

**THE RISE OF CHINESE CHATBOTS:
SOCIO-CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS**

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Executive Summary

1. China has plans to become a core strategic technology player and by 2030, a global dominant player in AI (artificial intelligence) technologies.
2. The Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) attempts at using censorship to bring about ideological conformity requires chatbots to be scrubbed clean to prevent random materials from being leaked out publicly in a political system that is cautious with the impact of unexpected/uncontrolled public narratives.
3. Ernie bot's large chatbot model specialises in the Chinese language and utilises data custom-made for Chinese language training. Baidu Chief Executive Officer Robin Li believes that Baidu has a deep understanding of Chinese language and culture through its large-scale Chinese-language database, touting it as a strong feature of Baidu's research and development (R&D) capabilities.
4. Pro-generative AI developers/users and Chinese ChatGPT techies argue that chatbots will form the basis of tech innovation in content output and release humans from simple/routine assignments to redirect their attention towards creative thinking in the cultural, media, entertainment and educational sectors.
5. China owned more than 50% of the globe's AI patent applications in 2021 and outranked others in the quantity of AI journals, conference papers and related publications.
6. Other than large-scale language models, other chatbots with niched functions have also been created. Chinese chatbot creators like XiaoIce have also created idealised BGR (boy-girl relationships) bots that can provide company to Chinese urbanites who feel isolated in metropolitan city life.
7. Xiaolce could be found in most Chinese smartphones and social media platforms for 150 million Chinese users and behaves like the Chinese equivalent of Siri. In the WeChat super-app, Xiaolce can be utilised to construct a virtual

partner/girl/boyfriend for conversations through text, voice and visual communications.

8. Industry observers argue that Chinese tech companies could provide users with AI conversational capabilities in Mandarin and are still striving to upgrade their algorithms, computing power and natural language processing.
9. In 2017, the State Council unfurled a national strategy known as the “New Generation Artificial Intelligence Development Plan” to make “China the world’s primary AI innovation centre” by 2030. At the October 2022’s Communist Party Congress, Xi Jinping listed AI as “new growth engines”.
10. Some argue that the Chinese elite leadership may be willing to provide some space for the smooth development and experimentation of chatbots despite the potential of the Chinese public accessing un-scrubbed information and protests vids which can escape monitoring. The economic rewards and potential for social control are simply too attractive.