

Alibaba Introduces Its First AI Chip

[Chinese tech titan Alibaba Group](#) has [introduced](#) its Hanguang 800 - the first homegrown high performance AI interference chip - as it seeks to adopt more artificial intelligence and aims for digital efficiency. The announcement was made today during Alibaba Cloud's annual Apsara Computing Conference in Hangzhou.

The chip was created by T-Head, the unit that leads the development of chips for edge and cloud computing within DAMO Academy, Alibaba's global research institute. [As revenues of the global AI chip market are estimated to grow to \\$10.14 billion](#), Alibaba has strategically entered a lucrative sector. According to research firm Canalys, Alibaba towers over cloud computing rivals in China, commanding 47% of the market for cloud infrastructure services in the first quarter of 2019.

The corporation's foray into the chip sector comes amid efforts by Beijing to promote China's semiconductor industry and reduce the country's reliance on foreign imports of core technologies. The launch of Hanguang 800 follows that of Ascend 910, Huawei's AI semiconductor chip, announced last month, which is aimed at data centers. The capital city labeled semiconductors as a critical part of the "Made in China 2025" vision - a government plan developed to boost the production of higher-value products. [China aims to produce 40% of the semiconductors it uses by 2020](#).

The company's first self-developed AI chip is currently being used within Alibaba to power product search, automatic translation, and personalized recommendations on Chinese e-commerce websites. Alibaba claims that the Hanguang 800 chip is able to cut tedious tasks that would normally take an hour, down to just five minutes.

"The launch of Hanguang 800 is an important step in our pursuit of next-generation technologies, boosting computing capabilities that will drive both our current and emerging businesses while improving energy-efficiency," Alibaba CTO Jeff Zhang said in a statement. Zhang was responsible for leading the DAMO Academy when it was first established in 2017.

Although Alibaba hasn't disclosed a timeline on when the chip will be available to its cloud customers, the chip may help Chinese firms reduce their dependency on U.S. technology as the trade war makes business partnerships between Chinese and American tech companies tougher.

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