

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DIGITAL ECONOMY ON THE BELT AND ROAD UNDER THE COMPLEX INTERNATIONAL SITUATION



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Abstract: *In the complex international form, the epidemic situation of COVID-19, war, regional economic barriers and so on all affect the development of regional economy. In the development of "Belt and Road Initiative", digital technology has ushered in a historic opportunity for development, and the digital economy has increasingly become a new engine to promote the economic recovery and development of various countries. All countries should build a digital economic community, promote the construction of digital economy on "Belt and Road Initiative", and promote the high-quality development of regional economy.*

Keywords: *digital economy, regional economy, the Belt and Road Initiative*

I. Introduction

At present, the world is in a state of rapid disorder. Under the situation that the new crown epidemic has profoundly affected the global situation, financial crises, food crises, energy crises, and military conflicts have appeared at the same time. This is a very rare situation in world history since the end of World War II.

As the global economy weakens, demand for trade and investment declines, and business flows are blocked, the digital economy has gradually become an important force driving the resumption of production, transformation and upgrading of traditional industries, promoting unimpeded trade, cultivating emerging markets, and promoting the economic recovery and development of various countries. In 2020, the global digital economy will account for 43.7% of GDP. In the case of negative GDP growth in many countries, the global digital economy will grow by 3.0% year-on-year in nominal terms, which is 5.8 percentage points higher than the GDP growth rate in the same period^[1].

The digital economy is not only increasingly becoming a new engine to promote the recovery and development of the global economy, but also becoming a new driving force to boost the high-quality development of the "Belt and Road". The digital trade between China and the countries along the "Belt and Road" has shown a good growth trend. The annual growth rates of the digital trade indices of Singapore, Turkey and China reached 19% and 11% respectively in 2018, and the digital trade

[1] 资料来源: 中国信息通信研究院, 《全球数字经济白皮书——疫情冲击下的复苏新曙光》, http://www.caict.ac.cn/kxyj/qwfb/202108/t20210802_381484.htm.

indices between India, Israel, Iran, Serbia and other countries and China continued to rise from 2014 to 2018^[2]. Measured by the "B2C e-commerce development" index established by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the average value of this index in countries along the "Belt and Road" is 49%, which is higher than the world average. Circulation played an important role. With the continuous development of the Digital Silk Road, China has actively contributed its strength and experience to countries along the "Belt and Road" in various aspects such as transportation, logistics, medical care, and education.

II. Research Part

1. Opportunities for the development of the digital economy

In 2020, President Xi Jinping mentioned in his speech at the opening ceremony of the 17th China-ASEAN Expo and the China-ASEAN Business and Investment Summit that it is necessary to "enhance technological innovation and deepen cooperation in the digital economy.

(1) The construction of digital infrastructure is becoming the core content of the national digital strategy.

For developing countries, although the construction of digital infrastructure started late, they are firmly seizing the new opportunities of digital development and carrying out digital transformation planning and layout. In order to promote the development of Africa's digital economy, the African Union has formulated and issued a specific action plan for the "2063 Agenda"^[3]. Vietnam, Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia and other Southeast Asian countries have also clearly listed the digital economy and digital society as national priority development directions, and started to promote the construction of digital infrastructure, improve the regulatory legal framework, promote cashless payment, and improve logistics and distribution. On January 22, 2021, ASEAN held its first digital ministerial meeting and released the "ASEAN Digital Plan 2025", which clarified the goals and paths for ASEAN's digital development in the next five years, and plans to build ASEAN into a safe and transformative digital service, Leading digital communities and economies driven by technology and ecosystems. Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates and other Middle Eastern countries are accelerating technical cooperation and deployment in 5G, cloud computing, data centers, etc^[4]. Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and other Central Asian countries have introduced digital economy development strategies, and are committed to the construction of digital infrastructure such as communication technology infrastructure, e-commerce, and

[2] 资料来源：华信研究院，《一带一路数字贸易指数发展报告（2020）》，https://ydlmap.phei.com.cn/platform/theBeltAndRoad/researchReport/detail.do?guid=7d30_9c1571ad4debb606cddf2d999fdf。

