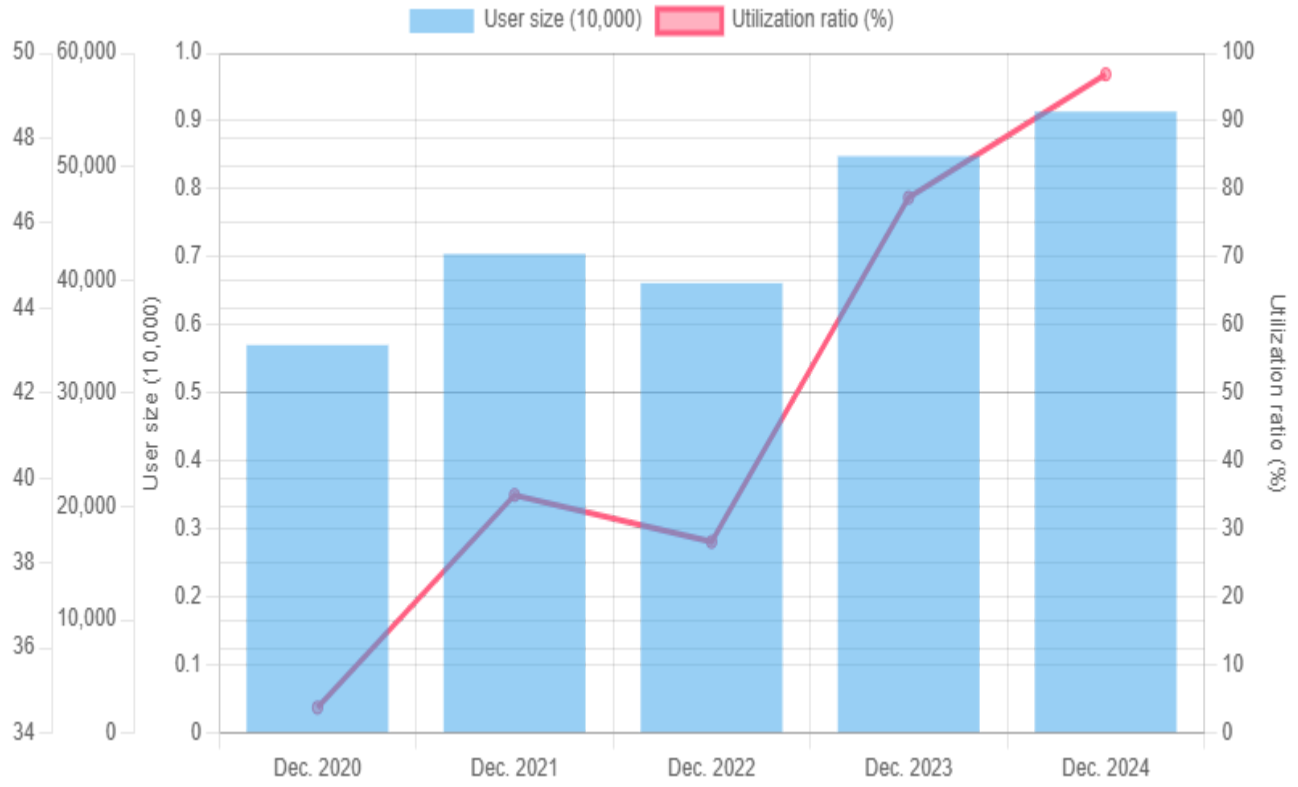
Chapter 4 - Culture, Tourism and Entertainment Applications

Online Travel Booking

By December 2024, China had **548 million** online travel booking users, an increase of **39.35 million** from December 2023, representing **49.5%** of all netizens.

Figure 28 User Size and Utilisation Ratio of Online Travel Booking from Dec. 2020 to Dec. 2024



Left axis: User size (10,000 persons). Right axis: Utilization ratio (% of all Internet users).

Source: Statistical Survey on China's Internet Development, CNNIC, December 2024.

In 2024, China's tourism industry experienced strong momentum in its recovery, with rapid growth and enhanced quality, becoming a highlight of economic and social development. AI, virtual reality, and other technologies have been applied rapidly, enabling high-quality development in culture and tourism. The deep integration of digital and real economy has become a new trend in tourism consumption.

