



## Tech Talk

### La French Tech at CES 2017©

by John McCarthy



Hi and a very warm welcome once again to Tech Talk. We're dedicating today's programme to La French Tech, best described as a burgeoning community of entrepreneurs, engineers, designers and investors. It's a well-established fact that France produces some of the best engineers in the world and French electronics companies are spoilt for a choice of the finest talents in computer sciences, electronics, mechanics and design. This is highlighted by the strong presence of French start-ups at this year's CES in Las Vegas, over 200 hi-tech ventures eager to display their wares and know-how at the world's largest consumer electronics show. Presidential candidate and self-confessed geek, François Fillon, was present to fly the flag and give a patriotic thumbs-up, explaining that technology and the digital era were the key to future economic growth and prosperity.

There was certainly a vast presence of French flair on display in just about every conceivable field, ranging from e-health to cyber-security, mobility, sport tech, the smart home and virtual reality. Indeed, on show was an amazing new product which could herald the future of VR: the Hypersuit. This lets you fly through virtual worlds while lying on a giant exosuit with your arms spread out, almost as if you're straddling a racing motorbike. While on the simulator, wearing a virtual reality headset strapped to your face, an arm movement to the right will move the in-game character in that direction, while pulling to the left will steer you in precisely that direction. It's designed to simulate every human gesture accurately and was demoed at the CES with various simulations including a base jump, cosmonaut experience and a super-hero role play. For the time being, the Hypersuit is strictly a prototype device although the potential is enormous, and there's speculation that it could one day be used to train military pilots. The company plans on making this device into a real consumer product at some point in the future.

For Mums and Dads, the Paris-based UrbanHello has come up with an interesting product called REMI, which is a 100% customizable baby monitor to help parents to check on and improve their baby's sleep. According to researchers, two-thirds of children experience sleep difficulties, so REMI, whose 'face' resembles a smiley, is a combination of many things; first and foremost a night tracker to understand the baby's sleep patterns; a sleep trainer which sets up regular sleep routines and helps toddlers to know when it's time to go to bed and also to rise and shine; a Bluetooth speaker, a

clock, a baby monitor connected to the smartphone and last but by no means least, a lullaby player. A techno rock-a-bye baby.

Those of a peripatetic nature will be delighted with Bibelib Paris, especially travellers who feel anxious and worry while waiting for their suitcase to fall onto the conveyor belt. Many of you will know that feeling: agonizing whether the luggage made it onto the plane, the possibility of someone having mistaken your suitcase for their own, the unsettling prospect of never seeing it again. Cue in Bibelib: a connected suitcase cover that protects, personalises and insures your luggage during your travels. It has an integrated tracking system so should it get lost a member of the airport staff can scan a QR code and send an SMS to the owner letting them know where they can find their treasured possession. Thousands of these covers have already been sold.

Most of us have mobile phones, the majority of which have to be attached to some kind of cable in order to charge. This will soon be a thing of the past, as Energysquare made its CES debut last month with a new generation of wireless chargers expected to be available in the coming months. The two-part system comprises a sticker, which you place on the back of your device, and a charging pad. The forementioned sticker has two electrodes and a connector that you plug into your phone's charging port, then simply place it on the pad to commence charging. The real innovation is that it allows for multiple devices to charge simultaneously at similar speeds to traditional wire-based chargers.

Finally, for males who carry mobiles in their trouser pocket, Spartan has come up with an interesting sartorial element: the "smart underwear" designed to protect the nether regions from the potentially harmful effects of cellphone radiation. These boxer shorts are made from a special fabric which creates an electromagnetic shield "down there", protecting one's fertility from any potential harmful rays and frequencies. After all, nothing is too good to safeguard the family jewels and heirlooms for future generations...

That's it for today. No doubt La French Tech will enjoy an even greater presence at next year's CES, a good pretext for the boss to send me there personally to cover the event. Join me next time for more Tech Talk here on EnglishWaves.