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COMMUNIQUE

12TH DIGITAL AFRICA CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION 2024

THEME

Quantum AI and
Implications for Africa



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12TH EDITION

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CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION 2024**

**THEME:
QUANTUM AI & IMPLICATIONS FOR AFRICA**

**3RD-4TH SEPTEMBER 2024
BANQUET HALL, MERIT HOUSE, ABUJA**

PREAMBLE

The 12th Digital Africa Conference and Exhibition, hosted by Digital Africa Global Consult Limited (DAGC), took place from September 3rd to 4th, 2024, in Abuja, Nigeria. Themed "Quantum AI & Its Implications for Africa," the event attracted over 300 physical participants and over 200 virtual attendees.

OPENING CEREMONY

Looking at the current state of information technology devices, which include landlines, cellphones, smartphones, traditional computers, laptops, mainframes, and even supercomputers, we can see that each generation of these devices computes in binary numbers, either 0 or 1. However, a quantum computer can calculate both 0 and 1, as well as everything that comes before 0 and anything that comes after 1, thus it is not confined to processing only 0 or 1.

What it could take a supercomputer to compute certainly in millions or billions of years, a quantum computer can do it in seconds or minutes. When we consider this, we have to agree that as a technology it is too significant to be disregarded. Africa needs to be aware of the new technology and make sure that we contribute to and incorporate ourselves in its progress.

It is conceivable that as a quantum computer is capable of computing in nanoseconds it would be able to resolve issues in healthcare, research, education, planning, weather, and other fields where humans are presently unable to find solutions, therefore alleviating the enormous poverty that befalls humanity.

By ensuring that our universities, organizations, and other educational institutions proclaim and impart quantum computing knowledge to our students and stakeholders, we can contribute to its progress. Additionally, modern students have to broaden their horizons by studying artificial intelligence and quantum computing in addition to classical computers.

THE CONFERENCE THEME

The conference aimed to highlight the transformative potential of quantum AI in Africa, encourage cross-continental collaboration, and outline strategies for accelerating technological development across various sectors.



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE CONFERENCE

1. The Conference acknowledges Quantum AI is the future based on the potential it possesses. Some of what a quantum AI system can solve in seconds it will take today's supercomputer billions of years to solve. With these tremendous abilities, the conference outlined the benefit of quantum AI and how it can improve the growth of Africa.

Quantum AI's Role in Africa's Development

Quantum AI, with its ability to solve complex problems in seconds, was identified as a revolutionary tool for sectors such as healthcare, education, agriculture, and infrastructure. For Africa to harness this power, it is necessary to invest tremendously and actively participate in the development of quantum AI technology in Africa.

2. The Conference elaborates on how Artificial Intelligence can engender Workforce Transformation

AI was described as a force that will alter the nature of work, not eliminate it. Participants emphasized the importance of equipping the workforce with AI-related skills to ensure African nations can thrive in the global digital economy.

3. The Conference notes the Importance of Education in AI and Quantum Computing

Integrating AI and quantum computing into Africa's education systems is crucial. From primary to tertiary levels, the next generation should be trained to meet the demands of a tech-driven future.

At the end of the 2-day conference and exhibition, the conference agreed to and adopted the following as the communique for the 12th edition of Digital Africa

1. Substantial Investment in ICT Infrastructure

African governments should make significant investments in digital infrastructure to support quantum AI and related technologies. This includes expanding access to high-speed internet, reliable power supply, and data storage facilities, especially in underserved regions. Adequate infrastructure is essential to enable Africa to compete globally in the field of emerging technologies.

2. Comprehensive Legislative and Policy Frameworks

Governments across Africa must enact progressive legislation that fosters technological innovation. Policies should support AI research and development, promote private-sector involvement, and ensure robust protection for data privacy and security. Establishing ethical frameworks for AI deployment will prevent misuse and safeguard against issues like data breaches and algorithmic biases.

3. Prioritizing Education and Skills Development

Education systems across the continent must be reformed to include AI and quantum computing in their curricula at all levels. Governments should introduce AI-related courses in secondary schools and universities, while also establishing vocational training programs to upskill the current workforce. By preparing students with AI and tech-related knowledge, Africa can build a strong foundation for future technological leaders.

