The elderly are the next big growth market for Chinese tech firms

Soon after dinnertime, Xiangyang Park in central Shanghai transforms into a ***ballroom***. ***Loudspeakers*** pump out old pop songs as elderly folk ***sway*** under the plane trees. A picture of ***geriatric nostalgia*** — until you meet Ms Shi and Mr Zhou, a couple in their 70s whose enthusiasm for the ***waltz*** is matched only by that for their smartphones. "I can go without food, but not without my smartphone, " Ms Shi ***confesses***.

ballroom 舞厅	loudspeaker 扬声器
sway 摇摆；影响	geriatric 老年的
nostalgia 乡愁；怀念	waltz 华尔兹
confess 承认；坦白	

She and her husband remain unusual. Less than one in three Chinese over 50 reported owning a smartphone in 2016, the latest year for which the Pew Research Centre, a think-tank, has data, half the share in America.

Tech companies want to lure more Ms Shis and Mr Zhous online. To tech firms, the disconnectedness of China's 250m-odd old, or 18% of the population, is an opportunity. Unlike the young, whose fragmented attention is fought over by thousands of apps, ***retirees*** are up for ***grabs***.

retiree 退休人员	grab 夺取

And once on the internet, they ***splurge***. In 2017 JD.com, a big e-commerce firm, found that they spent 2.3 times as much as the average user. Their typical ***deposit*** in Yu'E Bao, an online cash-management service controlled by Alibaba, a giant internet firm, is 7, 000 yuan compared with 4, 000 yuan across all ages.

splurge 挥霍	deposit 存款；沉淀

The big generalists hope to lock the oldies in early. People over 55 are now WeChat's fastest-growing ***cohort***. Ele.me, a food-delivery service, is trialling meal and medicine deliveries

for the elderly, and ***one-off*** help with things like changing light bulbs. With the over-60s' share of the population expected to double to one-third by 2050, there is wisdom in this strategy.

cohort　一群；队　　　　　　　　one-off　一次性的