New scenarios have been built around content and experience, fostering the integration of culture and tourism. First, tourist highlights have appeared in succession. In response to increasing consumer demand, the tourism industry has diversified. Tianshui Malatang, a type of Chinese street food, blue Pingtan luminous seaweed, and other niche tourism specialities have become new attractions. “Going to a city for a concert” and “small counties are more cost-effective than big cities” have emerged as new ideas for culture, recreation and tourism.

According to data 67, there were 4.237 billion domestic trips in the first three quarters of 2024, up 15.3% year-on-year. Domestic tourists spent a total of RMB 4.35 trillion, up 17.9% year-on-year, and Tianshui Malatang contributed to a more vibrant cultural and tourism market. From January to September, Tianshui recorded year-on-year growth of more than 25% in cumulative tourist numbers and tourism revenue 68.

During the National Day holiday, the number of national business performances increased by 14.5% year-on-year, and box office revenue grew by 25.9% on a year-on-year basis; audience attendance grew by 13.3% compared with the previous year[69]; and Ctrip county tour orders were up by 20% year-on-year[70].

Second, the integration of culture and tourism has brought about new vitality. Local governments have fully leveraged the spread effect of short videos, live streaming, and online games to showcase culture, cuisine, attractions, and other features comprehensively, create new cultural and tourism cards, and drive the development of the artistic and tourism industry and the broader economy.

Since the release of the domestic game *Black Myth: Wukong*, Shanxi, the central location of the game’s scenes, has seen a rapid rise in attention and has become one of the most popular tourist destinations. The Shanxi Provincial Culture and Tourism Department has turned the online game craze into an offline tourism craze by launching corresponding tourism products, disseminating information on social media, and creating peripheral cultural products. In the first three days of the National Day holiday, the booking volume of tour orders in Shanxi Province increased by 63% and the booking amount grew by 171% compared with the Mid-Autumn Festival[71].

Third, immersive experiences have become a new highlight of tourism. AI, augmented reality (AR), and virtual reality (VR) have been increasingly applied in

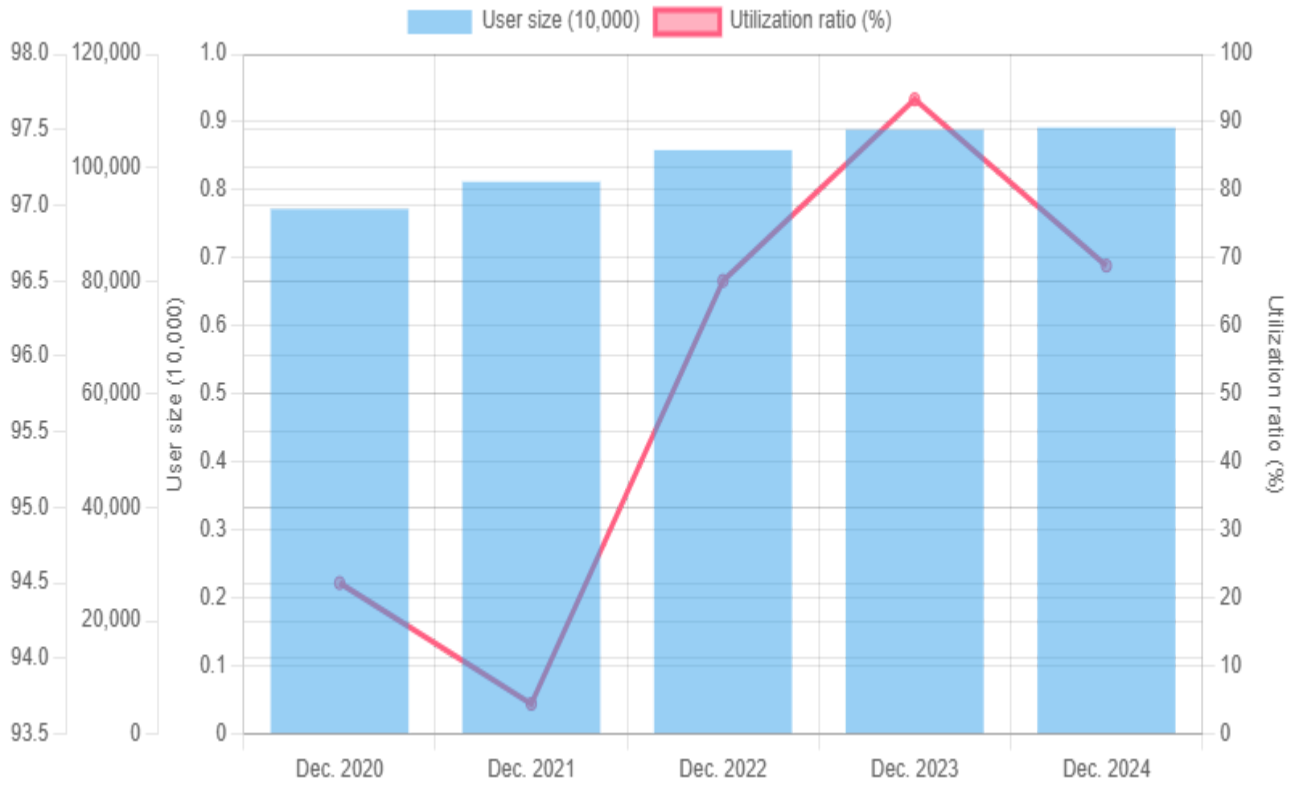
culture and tourism, offering new experiences to tourists. The Colourful Grotto Art Immersion Experience Exhibit by the National Museum of China has provided a new interpretation of grotto art. The 5G Immersive Experience Zone of the Grand Canal has become the most popular attraction in the Yangzhou-based museum in Jiangsu Province. The Chaozhou Hanbi Pavilion has introduced VR and AR to reconstruct historical scenes and present “red stories” more vividly.

