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Dash Robotics Secures \$1.4 Million in Funding to Bring Animal-Inspired Robot to Kids Everywhere

IronFire Capital leads seed round for Silicon Valley-based inventors
of innovative DIY robots that are affordable, fun and educational

SUNNYVALE, Calif. (April 23, 2015) – Dash Robotics, makers of hand-held, bio-inspired robots that are easy and fun for anyone to build, has secured \$1.4 million in a round of seed funding led by IronFire Capital. Following the [release of its beta robot kit](#) in 2014, which sold out in less than two weeks through a crowdfunding campaign, [Dash](#) plans to use the funds to begin its commercial launch into the consumer market this year, and initiate a pilot program for educators.

IronFire Capital has a track record of success investing in early-stage companies including Songza (acquired by Google), Stroom (acquired by Box), Caviar (acquired by Square) [and many others](#). In particular, IronFire will help Dash with manufacturing, distribution and design services.

Dash expects to be the first company to commercially offer an advanced robot for less than \$50 in the consumer market, through direct sales, online retail partners and specialty retail stores. The company can achieve this price point – a breakthrough in commercial robotics – through a combination of new composite materials, design, and manufacturing processes that no other company uses today.

Dash will be available for online purchase in the second half of 2015. For educators, Dash plans to initiate a pilot program through which educators will be able to supply a classroom with multiple Dash kits combined with science, programming and robotics curriculum designed for the middle school and high school levels.

“The robotics industry is primed for disruption. Today’s products are too expensive, too cumbersome, or too limited in their functionality. There is high demand among both consumers and educators for more accessible and affordable technology,” said Jacky Chan, partner at IronFire Capital. “The Dash team’s expertise in low-cost, light-weight design and manufacturing, matched with their strong scientific backgrounds across robotics, engineering and animal biology, put them in a solid position to deliver a new kind of offering that brings sophisticated yet simple robotics to the masses for the first time.”

Nick Kohut, chief executive officer for Dash Robotics, said, “Customer response to our beta kits was overwhelmingly positive, and it’s great to see the same response from investors, having quickly exceeded our \$1 million goal for this round. We’re now in a great position to expand our distribution to reach consumers at a much larger scale. And our breakthrough pricing enables us to explore things that have never been achieved at scale before, such as multi-robot gaming, swarm behavior, and even bringing advanced, hands-on robotics into the classroom.”

Dash is a bio-inspired robot that fits in the palm of your hand. Controlled with a smartphone, Dash has six insect-like legs, so it can run at high speed and climb on a variety of surfaces where wheels will not operate. The robots are shipped as a 2D kit consisting of an ultra-lightweight and surprisingly durable composite of micro-thin plastic and fabric. The kits are folded at home and snap together into a 3D bug-like shape, almost origami-style. Simple electronics for controlling the robots, included with the kit, are also easy for anyone to install.

While the initial beta product consisted of a basic bug-like frame, the new Dash robots under development for launch this year allow you to use both a mobile app and physical accessories to create and modify your own character, with a unique personality and varying levels of physical attributes such as speed, agility, protection, and power.

Founded in 2013 by four PhD students at the University of California, Berkeley, the Dash mission is to bring low-cost bio-inspired robotics design into the commercial realm. Working with world-renowned biologists, the team studied principles of a broad range of animals - particularly the running movements cockroaches and lizards.

They distilled their findings about the positions and movements of limbs – particularly running legs – to reflect the behavior of insects or small animals that can navigate challenging terrain. Dash is now becoming the first company to commercialize this innovative practice using years of UC Berkeley research funded by the National Science Foundation.

About Dash Robotics

Four UC Berkeley PhD students on a mission to make advanced robotics simple, fun and affordable for everyone founded dash Robotics in 2013. The company is headquartered in Sunnyvale, California.

