



Playing Tag With Cats

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Some Horrifying Facts about Cat RTO Rates

- NCPPSP Study 1997: **2.3%**
- HSUS Website: **3.5%**
- LA City Shelters 2008: **3.8%**
- Austin Texas: **4.9%**
- PetPoint Aggregate Data: **1.7%***

* Percentage of stray cat intake RTO's



How Do People Find Lost Cats?

- Lost dogs and cats wearing ID tags are recovered more often than those without.
- Websites played little or no role.
- Microchips had a negligible effect on dog recovery.
- Fewer cats than dogs were recovered (53%/71%).
- Signs posted in the neighborhood were the most effective method of finding lost cats, HOWEVER, only 10% of cats wore an ID or license tag.
- 66% of recovered cats came home on their own.

Reference: Study by Linda Lord, DVM, JAVMA Vol. 230, No. 2, January 15, 2007



Interesting Point

Owners who reported losing their cats found
53% of them - 47% weren't found



The most common source of pet cats is
strays at 30%



Is there a link?



Microchips Pros and Cons

Pro

- Permanent, can't fall off the pet like a collar & tag

Cons

- Records have to be up to date – there are some “work-arounds”
- Not visible – don't know there's a chip until the cat is scanned
- Pricey – although many shelters offer low or no-cost programs
- Scanner performance can be iffy



One Person's Experience

"I worked in a large, open-admission shelter with annual intake of about 50,000 animals. Most had no form of ID. We always did backflips when the scanner indicated a chip had been found. In the vast majority of cases, the information on the chip was outdated because people failed to or forgot to update their contact information. My wish is that all pets would have a collar and current tag, complemented by a microchip backed by current info."

Who Scans??

- Most shelters?
- Most animal controls?
- Veterinarians?

Who doesn't?

- Spay/neuter clinics
- Feral cat caretakers
- People falling in love with a stray

Who Gets Scanned?

Live cats



Who Doesn't Get Scanned?

Dead cats





Microchip Success Stories?

- Lost dog found 9 years later, 1,200 miles away
- “Miracle kitty” returns after 3-year disappearance
- Cat named Bear found 4 months after going missing
- Clyde the cat returned after 3 yrs – found 2400 mi. away
- Lost dog from Illinois found in Georgia 10 months later
- Dachshund from CA found 4 months later in Phoenix



Registry Tag Pros and Cons

Pros

- Visible
- Toll free number to call
- Cheap-ish

Cons

- Records have to be kept up to date
- Sometimes profit-making registries fail – so will they be there to respond when your cat needs them?



Identification Tags

Pros

- Visible
- Swift “read and return” – pet doesn’t have to go to a shelter
- Daily evidence if tag is out of date
- CHEAP!

Cons

- Tag info could be out of date
- Collar could fall off
- Collar and tag could be taken off by nefarious pet finders
- Tag info could be used to demand ransom (but so could other sources of info)



ID Tag Success Stories

A person finds a cat at their back door. The cat has a tag. The person calls the owner who comes and gets it.

Is there a newspaper or TV headline in this?



Using the Web to Search

If you Google:

- Pet Registries: 535,000 hits
- Pet Lost & Found: 14,700,000 hits
- Cat Lost & Found:
21,400,000 hits





Who is running National L&F websites?

- Missing Pet Network
- Pets 911
- Mayor's Alliance for NYC's Animals
- Petfinder
- Alabama Pet Registry
- And many more!

Who is running local L&F websites?

- ?????

How to Describe a Cat

- They don't all look alike, but differences can be subtle
- You (the finder) must come up with a description recognizable by the desperately searching cat loser
- A photograph should do the trick – but will it?


Let us visit another Powerpoint presentation to explore these points

Patterns -- Tabby


Tabby patterns are stripes on a lighter background. (Sometimes stripes are broken into spots...but they're still tabby.)

- Brown tabby
- Gray tabby
- Silver tabby
- Red tabby
- Orange tabby
- Buff tabby
- Black tabby ("shadow" tabby)


Patterns -- Tabby



Classic



Spotted



Mackerel


Illustration footnote #1

Patterns – Ticked, Shaded, Smoked, and Tipped

Sometimes looks like a “dye job”; each is a dramatic and uncommon effect.

- **TICKED** (“agouti”) Much like a squirrel’s markings, each hair is mottled.
 - ✓ Ruddy (brownish)
 - ✓ Red
 - ✓ Blue
 - ✓ Fawn
- **SHADED, SMOKED, and TIPPED** Shaded/Smoked: Each hair is light at the root and shades upward to a much darker color (i.e. white shading to black). Tipped may be the reverse (very rare).

Patterns – Ticked, Shaded, Smoked, and Tipped



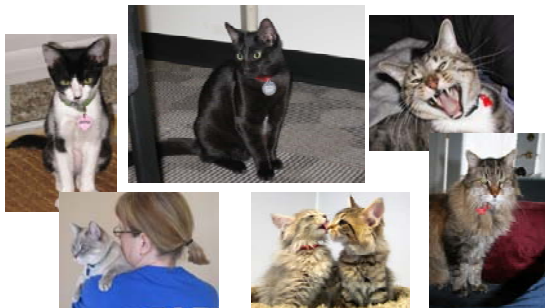
Same cat, different light, different perspectives. Which is more accurate? Which is more interesting and individual?

Wouldn't it be a lot easier to
just read a tag?