4. Strengthening Public-Private Partnerships for Innovation

To drive growth in AI and quantum computing, collaboration between the public and private sectors is vital. Governments should work closely with private enterprises to establish innovation hubs and AI research centers. These partnerships can accelerate the commercialization of AI technologies and foster an environment conducive to technological advancements across various sectors, including healthcare, agriculture, and finance.

5. Promoting Inclusive and Ethical AI Development

Africa must develop AI technologies that are ethical and inclusive, ensuring they meet the continent's specific social and economic needs. This includes creating AI systems that promote fairness and equity, while actively working to reduce biases in AI algorithms. Furthermore, a unified data protection and governance framework should be established across African nations to ensure data sovereignty and mitigate the risks of digital colonialism.

6. Fostering Collaboration Across African Nations

The development of a pan-African technological ecosystem is crucial for the continent's success in AI and quantum computing. African countries must collaborate on research, data-sharing, and policy development to overcome challenges such as data scarcity and infrastructure gaps. This collaborative approach will allow Africa to leverage collective resources and knowledge, increasing its competitiveness on the global stage.

7. Boosting Research and Innovation Funding

To ensure that Africa remains at the forefront of technological advancements, governments and private entities must allocate substantial funding for research and development in AI, quantum computing, and other emerging technologies. By supporting innovation, Africa can develop homegrown solutions that address local challenges and drive sustainable growth.

8. Developing AI-Centric Solutions for Socioeconomic Challenges

African nations should focus on creating AI-based solutions tailored to address pressing issues such as healthcare accessibility, agricultural productivity, and financial inclusion. AI applications in areas like

telemedicine, precision farming, and fintech can help overcome infrastructural barriers and provide services to underserved populations, ultimately improving the quality of life across the continent.

9. Creating AI-Specific Regulatory Bodies

Governments across Africa should establish regulatory bodies specifically tasked with overseeing AI developments. These bodies would ensure that AI technologies are deployed ethically, transparently, and in line with national development goals. Additionally, they can facilitate international partnerships, ensuring that Africa remains at the forefront of global AI advancements while adhering to global standards and best practices.

10. Addressing Energy and Connectivity Challenges

Since the widespread adoption of AI and quantum computing requires consistent power and reliable internet connectivity, governments should prioritize sustainable energy solutions, including the use of solar and renewable energy sources. These initiatives will not only support the growth of AI technologies but also help mitigate the broader challenge of unreliable power in many parts of Africa.

11. Empowering Local Entrepreneurs and Start-Ups

By creating an enabling environment for tech start-ups and entrepreneurs, Africa can unlock innovative AI solutions tailored to local challenges. Governments should offer grants, subsidies, and incentives to support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that are working on AI-based technologies. Establishing local incubators and accelerators can also help nurture talent and foster a vibrant tech ecosystem.

12. Encouraging Cross-Industry AI Applications

AI's potential spans multiple industries, from agriculture and healthcare to energy and finance. African nations should encourage the use of AI across these sectors to enhance productivity, efficiency, and sustainability. For example, AI can optimize energy grids, improve crop yields through precision farming, and provide scalable solutions for financial services to reach underserved communities.

13. Establishing International Partnerships for AI Development

Africa should actively seek international partnerships with leading tech nations, research institutions, and global organizations to enhance AI and quantum computing capabilities. Such collaborations can provide access to cutting-edge technologies, shared research, and global best practices, enabling Africa to stay ahead in the rapidly evolving tech landscape.

14. Promoting Public Awareness and Digital Literacy

To ensure widespread adoption and understanding of AI technologies, African governments and organizations should invest in public awareness campaigns. These initiatives should focus on educating the general population about the benefits of AI, addressing concerns regarding job displacement, and promoting digital literacy at all levels of society.

15. Fostering AI Talent and Reducing Brain Drain

To address the talent gap, African countries should implement policies that encourage the retention of skilled professionals within the continent. Governments and institutions should offer competitive salaries, research opportunities, and career growth prospects to prevent brain drain and attract global AI talent back to Africa.

CONCLUSION

The 12th Digital Africa Conference underscored the tremendous potential of quantum AI to accelerate Africa's development. However, achieving these goals requires immediate action in the areas of infrastructure, education, and cross-border collaboration. Africa must seize this moment to secure its position in the evolving global technological landscape.

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