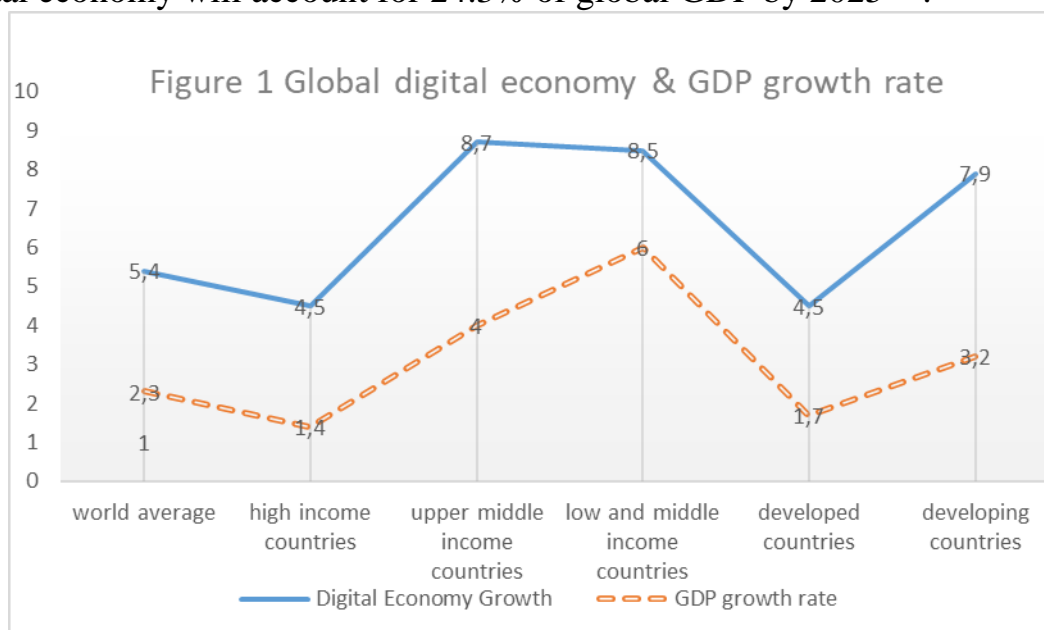
[3] 黄玉沛《中非共建“数字丝绸之路”：机遇、挑战与路径选择》，载于《国际问题研究》2019年第4期。

[4] 姜志达、王睿《中国与中东共建数字“一带一路”：基础、挑战与建议》，载于《西亚非洲》2020年第6期。

smart cities^[5]. Developed countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, and Japan have successively issued national digital strategies in an attempt to build a national-level data governance plan, and their corresponding development agencies have also formulated strategies and policies, deployed action plans, and seized opportunities for digital cooperation.

(2) The digital economy has become an important engine for economic recovery.

Under the situation that the new crown epidemic has profoundly affected the global situation, the digital economy has shown tenacious resilience, especially during the COVID-19 epidemic, services such as cross-border e-commerce, online education, sharing platforms, and collaborative office services were widely used, and the global digital economy "grew against the trend". The downward pressure on the economy has contributed a lot to the recovery of the global economy. According to calculations (see Figure 1), in 2019, the average nominal growth rate of the global digital economy was 5.4%, which was higher than the nominal growth rate of global GDP of 3.1% in the same period. Downward pressure, the key to driving economic recovery. Additionally, according to research by Huawei and Oxford Economics, the digital economy will account for 24.3% of global GDP by 2025 ^[6].



Data source: China Academy of Information and Communications Technology.

2. Challenges of digital economy development

(1) The digital technology gap squeezes the development space of the digital economy in the "Belt and Road" regional economic development

^[5] 王海燕《中国与中亚国家共建数字丝绸之路：基础、挑战与路径》，载于《国际问题研究》2020 第 2 期。

^[6] 中国信息通信研究院《全球数字经济新图景（2020 年）——大变局下的可持续发展新动能》，参见中国通信研究院网 <http://www.caict.ac.cn/kxyj/qwfb/bps/202108/>。

Due to the different levels of development of digital infrastructure, the rapid development of a new round of technological revolution (artificial intelligence, big data, cloud computing, blockchain, Internet of Things, new energy, new materials, life sciences, aerospace, etc.) has made the world It has become more chaotic, and the most prominent manifestation is the digital divide that is wider in scope, more severe in degree, and far-reaching in its impact^[7]. From a horizontal perspective, the digital divide is specifically manifested as the digital divide at the individual, enterprise, national and regional levels. According to the World Bank, more than 4 billion people around the world do not have access to the Internet. 60% of people in developing countries do not have access to the Internet, and as many as 85% in least developed countries. Among populations in LDCs, especially between rural and urban populations (10% and 23%), women and men (12% and 18%), youth and people over 45 (20% and 8%), The gap in access to opportunities is equally large^[8]. From the perspective of vertical development stages, the digital divide is specifically manifested as "digital infrastructure divide", "digital economy divide" and "digital talent divide".

