

iBridge's success story: small office but a classroom for big global innovation

By ZHANG XIUYING

Have you found your roadmap to navigate the future?

This is one of the questions that's been asked at the International Association of Science Parks (IASP) 2011 World Conference, in Copenhagen, Denmark.

An impressive number of delegates from several dozen countries gathered in Copenhagen with the shared aim of developing such "roadmaps for navigating the future" and to discuss new ways to secure growth for cities, regions, and countries in the global knowledge economy, with special focus on the role of STPs.

One success story from the Zhongguancun Haidian Science Park (HSP) about smart roadmaps in innovation, comes from iBridge, a standout at the conference.

The Chinese government is

sponsoring project to develop a network for exchanges and cooperation among companies in science parks across China and around the world, based on Web 2.0 technology.

Welcome to the Information Bridge, or, more commonly, the iBridge, an innovative approach to the challenges posed by economic globalization and "knowledge-based" societies.

The pilot project is the baby of the Administrative Committee of HSP probes the pathway to future innovations and has provided services for governments, businesses, organizations, and various others.

The iBridge's tools are the blogs, communities, RSS, and other web 2.0 devices. It was designed in 2004 and is the first development of its kind to come from any of China's 108 science parks, with a strategy on "linking businesses across

the world".

Its functions include media partnerships, policies releases, government funding, and online services.

The iBridge office has received over 80 delegations from around the world since last year, many of which are from universities, research institutes, or science parks, and are scholars, entrepreneurs, or senior executives of famous companies, who came to share their ideas on innovation.

Small as it is — only about 150 square meters — the office has become a classroom of sorts where innovative people from around the world pay close attention to its approach to connecting innovative resources globally in a new way.

Martin Grossman, from Bridgewater State College, Massachusetts, in the US, wrote a paper on this phenomenon titled "An emerging



We will encourage transnational knowledge flows and fostering innovation."

MARTIN GROSSMAN
FROM BRIDGEWATER STATE
COLLEGE, MASSACHUSETTS

global knowledge management platform: case of iBridge."

In describing the work to be done on improving the features and functions of iBridge, Grossman cited "introducing more efficient ways of communication, providing more user-friendly display web pages and layouts, and paying more attention to the latest development of web-technology".

He went on to say, "We



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Students and faculty from Spain's Eseeune Business School visit the HSP, on August 22.

will encourage transnational knowledge flows and fostering innovation."

Cooperation

HSP developed a fund policy, with a global view, specifically designed for international cooperation in September 2006, and it had provided more than 32 million yuan (\$5 million) for several dozen projects by the end of 2009, covering 38 countries and regions.

The fund was the first of its kind for China's science parks and a meaningful example of innovations in financing science. It has become part of HSP's long-term development plan for the coming decade.

Also in 2006, HSP joined Hong Kong's Phoenix TV in promoting its high-tech companies. And, over the next several years, it helped promote 150 enterprises via TV in Europe, creating a new

form of media cooperation. Its programs can be found on the iBridge platform, which has helped raise public awareness and lead to the production of similar shows nationwide.

The author is chief of the International Cooperation Division and deputy director of the Administrative Committee of Zhongguancun Haidian Science Park, Beijing

No question about it — China has arrived

By YA-QIN ZHANG

There's no question about it: we do live in an uncertain economic climate. But, one thing that is not uncertain is that companies that ignore China's innovative ability and role in global economic recovery do so at their own risk.

It was no accident that Microsoft chose Zhongguancun and Haidian Science Park as the site of its Asia-Pacific R&D headquarters, with its more than 3,000 top-caliber scientists and engineers. It's the largest such investment Microsoft has made outside the United States.

Again, there's no question that China's moment has arrived. And the IT industry is helping to propel it forward and is an engine for global growth.

There are a number of things that make China an innovation center -- things that promise to have a considerable influence on future generations.

Some 20 years ago, when Microsoft first moved into Zhongguancun, there was no evident promise of its future relevance or impact. It was still an early idea shared by Bill Gates, Microsoft's founder, Microsoft itself, the Chinese government, and the Haidian Science Park, China's first State-recognized high-tech zone — that, one day, the district would prove to be a catalyst for world-class, China-based innovation and growth.

