



hitchBOT

hitchBOT USA TOUR COMES TO AN EARLY END IN PHILADELPHIA

Canadian hitchhiking robot's journey may be over, but the adventure continues

TORONTO, ON, August 5, 2015 – The U.S. trip of Canada's first hitchhiking robot, hitchBOT, came to an end during the early morning hours of August 1 in Philadelphia's Old City. Its journey, which began on July 17 in Marblehead, MA, was intended to take it to the Exploratorium in San Francisco, CA, crossing off bucket list items along the way.

According to social media reports, hitchBOT spent a night out in Philadelphia on Friday, July 31. It was left on a bench in a popular tourist area in the early morning hours of Saturday, August 1, presumably waiting for its next ride. It was then that hitchBOT fell into the wrong hands and was unfortunately destroyed. A fake surveillance video, which showed someone destroying the robot, was subsequently created. The body, which was found by some of hitchBOT's fans, is in the process of being sent back to its family in Canada.

"We are grateful for the responses we've received from friends and fans around the world, all of which have been overwhelmingly supportive and kind," says Dr. Frauke Zeller, assistant professor at Ryerson University and co-creator of hitchBOT. "hitchBOT always relied on the kindness of strangers and it did receive an astounding amount of help and support."

hitchBOT's supporters from across the globe have offered their assistance and support in many ways – from helping to find hitchBOT's missing parts or building a new bot to providing financial support. This outpouring has showed hitchBOT's family how well loved the happy traveler was, and the overwhelming interest in robot-human interaction. At the present time, the researchers have not started or committed to any crowd funding or kickstarter campaigns.

"As researchers, we wanted to know, 'can robots trust humans?' and knew there would always be the possibility that hitchBOT would be damaged or stolen," says Dr. David Harris Smith, assistant professor at McMaster University and hitchBOT co-creator. "Even though it did end badly for hitchBOT, we've learned a lot about human empathy and trust - everything we've learned will be borne out in the resulting research and used in future planning for hitchBOT's adventures."

While hitchBOT's 2015 summer adventure is over, its family is very much looking forward to the future and is currently considering a number of options, including:

- Re-building hitchBOT and sending it back to Philadelphia, where it would continue on its journey in 2016
- Introducing a hitchBOT to schools and allowing school children to devise robot adventures as it travels from school to school

While the family is saddened by the loss of hitchBOT, they do need to return to their human lives – media requests will not be granted after Thursday August 6, 2015.

hitchBOT's family has no interest in pressing charges or in finding the people who vandalized the robot; they wish to remember the good times, and encourage hitchBOT's

friends and fans to do the same. They invite you to share your memories of hitchBOT [here](#).

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