

New technology breaks language barriers in Japan

Vocabulary Match

innovative • transparent • maintain • observe • subsidizes • collaboration •
 • keep • clear • teamwork • new • decreases • watch

Article

Japan is introducing innovative technologies to overcome language barriers for tourists. Toppan, a Japanese printing company, has developed a transparent display that translates conversations in real time, allowing users to maintain eye contact and observe physical gestures. The system supports 15 languages, including English and Chinese, and will be available for sale in June.

Nosaka Tomoaki, a representative of Toppan, stated, "As the pandemic subsidizes, the number of people visiting Japan will increase. We want to help them overcome language barriers with our displays."

Another example is the collaboration between Japanese taxi-hailing app Go and Chinese companies, enabling Chinese tourists to request taxis using their native Chinese-language apps. Mobility Technologies, the operator of the Go app, is expanding its partnerships with South Korean and Southeast Asian companies and working on agreements with firms in other markets.

Quiz

1. What is unique about the transparent display developed by Toppan?
2. What is the goal of Nosaka Tomoaki and Toppan for their displays?

Conversation

A: Can you believe this translation display? It's like magic!
 B: Haha, yeah! We're chatting with locals like we've lived here forever.
 A: I know, right? And getting a taxi with our Chinese app is a game changer.
 B: Totally! We might just become professional tourists at this rate.
 A: Japan's technology is really making language barriers a thing of the past.
 B: So true! Now, if only they could invent a gadget to help us decide what to eat!

Discussion

1. What was traveling like in the past, and how has technology made it easier for tourists?
2. Do you think technology will eliminate the need to study foreign languages in the future?
3. What apps do you use on your phone that make your day-to-day life easier or more enjoyable?

Original:

https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/news/20230320_19/