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Story last updated at 9:40 a.m. Sunday, February 8, 2004

'Cool hunter's' Japanese finds inspire businesses globally

BY YURI KAGEYAMA

Associated Press

TOKYO--Loic Bizel leads visitors through alleys packed with wild-haired youngsters, makes his way into tiny boutiques tucked beneath stairwells and points out fatigue-inspired jackets, hand-painted sneakers and plaid miniskirts.

Part tour guide and part business consultant, the 32-year-old Frenchman is a "cool" hunter, with a mission to uncover the ever-changing street fads of Japan and translate them into a language the rest of the world can understand.



CHIAKI TSUKUMO/AP

Hunting for cool: Loic Bizel, walking in an alley packed with youngsters in Tokyo's Harajuku shopping district.

"The people in the streets are very creative," Bizel said, pointing to a young man wearing baggy shorts on top of long pants, a look that's all the rage in Tokyo. "The search to be unique, to be

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