



hitchBOT

CANADA'S HITCHHIKING ROBOT PREPARES FOR GERMAN ADVENTURE *hitchBOT to make roundtrip tour of Germany*

TORONTO, ON, January 15, 2015 – Canada's first hitchhiking robot, [hitchBOT](#), will go on a German adventure from February 13th to 22nd participating in tourist activities across the country. Will the chatty robot be met with the same affection it experienced last summer in Canada? Or will hitchBOT receive a different kind of reaction in Germany?

Canadians have already fallen in love with hitchBOT – the tweeting, trivia-loving, wellington-wearing, hitchhiking robot from Port Credit, Ontario. The robot is about as tall as a six-year-old child and weighs no more than 15 pounds. It is wholly dependent on the good will of people, as it cannot move or get around on its own.

In July and August, 2014 hitchBOT charmed its way across Canada, hitching rides along the Trans-Canada highway. This February, it will be shining its wellies for its big adventure in Germany. With the help of its family, hitchBOT has been learning German and looks forward to making new friends.

Its co-creators, Dr. David Harris Smith (McMaster University) and Dr. Frauke Zeller (Ryerson University) originally developed the project to see whether robots can trust humans. Now they are looking forward to their offspring's European adventure.

"We are anxious to learn how hitchBOT gets by on the Autobahn", said Frauke Zeller, "And, who knows, it's always been hitchBOT's dream to referee a German soccer match."

hitchBOT is a very talkative robot, thanks to the Cleverscript speech technology designed to converse with humans. It can answer questions including where it comes from, how to ride a horse, and its interests in astrophysics.

hitchBOT's family consists of a collaborative, interdisciplinary team of researchers from the fields of visual arts, engineering, computer science, and communication. hitchBOT was first conceived in 2013 as a collaborative art project by Dr. David Harris Smith, Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication Studies and Multimedia at McMaster University and Dr. Frauke Zeller, Assistant Professor in the School of Professional Communication at Ryerson University .

Fans are encouraged to follow hitchBOT's journey online on its [website](#) on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#). hitchBOT is also inviting users to share their hitchhiking stories and pictures using #hitchbot on Twitter and Instagram.

hitchBOT's first trip abroad is developed together with the German broadcast channel ProSiebenSat1 and its flagship prime-time edutainment show, Galileo.

For media requests, please contact Johanna VanderMaas (details below).

hitchBOT is an outgoing and charismatic robot that began hitchhiking across Canada in July 2014. In less than four weeks, hitchBOT charmed its way through rides from Halifax, Nova Scotia, to Victoria, B.C. For more information, visit hitchBOT's website at www.hitchbot.me.

***Ryerson University** is Canada's leader in innovative, career-oriented education and a university clearly on the move. With a mission to serve societal need, and a long-standing commitment to engaging its community, Ryerson offers more than 100 undergraduate and graduate programs. Distinctly urban, culturally diverse and inclusive, the university is home to more than 38,000 students, including 2,300 master's and PhD students, nearly 2,700 faculty and staff, and more than 155,000 alumni worldwide. Research at Ryerson is on a trajectory of success and growth: externally funded research has doubled in the past four years. For more information, visit www.ryerson.ca*

***McMaster University**, one of four Canadian universities listed among the Top 100 universities in the world, is renowned for its innovation in both learning and discovery. It has a student population of 23,000, and more than 160,000 alumni in 140 countries. McMaster's core research community is comprised of individuals from around the globe and is constantly rated very highly for its discoveries, quality of research enterprises, excellence of its research programs and the amount of funding it receives from the government. For more information, visit www.mcmaster.ca*

***"Galileo"** is, according to recent polls, the most popular daily edutainment show in German television. Being broadcasted since 1998, the show has up to two million viewers. "Galileo" keeps surprising them with breathtaking events: blasting its old studio, travelling around the planet on regular flights within 70 hours, or visiting the hot center of a volcano. The TV show also provides fascinating facts about everyday life. Where does our food come from? How to blast a building securely? "Galileo" gives all the answers. Helping hitchBOT travel through Germany is the shows newest challenge.*

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