According to the data, the first 42 new immersion experience locations attracted more than 4.3 million consumers during the May Day holidays, with total consumption exceeding RMB 220 million 72.

Online Video and Live Streaming in China

As of December 2024, the number of online video users had reached **1,070 million**, an increase of **3.47 million** from December 2023, accounting for **96.6%** of all Internet users. The number of short video users was 1,040 million, accounting for 93.8% of all Internet users.

Figure 29 User Size and Utilisation Ratio of Online Video from Dec. 2020 to Dec. 2024

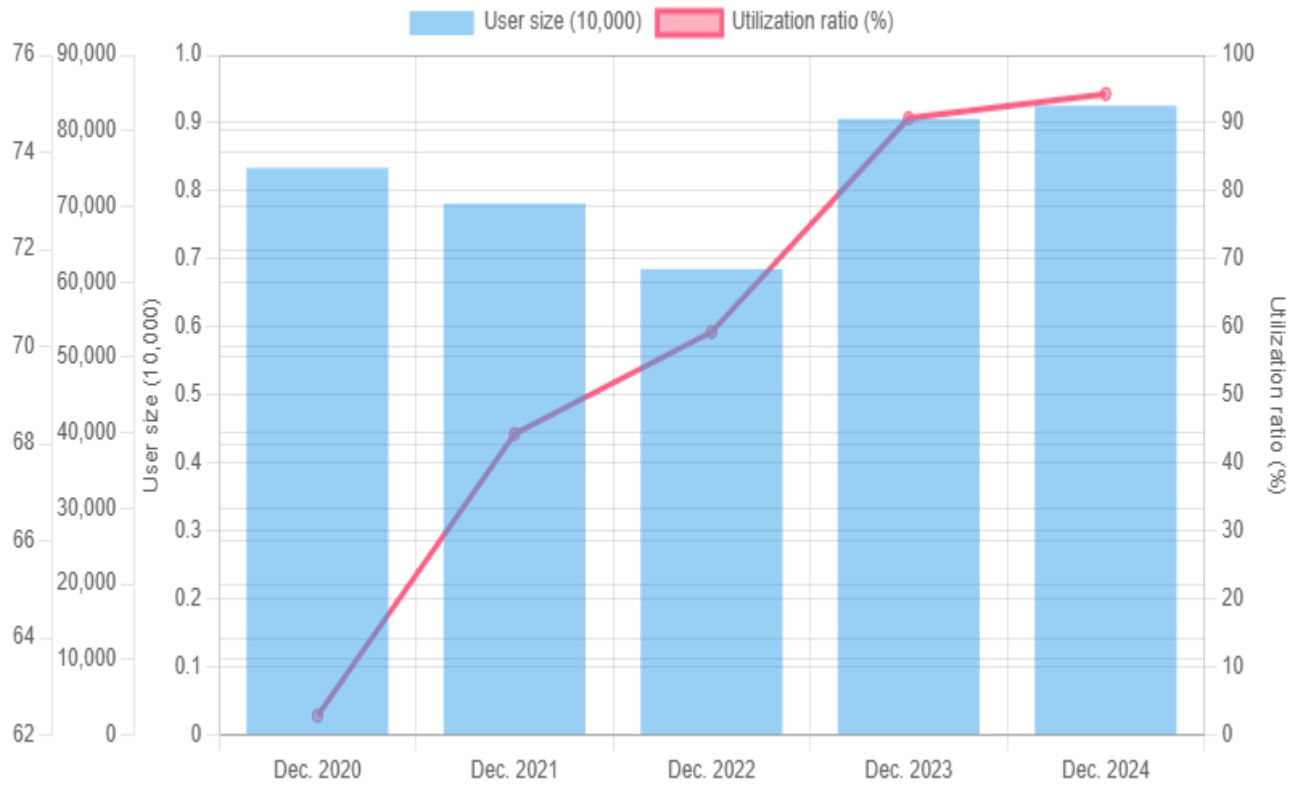


Left axis: User size (10,000 persons). Right axis: Utilization ratio (% of all Internet users).

Source: Statistical Survey on China’s Internet Development, CNNIC, December 2024.

By December 2024, the number of live-streaming users was 833 million, an increase of 17.37 million from December 2023, representing 75.2% of all internet users.

Figure 30 User Size and Utilisation Ratio of Live Streaming from Dec. 2020 to Dec. 2024



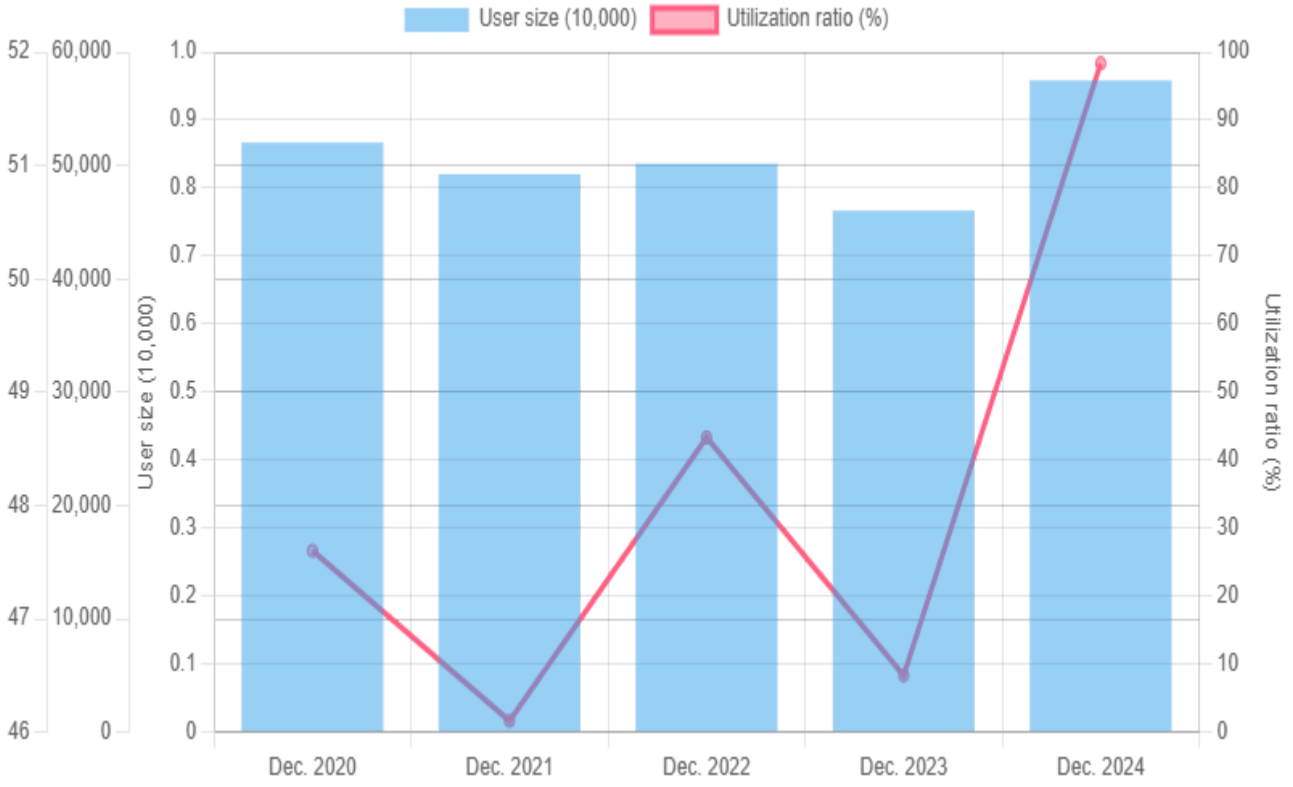
Left axis: User size (10,000 persons). Right axis: Utilization ratio (% of all Internet users).

