



Paris welcomes robots to upcoming tech and travel conference



PARIS – Robots and the travel industry are the hot topic for the third edition of the Tourism Technology Conference in Paris this December 6. The conference, known as [TOTEC](#), is an annual event that brings together tourism professionals to discuss and showcase the latest technology applicable to the industry. It also serves as a networking event with representatives from major companies including the [Sabre Travel Network](#) who will be on hand to talk to participants.

Tourism is one of the biggest industries in the world, supplying 9.1% of the global GDP according to the [World Travel and Tourism Council](#). A growing portion of these transactions takes place online as travelers rely more and more on the Web, smart phones, and other forms of technology for their journeys. The increasingly important role of technology inspired Frédéric Vanhoutte, founder of TOTEC, to launch his conference. “The idea of TOTEC is to see how we build a bridge between technology or serves and the B2B users, for the final customer benefit,” he said. He launched the event in Paris two years ago with the help of his network in the French capital.

The conference, held the centrally-located Pavillon Cambon Capucines, will welcome tour operators, hotel managers, journalists, and any other tourism professionals that wish to attend. The day's speakers include CEO's and entrepreneurs from major businesses including Microsoft, BNP Paribas, and Google.

The major message of the conference is how to grapple with the ever-changing gadgets, software, and technology that alter tourist's expectations. "If you're not using technology, you miss your audience," Vanhotte said. "The customers are online, the new generation is mobile, so how can any entrepreneur consider developing a business by avoiding being where the customer is?" he said.

In addition to general topics like the Internet and market studies, this year's main theme is the applications of robotic technology in tourism and hospitality services. There will be a speaking robot welcoming the audience, something that Vanhoutte things will be a surprising and unique feature of the conference. Attendees will hear talks and discussions about the potential and philosophical risks and benefits of further developing robots.

Participants can register on the site for free to attend the talks, which will be mostly in French. But English speakers are invited to attend since all presenters will be simultaneously translated into English via headsets. Vanhoutte hopes to take the conference to Montréal, Spain, and Belgium in the future.

Photo: [TOTE](#)

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