



hitchBOT

hitchBOT TAKES ON AMERICAN HITCHHIKING ADVENTURE, JULY 17

Canadian hitchhiking robot to cross the U.S., relying solely on the kindness of strangers

TORONTO, ON, July 6, 2015 – Canada’s first hitchhiking robot, hitchBOT, begins its next hitchhiking adventure on July 17, traveling across the United States of America one ride at a time from Boston, MA to San Francisco, CA.

In addition to newly shined wellies, the quirky robot will be packing a hitchhiking bucket list, which it hopes to complete with the help of friendly strangers it meets along the way. The list contains a number of places and historic monuments hitchBOT hopes to visit, including Times Square in New York City; Millennium Park in Illinois; Mount Rushmore in South Dakota; and the Grand Canyon in Arizona.

“hitchBOT was very well received as it made its way across Canada, Germany, and the Netherlands – proving that robots can indeed trust humans,” said hitchBOT’s co-creator Professor Frauke Zeller, “and given that hitchBOT is built out of a bucket, we thought it would be only natural if we let it have a bucket list for this exciting new adventure.”

hitchBOT’s good-bye party will take place from 6 to 9 p.m. on Thursday July 16 during the evening party series at the Peabody Essex Museum (PEM) in Salem, MA. Its final destination is the Exploratorium in San Francisco, CA. On Friday, July 17, hitchBOT’s co-creators, Professors Zeller and David Harris Smith, will bid it farewell on an East Coast highway where it will begin its great U.S. hitchhiking adventure by putting up its thumb and asking for a ride.

hitchBOT is an outgoing and charismatic robot that began hitchhiking across Canada in July 2014. In less than four weeks, hitchBOT charmed its way into rides across the country, depending on the help of kind strangers. hitchBOT cannot move by itself, but can converse with humans thanks to Cleverscript speech technology, which allows it to answer questions about where it comes from or its favourite pastimes.

“This trip will be unlike any other, as hitchBOT’s goal is not only to hitchhike across the U.S., but also to visit a number of historic sites and monuments. We’re hoping to see hitchBOT involved in some creative adventures while on the road,” said Harris Smith.

hitchBOT’s family consists of a collaborative, interdisciplinary team of researchers from the fields of visual arts, engineering, computer science, and communication. The project was originally co-designed by Dr. David Harris Smith, Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication Studies and Multimedia at McMaster University (Hamilton), and Dr. Frauke Zeller, Assistant Professor in the School of Professional Communication at Ryerson University (Toronto), to see whether robots could trust humans.

Fans are encouraged to follow hitchBOT’s journey at hitchbot.me and on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#). hitchBOT is also inviting users to share their hitchhiking stories and pictures using #hitchbot on Twitter and Instagram. Members of the media and the public are invited to attend the launch event on July 16 at 6 p.m.

For media requests, please contact Johanna VanderMaas.

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