

[News story: Innovate 2017 day 1: 50-50 split on AI creating vs taking jobs](#)

Attendees at [Innovate 2017](#) are split down the middle on whether robots will end up taking away more jobs than they'll create.

This came out of a panel debate involving:

The panel agreed that there were lots of areas, such as care and decision making, where there always needs to be a human element.

Hamid was of the view that lifelong learning would become compulsory to enable the take up of robotics. There will be a cycle of learn-unlearn-relearn whereby people – and their jobs – can stay relevant while still benefiting from robotic and automation technologies.

Delegates at Innovate 2017.

Innovation loans launch

Ruth McKernan, Innovate UK Chief Executive, kicked off the day with the official launch of innovation loans. A £50 million pilot programme will be run over the next 2 years.

This is a patient, flexible loan scheme for innovations that are near to market, where there is less risk involved. It is complementary to grant funding.

The first loans competition, which is now open, will be infrastructure systems deployments. It is for single, small or medium-sized enterprises, who can get up to £1 million to work on late-stage research and development projects.

Robotics and AI for safer work

We also welcomed Minister of State for Climate Change and Industry, Claire Perry, who gave a keynote speech singing the praises for UK innovators in robotics and artificial intelligence (AI).

The Minister set out how UK experts and innovators are leading the world in this new sector, and how the nation is nurturing these new technologies.

She went on to share details of the £68 million from the [Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund](#) that will go to robotics and AI projects aimed at improving safety in extreme environments. This includes systems that take on jobs in the freezing oceans, nuclear energy, deep mining and space.

During her speech the Minister also committed to £16 million funding for smart energy systems. This will go towards 2 energy innovation competitions

to reduce demand on the electricity grid at peak periods and to increase demand at other times.

It will build on government's [Clean Growth Strategy](#) to fund over £2.5 billion in clean technology innovation.

New products from businesses

Also at the event there were a number of exhibitors showing their innovations for the first time. Among the new products launched were:

- a rapid diagnostic platform for quickly identifying diseases such as Ebola without the need for laboratory facilities or experts. The QuRapID by [BioGene](#) detects multiple pathogens from a single patient blood sample in less than 45 minutes
- a portable 'Easibridge' system for applications such as evacuation and rescue, from [Bright Structures](#). A 16 metre bridge can be installed and crossed by just one person in under 30 seconds
- a solar-powered bench with USB points for mobile charging and WiFi. [Environmental Street Furniture](#) believe it could be used for city centres, parks and stadiums
- an automated 'man-overboard' detection system, which uses thermal cameras and microwave radar to detect if anyone falls from a ship or platform. [Telesto Technologies](#) believe it will be used for shipping, cruises and drilling applications
- a 'wearable' tent, which turns from a waterproof poncho into a tent that can be used without ropes or poles. The innovation comes from [Zelter Shelter](#)

Zelter Shelter's wearable tent.

Design in Innovation award

Topping off the day was Innovate UK's Design in Innovation award, which was presented to Pae Natwilai, CEO and Founder of [Gettrik](#).

Now in its third year, the Design in Innovation Award recognise the Innovate 2017 showcase exhibitor whose project best demonstrates human-centred design processes that deliver for people. On the judging panel were representatives of the Design Council and leading designer, Sebastian Conran.

Gettrik won the award for 'Triik', its automated drone control and real-time inspection system for buildings and infrastructure. The judges recommended it for being intuitive and easy to use.

Pae is one of our women in innovation award holders. This was our female-only funding competition designed to get more women innovating in business and create new role models for the next generation.

Tune in

Day 2 of Innovate 2017 continues tomorrow (9 November 2017). You can catch the action by: