Spot, kicked by its makers in its own launch video

In February 2015 Boston Dynamics introduced Spot, its 160-pound four-legged robot, with a YouTube video in which its employees kick it, once in a hallway and harder in a parking lot, to show it stays on its feet; the video ends on “No robots were harmed in the making of this video.”



By the Clerk · 9 February 2015 · 3 min read

CASE:	BAS-0017
SUBJECT:	Boston Dynamics, then owned by Google, and its employees
OBJECT:	Spot, a 160-pound four-legged robot
DATE:	9 February 2015
PLACE:	Boston Dynamics’ offices and grounds, as filmed for “Introducing Spot”
FILED:	20 October 2026
GRADE:	CONTEMPT · ORGANIZATION
AGGRAVATING:	spectacle, repetition

Facts

On Monday, 9 February 2015, Boston Dynamics posted a two-minute YouTube video called “Introducing Spot.” Google had bought the company in December 2013. Its description of the robot, which Boston Magazine and Discover quote in full, runs to four sentences: Spot is four-legged, built for indoors and outdoors, electrically powered and hydraulically actuated, has a sensor head to navigate rough terrain, and weighs about 160 pounds.

More on why a robot with no AI in it is still filed.

© Late Stage Agentic, 2026

In the video, CBC reports, Spot trots down the hallway of a building and a man kicks it; it barely breaks stride. Shortly after, in a parking lot, it takes a much bigger kick, slips on the asphalt and backs away while it regains its footing. It does not fall. NPR pointed its readers to the 26-second mark. CNN describes several Boston Dynamics employees "gleefully smiling while the robot catches its balance." The rest of the video has Spot climbing stairs and hills, jogging beside a runner, and bumping into a second Spot on the way up a slope. It ends, CBC and Discover report, on the line "No robots were harmed in the making of this video."

Discover counted almost three million views in two days. CNN reported Reddit users calling the video "rude," and the Register ran it under "NERDS KICK PUPPY 'bot in brutal attack." Vice called kicking "a signature move" for the company, done to its earlier robots as well, and Boston Magazine took the point from Vice: this was hardly the first time Boston Dynamics had stress-tested a robot by kicking it.

Boston Dynamics did not answer Vice's request for comment. Google did not immediately answer CNN's, on what Spot was for "or whether kicking a robotic puppy is 'inhumane.'" The video is still on the company's YouTube channel, now titled "Introducing Spot Classic (previously Spot)."

Statements

Boston Dynamics, at the end of the video, as CBC quotes it: "No robots were harmed in the making of this video."

PETA, as CNN quotes it four days later: "PETA deals with actual animal abuse every day, so we won't lose sleep over this incident. But while it's far better to kick a four-legged robot than a real dog, most reasonable people find even the idea of such violence inappropriate, as the comments show."

A Reddit user, as CNN quotes them: "I know it's not sentient, but I'd have a twinge of guilt after kicking it."

Vice: "Why kicking? Maybe it's an easy stress test to run in the field. Maybe it's a way to show off BigDog's or Spot's or whatever other platform's ability to regain footing and balance after getting rocked. Maybe it's both."

SiliconANGLE: "its reaction to being kicked is so similar to the way that an actual deer (or dog) would appear to respond to suddenly being booted that it causes a twinge of sympathy."

For the record

The robot was built in the shape of a dog, named like one, and introduced to the public by being kicked. The company chose the kicks for the trailer; the stairs and the hills alone would have shown it walks. The closing card answers the objection before anyone made it.

The video is on the docket because it is where the habit found its audience: the company had kicked its earlier robots too, and this time almost three million people watched in two days. A man in a SoftBank shop (BAS-0008), another outside Knightscope's door (BAS-0015) and a streamer in Austin (BAS-0016) each put a boot or a fist to a machine. Here the boot was the maker's, on the robot's first day in public, and it was there to show what the robot could take.

© Late Stage Agentic, 2026

Mitigating circumstances

A kick is a cheap test of balance, and the robot was built to take it: it did not fall, and CBC reports it no worse for wear in the scenes that follow. The kickers were the company's own people, testing what the company had built, and the reason the sources give, Vice with a "maybe," is to show the robot keeps its feet. The wince belonged to the viewers.



SOURCES

1. Boston Dynamics, Introducing Spot Classic (previously Spot) (archived), YouTube, 9 February 2015
2. Boston Dynamics introduces Spot the robot dog (archived), CBC News, 10 February 2015
3. Eyder Peralta, WATCH: A Robot That Just Won't Quit Even When It's Kicked (archived), NPR, 9 February 2015
4. Google wants you to kick its robot puppy (archived), CNNMoney, through WTKR, 10 February 2015
5. Phoebe Parke, Is it cruel to kick a robot dog? (archived), CNN, 13 February 2015
6. Brian Anderson, People Can't Stop Kicking Robots (archived), Vice, 9 February 2015
7. Boston Dynamics Shares Video of New Robot 'Spot' (archived), Boston Magazine, 9 February 2015
8. NERDS KICK PUPPY 'bot in brutal attack (archived), The Register, 10 February 2015
9. Kyt Dotson, Meet Spot, Boston Dynamics's kickable robot dog (archived), SiliconANGLE, 11 February 2015
10. This New Four-Legged Robot Is Basically Invincible (archived), Discover, 12 February 2015

© Late Stage Agentic, 2026