Source: Statistical Survey on China's Internet Development, CNNIC, December 2024.

Online Literature and Micro Dramas In China

As of December 2024, the number of online literature users was 575 million, an increase of 54.74 million from December 2023, accounting for 51.9% of all internet users.

Figure 31 User Size and Utilisation Ratio of Online Literature from Dec. 2020 to Dec. 2024



Left axis: User size (10,000 persons). Right axis: Utilization ratio (% of all Internet users).

Source: Statistical Survey on China's Internet Development, CNNIC, December 2024.

By December 2024, China had **662 million** micro drama users, accounting for **59.7%** of all netizens. First, high quality has become the development direction of the micro drama industry. China's National Radio and Television Administration has collaborated with all parties to promote the micro-drama industry toward excellence, creativity, and scale-up.

The programs Travelling with Micro Drama, Viewing China in Micro Dramas, and A Look at Brands in Micro Dramas have been launched in succession to foster a co-growing, open, and inclusive micro drama industry ecosystem.

Second, a variety of platforms have entered the micro-drama industry. From short video platforms, traditional film and television companies, and online literature platforms to long video platforms, television stations, and e-commerce platforms, many players have entered the micro dramas field in an effort to turn micro dramas into a key driver of revenue growth.

For example, the e-commerce platform Taobao launched a short drama theatre on its secondary page. Pinduoduo has released micro-drama episodes covering a variety of genres and are accompanied by product links. In April, JD announced

that it had invested RMB 1 billion and 1 billion bytes of traffic as incentives to attract more original creators of micro dramas and high-quality content organisations.

AI Empowering Culture, Tourism and Entertainment In China

AI technologies have created new opportunities for the culture, tourism, and entertainment industries. In the online video, game, live streaming, literature, and other cultural and recreational industries, AI technologies have been applied across business scenarios to improve content quality and enhance commercialisation.

In online video, AI technologies have been applied to content planning, production, distribution, personalised recommendation and online marketing. For example, the video generation model Kling AI has more than 6 million users who have generated over 65 million videos and more than 175 million pictures[73].

In the first half of the year, nearly 20,000 merchants realised smart operation with a large model on the Kuaishou platform. In the second quarter, Kuaishou e-commerce's total transaction amount for searched-for goods increased by over 80% year-on-year following the introduction of a large recommendation model that improved the ability to recognise users' shopping intentions 74.

In the online literature, AI technologies have become a new engine of development. First, AI-assisted creative writing has inspired online literary authors. Based on the natural language processing capabilities of large models, creators can use AI to assist with framework construction, cue organisation, character setting, and scene description.