Today, the park is home to multinational R&D centers such as Microsoft, Intel, IBM and Google; and leading home-grown brands such as Lenovo, Baidu, Alibaba, Sina, Tencent and Sohu.

IT engine for growth

New technologies -- in particular, new business models related to software, mobility, and the Internet -- provide a strong platform for innovation that will help accelerate economic recovery. And tech-

nology will continue to play a major role in creating jobs and efficient ways to fuel global economic growth, especially devices and cloud-based services that help organizations and individuals be more productive, entertained, or well-off.

Talent base

China is fast becoming a science and technology powerhouse. Its huge numbers of science and engineering graduates (1.5 million, in 2006, for example) offer an unequalled talent base for future R&D. Microsoft and the Haidian Science Park have long relied upon, and benefited from, the students and graduates of nearby universities and research institutes such as Peking University, Tsinghua University and the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

Collaboration a driving force

China's investment in



Ya-Qin Zhang

R&D will soon amount to more than \$100 billion a year. This, combined with contributions from local industry and multinationals such as Microsoft, will have a huge effect. In 2011 alone Microsoft outsourcing put more than \$216 million into the local ecosystem.

Beyond investment, the sharing of best practices, the mentorship, and start-up culture in China is beginning to replicate the unique chemistry of California's Silicon Val-

ley. Having a proximity to places such as Zhongguancun's Haidian Science Park, which encourage collaboration, is invaluable in building an innovative economy in China.

Microsoft is committed to helping local industry achieve its full potential, and that includes working with the local government as it builds an intellectual property rights protection system.

This may be one of the single biggest challenges currently facing the industry, but it is one that can assuredly be overcome.

Sina, Tencent and Sohu.com are emblematic of the development and changes that will help China's IT innovation lift the world economy out of its current decline.

The author is corporate vice-president of Microsoft and Chairman of the Microsoft Asia-Pacific R&D Group

Where enterprises interact with the international media

By XU XIAO

While technological developments and buzzwords may be everyday stuff in the developed world these days, they are becoming no less so in China, especially in a science park in Beijing, where they have even gotten some more attention.

At least they have, by Thomas Seifert, a correspondent from a leading Austrian newspaper, Die Presse. He is writing a book on innovative industries in emerging countries and visited Beijing's Zhongguancun Haidian Science Park (HSP) recently for his research.

Seifert heard about the park for the first time a year ago at the 2010 Tianjin Davos. For one thing, it has encouraged its enterprises to interact with international media, more openly, as a means of promoting themselves and to give other countries a better understanding of China's real developments and innovations.

Zhang Xiuying, deputy head of management at HSP, first met Seifert at the 2010 Tianjin Davos Forum, and since the European reporter was curious about the emerging Far East, Zhang wanted to use the opportunity.

The Zhongguancun National Innovation Demonstration Zone is one of China's leading experimental zones for economic reforms, and HSP is more or less at the core.

"HSP is an incubator for innovation in technology, business, and financing, as well as a testing area for liberalized government policies," said Claire-Juliette Beale, partner and co-founder of Touch360 who visited HSP on August 2007.

"It will be the main way we can learn about the development of creative industries in China and see how the government supports creative, high-tech industries," Seifert said.

"The innovative environment in HSP really impressed me," after talking with the HSP management and enterprises such as Innovation Works, and Doodle — a cell phone game research and development company.

Huang Ying, deputy head of HSP's international department has said that they give the media whatever services they need by arranging interviews and supplying background information.

Seifert has also visited the cities of Chengdu and Chongqing, in Sichuan province, which help transfer innovative businesses to central and western parts of China.

Outside of China, he has visited enterprises in India and Singapore, to make a comparison and get a broader perspective.



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CLAIRE-JULIETTE BEALE
PARTNER AND CO-FOUNDER OF TOUCH
360

"I believe that, after my book is published, European stereotypes on China — for example, that there is no creativity or technology — will change. And more foreign capital will be attracted to China," Seifert added.

