

《电商巨头京东下乡》

????????

Shopping websites have brought their competition to rural areas, where the walls of buildings have become advertising battlegrounds for the country's leading e-commerce companies.

Newly Nasdaq-listed JD.com Inc, China's second-largest e-shopping website, wowed the public this week after posting two photos on Weibo – a Chinese social networking site – to unveil its new strategy for the rural market following years of charming urban customers.

One photo shows the e-shopper's ambition to win the heart of the global high-end market. Its logo is pictured on a huge electronic screen in the heart of New York City's bustling Times Square.

In the other photo, apparently taken in a rural area, a wall is dominated by large advertisement signs. The white Chinese characters painted against a scarlet background read, "Hard work makes you rich, and shopping on JD.com helps you run a thrifty home."

According to data from JD.com, the e-commerce company has coated more than 8,000 walls in more than 145 towns, villages and cities since 2013.

Walls outside residential houses have long been a major place for advertisement in rural areas. In the 1980s and 1990s, the exterior walls were mainly used to publicize China's family-planning policy with red catchphrases and slogans brushed on white walls.

JD.com is not the only e-commerce company to exploit wall advertisements. Its rivals, including Taobao.com – China's largest consumer-to-consumer online marketplace – and Dangdang – China's largest online bookseller – are also in the hunt.

The e-commerce giants have expressed strong intent to explore the rural market, as the less-developed regions are expected to become a new growth point for Internet commerce.

The overall online shopping market in China reported a growth of 50 percent year-on-year in 2013, according to a report released in January by Alibaba Group Holding Ltd, the country's largest e-commerce group. The growth rate of online transactions in counties and villages outpaced that of cities by 13.6 percentage points in the same year.

Apart from those who enjoy shopping online, an increasing number of businessmen in China's rural areas are making a living on the Internet by setting up online stores. The number of online retailers in rural areas jumped from tens of thousands in 2005 to more than one million last year.