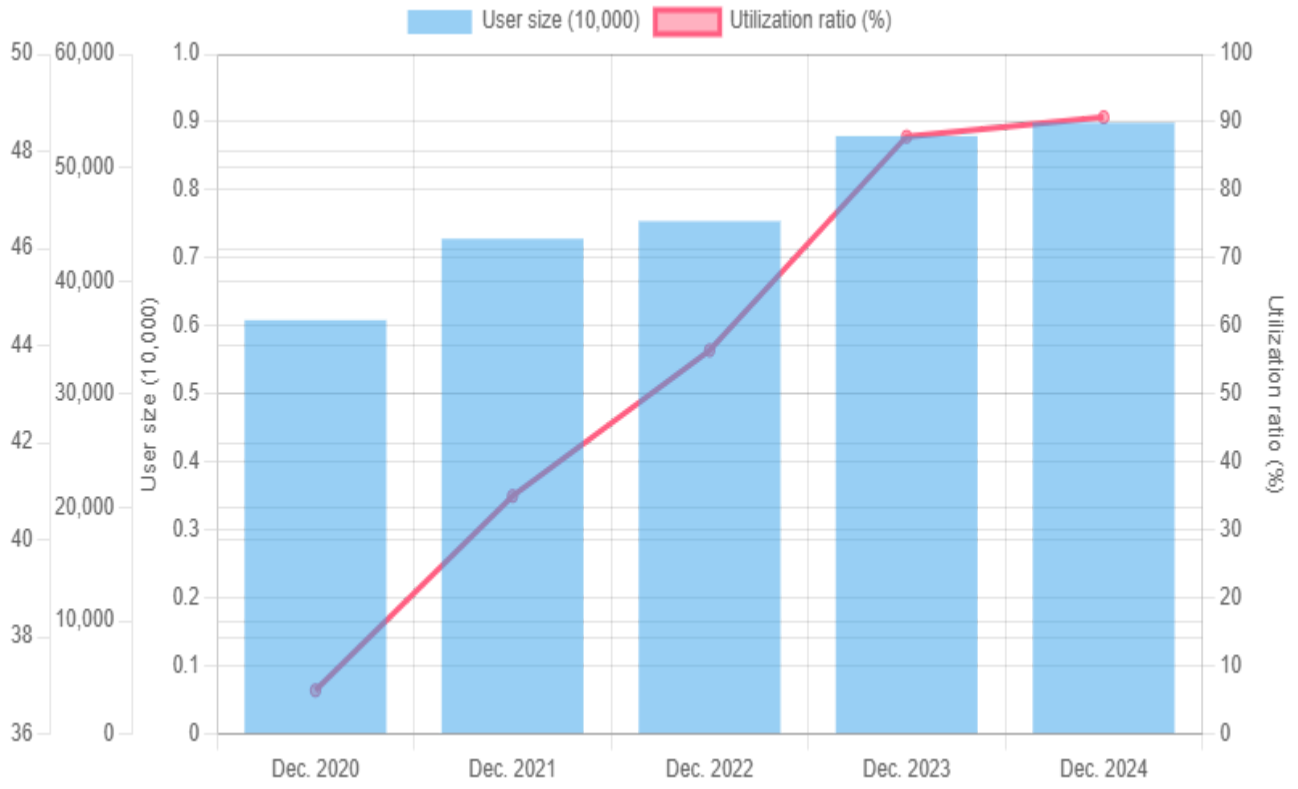
Second, the translation process has been optimised, making it possible for works to be translated and updated efficiently and distributed overseas. With the help of AI, translation efficiency has been significantly improved, the volume of translation has increased, and translation costs have been reduced, making it easier for overseas readers to access domestic online literary works.

Public Service Applications in China

Online Car-Hailing Services in China

As of December 2024, the number of car-hailing users was 539 million, an increase of 11.80 million from December 2023, accounting for 48.7% of all internet users.

Figure 32 User Size and Utilisation Ratio of Online Car-Hailing Services from Dec. 2020 to Dec. 2024



Left axis: User size (10,000 persons). Right axis: Utilization ratio (% of all Internet users).

