# 'Social Petworking' - Nearly One Million UK Pet Owners Have Social Media Accounts For Their Animals

**Thursday 10 April, 2014**

New research from Gocompare.com has revealed that nearly a million pet owners have given their furry friends a social media account and are posting on their animals' behalf.

The survey found that just under one in ten (7%) UK pet owners had created an online profile for their pet, a practice known as 'social petworking', which has become increasingly popular worldwide in recent years, with some animals gaining a significant social media following, even rivalling their human counterparts.

The most influential social media pet is Sockington the cat, who belongs to American archivist and historian Jason Scott. On Twitter, Sockington (@sockington) has amassed over 1.3 million followers, which is more than Prime Minister David Cameron, Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg and Labour Party leader Ed Miliband combined.

Though only a small minority of pet owners are going as far as creating Twitter and Facebook accounts for their pets, a much larger proportion (17%) admitted that their own social media profiles are dominated by updates about their pets.

When it comes to Twitter, dogs are the internet's best friend. Analysing tweets from February 4th to March 6th, Gocompare.com found that more tweets in that time period were about canines than their cat counterparts. During the time frame, there were 1,713,613 tweets referencing cats compared to 2,323,567 tweets about dogs**.

It's not just on Twitter that dogs are favoured. In separate research***, the comparison site found that dog owners are more likely to insure their animals than those who own cats. The research found that the majority of cat owners (60%) did not have insurance for their pet, while just over half (55%) of dog owners had their animal covered.

Ben Wilson, pet insurance spokesperson at Gocompare.com, commented:

"The nation seems divided on what people think of pets on social media, as half (51%) of those asked said that they found people who constantly post about their pet on social media irritating, and the vast majority (74%) saying that they find people who create profiles for their pet 'weird'. But with around four million tweets about cats and dogs each month, it doesn't look like animal lovers will stop talking about their pets online anytime soon.

"However, what is concerning is the number of pet owners who admitted to not having insurance for their animal. Though nearly one in five (17%) admitted to adoring their pets so much that most of their own social media post revolved around them, and just under one in ten (7%) having even made profiles for their pets, our research found that only half of cat and dog owners actually insured their animal.

"Pet owners without insurance may not be able to afford essential medical treatment if their pet becomes ill or has an accident, so while it's nice to see so many who want to show their four-legged companions off on social media, the best way to show your love for your animal is to make sure it has the right cover."

-ENDS-

Notes to Editors:

On 17th February 2014, Vision Critical conducted an online survey among 2,019 randomly selected British adults who are Springboard UK panellists. The margin of error-which measures sampling variability-is +/- 2.2%. The results have been statistically weighted according to the most current education, age, gender and regional data to ensure samples representative of the entire adult population of United Kingdom. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.

*Almost one million figure based on there being an estimated 13 million (45%) of UK households with pets according to the 2013 Pet Population report by the Pet Food Manufacturers' Association (PFMA) available here; http://www.pfma.org.uk/pet-population/. In the survey 7% of pet owners said that they had "at least one pet who has their own social media account/page". 7% of 13,000,000 = 910,000, or nearly

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**Using online Twitter analytics tool Topsy, Gocompare.com compared the volume of tweets containing 'dogs' to those containing 'cats'. During the time frame, there were 1,713,613 tweets referencing 'cats' compared to 2,323,567 tweets about dogs.

***Research commissioned by Gocompare.com and carried out by OnePoll on the 3rd of June 2013 with 2,000 UK pet owners aged 18 and over.

Gocompare.com launched in November 2006. It was founded by Hayley Parsons, who has worked her entire career in the insurance broking and aggregator markets. It was the first comparison site to focus on displaying product features rather than just listing prices, and it was this philosophy that led to Gocompare.com becoming the only price comparison site to be invited to join the British Insurance Brokers' Association (BIBA).

Today, Gocompare.com has become one of the most successful comparison sites in the UK, with the equivalent of a quote being carried out every second during 2012. It provides one of the most comprehensive online car insurance comparison services in the UK as well as comparing home insurance, pet insurance, breakdown cover, and bike and van insurance.

With Gocompare.com, customers can also compare a wide variety of other products and services, including credit cards, travel insurance and business products, plus gas and electricity and other household services.
Gocompare.com is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA). ?

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