as part of its effort to crack down on misinformation—here's what that means. Don't panic: Such a score might seem reminiscent of an authoritarian government, but it's really just a perfectly reasonable way to apply machine learning to the problem of fake news. Essentially, a person's previous behaviour in reporting posts as fake is considered by the algorithm that prioritises posts for moderators. That's necessary because people sometimes report a story as fake if they don't agree with it. (Source: MIT Technology Review, 21 August 2018).

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