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Robot car park beams down to Dubai

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by Greg Whitaker Aug 12, 2009

Dubai's first automatic car park opened this morning at Ibn Battuta Gate. Capable of handling 765 vehicles, it is the first of several large-scale robotic car parks being built to address parking problems in the UAE.



The robot car park can park 250 cars an hour

The technology behind the automated parking system was developed by US-based Robotic Parking, and has been brought to the region by the MAG Group, a local property developer.

All the customer sees is a parking garage with space for one car, though the 'floor' is platform which rides on the top of a robotic trolley. When the customer leaves the vehicle and collects a ticket, the wall of the garage drops away and the car is whisked to an elevator, which in turn takes the car to another trolley. From there, the machine parks the car in the dark depths of the structure. In total, the process takes around three minutes.

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"In a world of increasing urbanisation and traffic congestion, the future is robotic parking," said Sami K. Issa, GM of MAG Robotic Parking, the technology licensor. "With this technology, you don't need to drive through the garage to find a parking space. You simply drive your car to an entry station and leave your car to be picked up by the computerised lifts that will safely place it inside the building on a shelving system. When you leave, you return to a central point and your car is swiftly retrieved for you."

Most of the core technology comes from GE Fanuc Intelligent Platforms, though Issa explained how MAG Robotic Parking had designed the frame of the machine, as well as having developed the software to run the system that controls the robots.

According to the firm, pre-opening performance tests of the system achieved more than 250 parking transactions per hour – faster than regular gated ramp-style car parks can handle. It has mainly been built as space-efficient parking for the new Ibn Battuta Gate offices, but will also serve the adjacent shopping mall. The owners, Seven

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Tides, hope it will appeal to gadget obsessed Dubai residents, who will appreciate the benefits of the system.

Andrew Chambers, of Asteco, the firm which will manage the machine on behalf of the owner commented, "This robotic car park will be especially convenient for the office tenants, parking or retrieval can be completed in less than 160 seconds. It is safe and secure and obviously doesn't expose expensive paint work to the abrasive elements during lengthy office hours."

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