"And I'm sure that more young, talented people will come to work in the HSP and in creative industries. And more creative companies or independent brands similar to Baidu, Tencent or Vant will appear."

Zhang, the management head, called this an important opportunity for HSP to get itself on foreigners' lists of good places to visit in Asia, which will increase communication.

In fact, HSP's cooperation with Seifert is just one part of its larger "iBridge" strategy, to improve cooperation with other parts of the world.

In March 2011, Robert Burns, the vice-president of Lux Research Inc, an independent research and advisory firm providing strategic advice on emerging technologies, visited HSP and decided to cooperate, immediately afterwards.

In following up, Burns sent three groups of Lux staff members to HSP, in one month, to arrange ways to cooperate.

In 2006, HSP cooperated with Hong Kong Phoenix TV's European channel to show its development to the outside, as a way to demonstrate iBridge's effectiveness, officials have said.

Seifert's assistant told China Daily that Seifert is about ready to wrap up his year of Asian research and start writing his book.

In a note of thanks to HSP, he said the park does not just support IT industries, but all sorts of high-tech enterprises and that he was impressed by the effortless support it gives enterprises.

"Any enterprise with innovative thinking can be nurtured in HSP and become a forerunner in its field."

Tongfang has connections with schools and emerging industries

By XIAO XU

A high-tech company in Beijing's Haidian Science Park (HSP) that has been cooperating with Tsinghua (Qinghua) University, one of China's top schools, is quickly becoming a leader in the information technology industry and related fields.

The Tsinghua Tongfang Company is now, in fact, a brand name and holds nearly 2,000 patents and property rights. By 2010, it had 24.8 billion yuan (\$3.88 billion) in assets and sales of more than 18 billion yuan.

In November 2008, the company was selected as one of the world's top 500 brands.

Its name comes from a famous sentence in the Book of Rites — one of the five Confucian classics — referring to a place where those with similar ambitions and social sense gather.

Also, there is a Tong Fang department on the Tsinghua campus, in one of the oldest buildings, which is used for the

annual Confucius memorial ceremony every Aug 27.

These days, Tongfang is making full use of its close relations with the university to use its intellectual resources to back the company's research and development ambitions.

It has collaborated with Tsinghua to establish two other companies: Tongfang Nuctech Co and Tongfang Microelectronics.

Nuctech has become one of the world's largest security inspection product manufacturers and security solutions supplier, with a 70-percent market share globally, according to the company.

Meanwhile, Chinese government has approved Tongfang Microelectronics as a major specialized chip supplier for its second generation identity cards. The company has sold over 800 million of the chips.

The government has said that, for the beginning of China's 12th Five-Year-Plan, this year, it will develop seven strategic

emerging industries, all of which Tongfang has connections with.

In the energy-saving, environmental-protection sector, Tongfang's methods for dealing with waste water, gas, and coal ash, and recycling energy are among the world's most advanced.

Its heating-network technology covers half of the China market and it is working on combining intelligent computer controls with "green lighting" to cut energy use and cost.

The company's executives have said they have enough preparation in emerging fields such as waste incineration and "are just waiting for the proper policy".

Tongfang was also one of the first Chinese companies to embrace "the Internet of things" concept — a network of Internet-enabled objects and the web servers that interact with them. The Internet of Things is driven by technology such as RFID (radio frequency identification), sensors, and smart phones.



Tsinghua Tongfang Co's HQ in the Haidian Science Park

In other major industrial segments, such as the military or satellite communications, Tongfang has become a world leader.

It is also involved in the new energy sector and new energy vehicles and, during the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, cooperated with CNPC, China's largest oil and gas supplier, in building refueling stations for the event's hydrogen vehicles.

The company has

explained that its overall development is closely related to the HSP and its support through favorable tax and other policies.

In addition, HSP has helped a lot by introducing intellectuals and promoting the company's image.

It said that HSP's innovative ideas accord with Tongfang's values in "technology, innovation and trust," which have helped the company grow bigger and stronger.