

Sony to stop producing AIBO, the robot dog

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Sony announced Thursday it will stop manufacturing AIBO the robotic dog by March.

Since its launch in 1999 more than 150,000 AIBOs have been sold worldwide. Nevertheless, the Japanese electronics company said it will stop production of the robotic pet as it seeks to restructure its operations and reduce the size of its robotic development unit.

AIBO (pronounced eye-bow) is an autonomous four-legged entertainment robot with high-tech features. A uniqueness of AIBO is that it matures and develops its character, and is able to make its own decisions. AIBO's name comes from Artificial Intelligence, A.I. and the

"BO" from roBOt. It also means pal or companion in Japanese.

AIBO's head has a touch sensor for non-verbal communication, stereo microphones for hearing, a color video camera for vision, and a distance detector to allow AIBO to avoid obstacles. AIBO has voice recognition components that allow AIBO to be programmed to recognize its own name and understand over 50 verbal commands.

AIBO uses Sony's OPEN-R platform to operate.

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