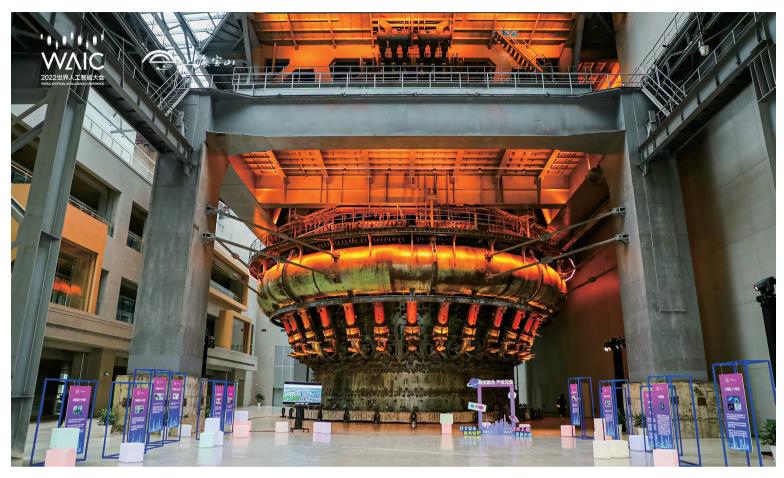A former plant of China Baowu Steel Group featuring an old furnace has been converted into an exhibition center, which hosted a sub-forum of WAIC. — Ti Gong

Metaverse a new focus to reshape city, industries and people's lives in future

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> Metacity is the core of the metaverse, where we can use imagination to drive the creativity of the real city, while the construction in the real city can also bring more opportunities to the metacity.
>
> **Wu Zhiqiang**
> Member of the Chinese Academy of Engineering

Yang Jian

As a female customer enters an unmanned Watson convenient store, an AI system quickly recognizes her and recommends her favorite snacks and lipsticks, which she can pay for with her smartphone.

At a local steel production line, flames of more than 1,000 degrees Celsius roar from a furnace, while an engineer is closely watching and controlling the manufacturing process via a digital-twin plant from his air-conditioned office.

A cargo ship carrying 80,000 tons of sugar sails off from Brazil to China, and a system based on "cloud native" technology immediately predicts the weather during the voyage, the traces of other passing ships and how the shipment of products would impact the global economy.

These were several of the many examples displayed at the World Artificial Intelligence Conference (WAIC) 2022 in Shanghai last week about how the metaverse will reshape people's lives, as well as urban operations and various industries.

The metaverse is a network of 3D virtual worlds focused on social connection. The term originated from Neal Stephenson's 1992 science fiction novel "Snow Crash," where humans interact with each other in a 3D virtual space.

Based on the concept, a metacity will become an updated version of the "digital city" and an inevitable tendency of the future urban development, according to the 2022 International AI City Forum on the sidelines of the WAIC.

"Metacity is the core of the metaverse, where we can use imagination to drive the creativity of the real city, while the construction in the real city can also bring more opportunities to the metacity," explained Wu Zhiqiang, a member of the Chinese Academy of Engineering.

Scientists and officials from Finland, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States shared their latest visions on the metacity, with domestic officials and experts at the forum.

Wu released the world's first City IQ index to measure the intelligence standard of 500 cities in 116 countries on smart ecology, government services, economy, infrastructure and innovative talent.

London tops the City IQ ranking, followed by Paris and Tokyo. Shanghai ranks 12th after other Chinese cities such as Shenzhen (fourth), Beijing (fifth), Hong Kong (eighth) and Guangzhou (ninth).

To further improve its intelligence standard, Shanghai launched an Artificial Intelligence Social Governance Collaborative Innovation Center in Yangpu District on Friday.