Source: Statistical Survey on China's Internet Development, CNNIC, December 2024.

Under continued policy guidance in 2024, enterprises specialising in industries such as online car-hailing, Internet healthcare and online education were empowered by digital technologies. Through the practice of digital-real integration, they have better met the needs of specific groups, enhanced the accessibility and universality of services, and delivered convenience and well-being to more people.

The online car-hailing industry has contributed to green and low-carbon travel and significantly enhanced elderly-friendly travel services.

First, green and low-carbon travel has been steadily developing. Platforms and enterprises have built up the power-exchange business for new energy vehicles. In January, Didi and Contemporary Amperex Technology Co. Limited (CATL) established a joint venture to provide power-exchange services for new-energy vehicles, particularly for online car-hailing scenarios.

In May, CaoCao Inc. deployed vehicles with 60-second customised power exchange in Jinan and Rizhao to promote the development of Shandong's new energy car-hailing ecosystem. For users, the frequent use of travel models such as ride-sharing has driven more efficient use of vehicle resources. In the first half of the year, the overall transaction volume of Didachuxing's ride-sharing services reached RMB 4.007 billion, with an order volume of 61.7 million[75].

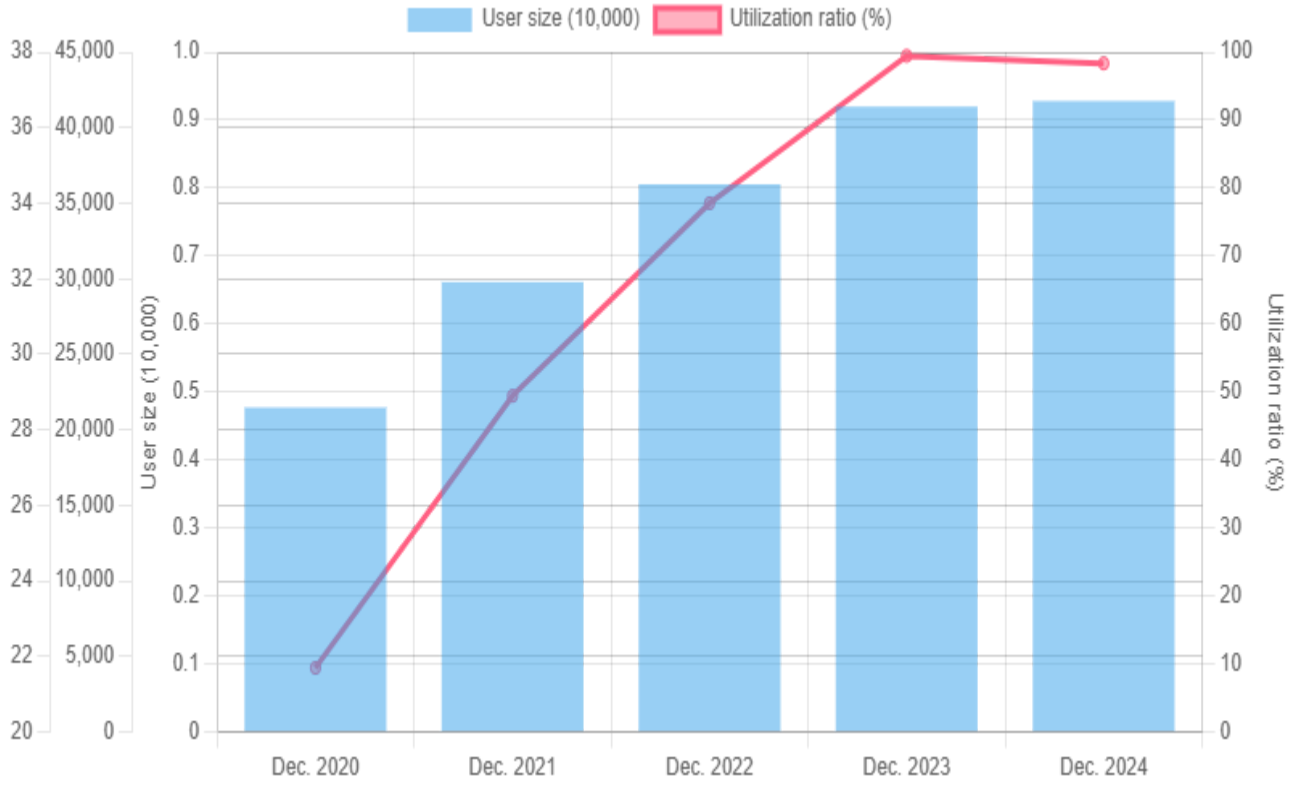
Second, platforms' services for older people have improved, and the threshold for online car-hailing among older adults has been lowered. By December, the utilisation rate of online car-hailing for seniors aged 60 and above reached 24.6%, with a user size of 38.49 million. By the end of September, Didi had provided 197 million trips to 6.24 million seniors in 355 cities[76].

