hitchBOT

hitchBOT Announces start date for Canadian hitchhiking journey

TORONTO, ON. June 13, 2014 – hitchBOT – the hitchhiking, tweeting, trivia-loving robot – will officially start its coast-to-coast journey at the **Institute for Applied Creativity** and the **Anna Leonowens Gallery**, both at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (NSCAD) on July 27, 2014. Members of media and the public are invited to attend this event and send hitchBOT off on its trip from Halifax to Victoria.

Dr. David Harris Smith (McMaster University) and Dr. Frauke Zeller (Ryerson University) first conceived of hitchBOT in 2013 as a collaborative art project. "Usually, we are concerned whether we can trust robots…but this project takes it the other way around and asks: can robots trust human beings?" said Dr. Zeller. "We expect hitchBOT to be charming and trustworthy enough in its conversation to secure rides through Canada."

Other than its one hitchhiking arm, hitchBOT will not be able to move on its own. Dr. David Harris Smith envisions that hitchBOT will look "like somebody has cobbled together odds and ends to make the robot, such as pool noodles, bucket, cake saver, garden gloves, Wellies, and so forth."

Through its AI and User Interface design, including speech recognition and processing, and 3G and wifi connectivity, hitchBOT will know its exact location and can plan its journey from there. Its knowledge is derived from a Wikipedia API, which will assist in its conversations with people.

hitchBOT is currently being assembled by its family of researchers in Toronto and Hamilton.
Fans are encouraged to follow hitchBOT's journey online via:
Twitter: @hitchbot
Instagram: @hitchbot
Facebook: www.facebook.com/hitchbot

For more information, visit hitchBOT's website at www.hitchbot.me

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About hitchBOT

hitchBOT is an outgoing and charismatic robot that will be hitchhiking across Canada starting July 2014. Using artificial intelligence (AI) and user interface (UI) design, including speech recognition, speech processing, and social media and Wikipedia APIs, hitchBOT will charm its way through rides across Canada.

About the Team

hitchBOT is a collaborative art project conceived in 2013 by Dr. David Harris Smith of McMaster University and Dr. Frauke Zeller of Ryerson University, with its primary affiliation being McMaster University. Since then, the family has grown to include researchers from a variety of disciplines, making hitchBOT a truly interdisciplinary project. The team consists of:

Dr. David Harris Smith, Co-creator & Principal Investigator

Assistant Professor, Department of Communication Studies at McMaster University
Dr. Smith teaches courses in Code and Design fundamentals, DIY Media, Avatar Virtual Environments, and New media Arts.

Dr. Frauke Zeller, Co-creator

Assistant Professor, School of Professional Communication at Ryerson University
Dr. Zeller's research interests include human-computer interaction/human-robot interaction, digital communication, organizational communication, and method development for digital research analyses.

Dr. Ebrahim Bagheri, responsible for hitchBOT's world knowledge (Wikipedia API)

Assistant Professor, Department of Electrical Engineering at Ryerson University
Dr. Bagheri's research interests include Reuse Engineering, Product Line Engineering, Semantics-enabled Software and Requirements Engineering Technologies, Software Quality Engineering, and Applications of AI and Knowledge Representing Techniques.

Dr. Frank Rudzicz, responsible for hitchBOT's speech capabilities

Assistant Professor, Department of Computer Science at the University of Toronto
Dr. Rudzicz's work focuses mainly on atypical speech and language, both in people with physical disorders, and in people with cognitive disorders.

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