

Alibaba adopts open-source model for AI offerings, intensifying competition in China

Article

The news: Alibaba launched two artificial intelligence models last week that can understand images and carry out complex conversations as part of its cloud services expansion.

The new AI models are based on the large language model (LLM) **Tongyi Qianwen**, and support extensive data training and underlying chatbot applications similar to **OpenAI's ChatGPT** and **Google's Bard**.

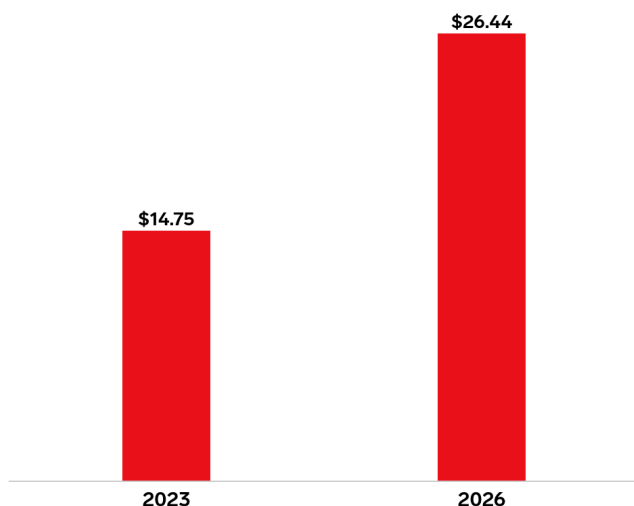
The latest in China's AI race: Alibaba's AI push comes on the heels of competing releases from **Tencent** and **Baidu**, just as Beijing formalizes AI regulation.

- The two new models, **Qwen-VL** and **Qwen-VL-Chat**, will be open source—which will let researchers, academics and companies create their own AI apps using Alibaba's technology.
- Qwen-VL can respond to open-ended queries related to different images and generate picture captions.
- Qwen-VL-Chat can write stories, create images based on user-inputted photos, and solve math equations shown in photos.

Trendspotting: The AI race in China is intensifying as Big Tech companies release competing services. Alibaba's open-source approach could result in wider adoption and crowdsourced development, but it's unclear whether these models will gain traction beyond China.

Our take: While Alibaba's models are an advancement, especially in AI image comprehension, they're not unique. To stand out in such a competitive field, Alibaba will need to find ways to distinguish itself and might be able to do so through its open source approach.

AI Spending in China, 2023 & 2026
billions



Source: International Data Corporation (IDC), "2023 V1 Worldwide Artificial Intelligence Spending Guide" as cited in press release, March 29, 2023

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