Meanwhile, the one-key car-hailing service is available in 325 cities, significantly improving response efficiency for elderly users. More than 150 million orders[77] have been made to serve 15.43 million elderly passengers. In October, Didi upgraded its car-hailing services for older people, not only by optimising online services and functions, but also by increasing the number of offline car-hailing stops for older people.

Internet Healthcare in China

As of December 2024, China had **418 million** Internet healthcare users, an increase of 3.72 million from December 2023, accounting for **37.7%** of all netizens.

Figure 33 User Size and Utilisation Ratio of Internet Healthcare from Dec. 2020 to Dec. 2024



Left axis: User size (10,000 persons). Right axis: Utilization ratio (% of all Internet users).

Source: Statistical Survey on China's Internet Development, CNNIC, December 2024.

The development potential of the Internet healthcare industry has been further realised. In June, the General Office of the State Council issued the *Key Tasks for Deepening the Reform of the Medical and Health System 2024*, which focuses on the coordinated development and governance of health insurance, medical care, and medicine.

With the adoption of large-scale medical models and the expansion of online medical purchases through medical insurance, Internet healthcare services have been significantly enhanced.

First, Internet medical services have been further developed and widely utilised. At present, 3,340 Internet hospitals across the country provide Internet diagnosis and treatment services for more than 100 million visits per year 78, of which the average daily online consultation volume at JD Health Internet Hospital was more than 480,000 79.

Second, medicines have been purchased via online medical insurance to meet patients' needs. Online medicine purchases, medical insurance payments, and

instant delivery not only further ease the burden of purchasing medicines but also significantly enhance convenience.

Since July, Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzhen have promoted the implementation of medicine purchase services through online medical insurance. People can use their health insurance accounts to purchase medicines in nearly 500 pharmacies[80] in 16 administrative districts and economic development zones of Beijing.

More than 1,000 pharmacies in Shanghai have joined the online health insurance program for the purchase of medicines and have completed settlements for about 2,047,000 people[81].

Third, large models help improve the quality and efficiency of online diagnostic and treatment services. In June, Ping An Health released “Ping An Doctor Aid”, a multimodal medical model designed to assist in generating patients’ health records and provide medical knowledge. In August, JD Health released the “Beijing Doctor Consulting” model, which helped make remote medical treatment more intelligent by giving medical advice and diagnosis.

Online Education in China

The strengths of online education platforms have continued to emerge, promoting educational fairness and universality. By December 2024, China had **355 million** online education users, accounting for **32.0%** of all netizens.

First, the channels of “learning for all” have been widened. The number of MOOC courses in China exceeded 76,800, with 1.277 billion views. The country ranked first in the world in online course development and application 82.

Second, rural education has become more equitable and inclusive. For example, the Digital Education Courtyard, built by Beijing Normal University, has relied on the national wisdom education platform for primary and secondary schools and has provided strong support for the vitalization of rural education by creating digital curriculum resource packages and enhancing digital education and teaching.

“Wenshu AI Education”, released by China Unicom, aims to provide services for teachers and students in rural areas to narrow the gap between urban and rural education and balance educational resources. As of December, the utilisation rate of online education in China’s rural areas reached 24.0%, with 75.17 million users.

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