

China's 'Useless Edison' combines inventing and the internet, with *hilarious* results

His fans call him "The Useless Edison." But inventor Geng Shuai doesn't mind. In fact, he kind of likes it.

hilarious 欢乐的; 滑稽的

"People say my inventions are useless, but I think there are two dimensions to usefulness: practicality and amusement," said the 30-year-old former *welder*, who left his job last year to focus full time on making his questionable *contraptions*, such as a motorbike with its own toilet. "I like doing this. So it is useful."

welder 焊工

contraption 精巧的设计

Every country has its toolshed inventors. But China --- which gave the world movable type printing, *gunpowder* and the compass --- has *spawned* a population of tinkerers who display the kind of outsize ambition that has helped the country become a global economic giant.

gunpowder 火药

spawn 产生; 酿成

Geng may now be the best-known among them --- a new kind of social media star whose calling card is his *quirkiness*.

quirkiness 离奇; 古怪

He makes a living through *inadvertently* hilarious videos --- filmed with the Chinese beauty filters that make everyone look like an airbrushed star --- in which he shows how he makes his inventions and then ham it up for the camera as he demonstrates how to use them.

inadvertently 不故意地; 不经意间

He now has almost 2 million followers on the video site Kwai, and they give him mobile phone "tips" for his performances --- the internet equivalent of a *busker* getting cash dropped in

a hat. His biggest *tippers* get their names on plaques on the wall in his workshop, which is often the set for his videos. The bigger the tip, the bigger the plaque.

busker 街头艺人

tipper 打赏者

Now, his fans are encouraging him to push the boundaries. Some threaten to stop following him if he dares make anything that is actually practical.