And the Winner Is (drum roll)



Gratuitous photos of cats with tags





A New Product That Changes the Paradigm

THE MAGNIFICENT PORTABLE TAG-MAKING MACHINE



Why Is This Better Than Sliced Bread?

- Go where the people are – don't wait for them to come to you
- Make money – do well by doing good
- Put a check-off on the form to opt out of receiving fundraising mailings
- You put the tag on the collar
- Immediate gratification!



Products to Choose From

- IMARC Pet Tag Engraver
- Quick-Tag
- PetScribe
- FINDER Lost Pet Tag System



Want a Free Tag?

Here's Lisa!

ACES

Animal Care Equipment & Services Inc.
Animal-care.com



Where Would You Take Your Tag Machine?

- On your mobile adoption vehicle
- On your mobile s/n vehicle
- Shopping mall
- "Taste of" your city event
- Football stadium parking lot
- Fundraising events
- ?????



Other Sources of Tags

- Pet supply stores
- The internet (try Boomerang.com)
- Mail in from information on display at the veterinarian's office
- Some veterinarians have tag machines on site
- ?????



The Collar Thing

Common reasons cat owners don't put collars on their best friends:

- She could injure herself wearing a collar (hung up on something.)
- She won't put up with a collar
- She never goes outside



The Collar Thing – Might Be Injured

Instant Survey Says:

- How many cases of cats killed by getting hung up on their collars do you know of first-hand?
- How many friendly cats, obviously someone's pet, do you know of that have been euthanized because they came in lost and weren't found or adopted?
- How many have you had to euthanize yourself?
- What is the greater risk: collar/tag or no collar/tag?

There are collars designed to stretch or snap loose when weight is put on them. Tell your adopters!



The Collar Thing – Never Goes Out

Of the 138 lost cats tracked in the U. of Ohio study,

**41% were housed
"strictly indoors"**

The Collar Thing – Never Goes Out

Opportunities for an indoor cat to get out:

- Doors opening (3 times per day X 365 days per year X 15 years of the cat's life = 16,425 chances for escape!)
- Screens falling off windows
- Fires
- Travel
- Trips to the Vet
- Petsitters (especially friends & neighbors)
- Stupid boyfriends
- ????????



The Collar Thing – Cat Disdain

Suggestions

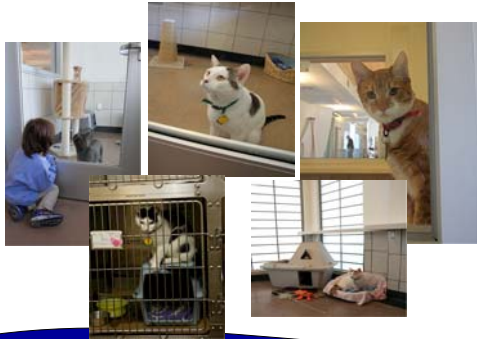
- Advise current pet owners to buy a spicy catnip toy when they get the collar. Put the collar on, then give the toy to the cat. The distraction will probably last long enough for the cat to learn to ignore the collar.
- If the cat takes the collar off – keep putting it back on.
- All cats up for adoption need to be outfitted with collars – real collars – so they leave the shelter accustomed to the feeling.

The Collar Thing – Cat Disdain

If you chip them before they go home, why not collar and tag them?

If you don't, why not start now?

The Robert Potter League

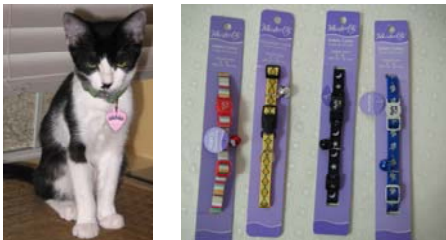


The Collar Thing – Cat Disdain

Another approach

- A collar is not just a utilitarian item – it is a FASHION item.
- Have you seen the great variety of collars on the market now?
- Some people buy new collars for each season
- People dress up cats in outfits because it's CUTE – whether the cat likes it much or not! So why not cute collars?

“Designer” Collars – all the Rage?



Glamorize Your Puss



Too Far.....



**What do you prefer:
Protection or Abstinence?**

Can they co-exist?



Assumptions about Indoor/Outdoor Decision

Assumption

- Everyone who adopts a cat from you faithfully fulfills their agreement to keep their cat indoors at all times.
- Cats who are let outside live short lives
- Cats kept inside from the start won't want to go outside
- Cats used to going outside will complain at first, but soon accept being kept inside.



Advice for those who let their cats out

Before even considering it

- Cat MUST be s/n first
- Collar and tag first
- Vaccinations first – esp. rabies
- Flea & tick prevention treatment first
- Time spent at home first to
 - Grow bigger
 - Get to know you
 - Get to know & love the house & it's comforts –
 - FOOD – yum
 - Petting - ahhh
 - Litterbox – clean and available



Look Around

Consider the neighborhood

- Streets – busy? High speed?
- Dogs – running loose in the area?
- Finicky neighbors? May be hard to tell until an accident happens in their garden
- Carnivorous wildlife? Cougars, coyotes, great horned owls, etc

Some Situations Just Aren't Safe Enough to Ever Risk Letting A Cat Outside

Some "Rules" to Consider

- Outside in daylight only
- Outside only when you are home
- Cat door? Only if you can lock it when you don't want your cat to use it (not to mention outside animals who want to come in)
- Signal that brings your cat home: Pavlovian techniques recommended