(2) Network data security issues weaken the consensus foundation of the digital “Belt and Road”

With the continuous innovation and in-depth development of digital technology, compared with the real society, the digital society in cyberspace accounts for an increasing proportion in various fields. The network society characterized by digitization, networking, intelligence and interconnection Greatly facilitate people's life. But at the same time, data has become a key target of network attacks due to its huge value and centralized storage management mode. The problem of blackmail attacks and data leakage against network data has become a major security issue in the process of digital "Belt and Road" construction^[9]. Network data has had a profound impact on economic operating mechanisms, social lifestyles, and national governance capabilities.

3. How to deal with the problem

(1) Strengthen co-construction and sharing, and join hands to bridge the digital divide

With the continuous innovation and development of digital technology, the digital divide has increasingly become a common problem in the international community. Therefore, bridging the digital divide should be the key to the construction of the digital "Belt and Road". Carry out digital technology talent training, and strengthen personnel exchanges and exchanges in digital technology between the two sides, improve the digital skills of people in countries along the

[7] [美] 阿尔文·托夫勒《权力的转移》中信出版社 2018 年版第 17 页。

[8] International Aid and Development, t “Digital Strategy 2018-2020: Doing Development in a Digital World”, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/701443/DFID-Digital-Strategy-23-01-18a.pdf.

[9] 刘国伟、张艺、朱岩《大数据时代网络安全技术的演进》，载于《信息安全研究》2019 年第 5 期。

"Belt and Road", and contribute to the digital "Belt and Road" "Construction provides long-term human capital support.

(2) Gather consensus among multiple parties and create a network data security system

With the continuous development of informatization, the value of data has become increasingly prominent. In the era of big data, the risk of network data leakage is higher than ever. In addition, the world's cross-border data flow policies are increasingly affected by complex factors such as geopolitics, national security, privacy protection, and industrial development levels. The increasingly complex network environment has put forward higher requirements for data security in the digital "Belt and Road". Therefore, the digital "Belt and Road" should pay attention to the basic role of network data security. Under the guidance of the overall security concept, with the goal of win-win cooperation and the premise of security and credibility, it should focus on privacy protection, data security, platform security, etc. Build a network data security guarantee system to ensure the orderly advancement of the digital "Belt and Road".

(3) Strengthen strategic alignment and build a digital economic community

In the context of drastic changes in the global external environment such as Sino-US strategic competition, the need for new rules and strategies for global digital governance is even more urgent. The digital "Belt and Road" is based on the high-quality development of the "Belt and Road", cracking the digital divide and other practical issues, and building a concrete practice form of a community with a shared future for mankind. Building a digital economic community is the core requirement for building a digital "Belt and Road".

III. Conclusion

The integration of the digital economy and the "Belt and Road" initiative is a new plan to promote the common development of mankind in the digital age, and it carries the common aspirations of the people of the countries and regions along the "Belt and Road". It has been proved that in the context of the intertwined Sino-US technological competition and the new crown pneumonia epidemic, the "Belt and Road" digital strategy based on peaceful cooperation, characterized by openness and inclusiveness, guaranteed by mutual learning, and guided by mutual benefit and win-win results The economy can bring profound changes to the economic development model and the state interaction model.

In the development of the "Belt and Road" digital economy, opportunities and challenges coexist. On the one hand, the new crown pneumonia epidemic has highlighted the importance of digital infrastructure, making it an important consensus for national capacity building; the new crown pneumonia epidemic has given birth to the irreplaceability of the digital economy, making it an important engine for national economic recovery; on the other hand On the one hand, digital technology is breaking

the relationship between major powers in the traditional physical world and bringing many new challenges to the digital “Belt and Road”.

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2. 资料来源：华信研究院，《一带一路数字贸易指数发展报告（2020）》，<https://ydyimap.phei.com.cn/platform/theBeltAndRoad/researchReport/detail.do?guid=7d309c1571ad4debb606cdbf2d999fdf>。
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