

## **Pets Are “Members of the Family” and Two-Thirds of Pet Owners Buy Their Pets Holiday Presents**

*Almost Two-thirds of Americans Currently Have a Pet*

**ROCHESTER, N.Y. – December 4, 2007** – Whether it’s a Persian or a Papillion, Fido or Fluffy, pet owners believe their pets are members of their family. Almost nine in ten (88%) pet owners say their pet is a member of their family with just seven percent saying no. Women are more likely than men to believe this (93% versus 84%). Dog owners are slightly more likely (93%) than cat owners (89%) to consider their pets members of their family.

These are some of the results of a Harris Poll of 2,455 adults surveyed online between November 7 and 13, 2007 by Harris Interactive®.

### **Who Has a Pet and What Type Do They Have?**

Just under two-thirds (63%) of Americans currently have a pet. Certain groups are more likely to have pets than others. Women are more likely than men (68% versus 57%) and Gen Xers (those aged 31-42) and Baby Boomers (those aged 43-61) are more likely (71% and 67% respectively) to have pets than the younger and older generations. Regionally, those in the Midwest are most likely (67%) to have one while those in the East are least likely (58%) to have a pet. Looking at race and ethnicity, 67 percent of Whites and 68 percent of Hispanics have a pet compared to just 35 percent of African Americans.

In terms of education, those who have more education are less likely to have a pet, as just over half (54%) of those with a post-graduate education have a pet as do 57 percent of those with a college education. Interestingly, the reverse is true with income. Six in ten of those who earn under \$35,000 and 56 percent of those earning \$35,000 to \$49,999 have a pet compared with two-thirds (67%) of those earning \$50,000 to \$74,999 and 68 percent of those earning \$75,000 or more.

Dog people outnumber cat people among U.S. pet owners. Seven in ten pet owners have a dog compared to just over half (52%) who have a cat. One in six (15%) have fish while seven percent have a bird and 12 percent have some other type of pet. Baby Boomers are more likely to have a dog (74%) while Gen Xers are more likely to have fish (21%).

Just over one-third (35%) of pet owners have one pet while one-quarter (25%) have two. Lesser numbers have three (13%), four (7%) and five (6%) while 13 percent of pet owners have six or more pets. Mature pet owners (those aged 62 and older) are more likely to just have one pet (42%) while Gen Xers are more likely to have three or more pets.

***The Harris Poll® #120, December 4, 2007***

By Regina A. Corso, Director, *The Harris Poll*, Harris Interactive.

## **What People Do With Their Pets**

If pets are members of the family, then they are entitled to certain things and pet owners make sure their pets get these things. Over two-thirds (69%) of pet owners let their pets sleep in the bed with them, with women more likely than men to share their bed with their pet (72% versus 64%). Gen Xers are also more likely to share their bed as almost three-quarters (74%) let their pet sleep with them. Also, cats are more likely to get on the bed than dogs (78% versus 70%).

Pet owners are also present buyers. Almost two-thirds (65%) have bought their pet a holiday present and over one-third (37%) have bought their pet a birthday present. Dogs get presents more than cats do. Seven in ten (71%) of dog owners have bought their pet a holiday present compared to 63 percent of cat owners. The same is true for birthday presents as 42 percent of dog owners have gotten a present for their pet compared to one-third (33%) of cat owners.

Further down on the list of what people do for their pets is cooking especially for them (23% of pet owners have done so), dressing them in some type of clothing (18%) and being taken to work (10%). Cooking for your pet is something one does as they get older as three in ten (31%) of Mature pet owners have cooked especially for their pet compared to just 14 percent of Echo Boomers (those aged 18-30) who have pets. While dogs may get more presents, cats may get the last laugh. Only 14 percent of cat owners have dressed their pet in some type of clothing compared to almost one-quarter (23%) of dog owners.

## **So What?**

Pets bring happiness to so many and, so often, many pets, particularly dogs, bring unconditional love. In return, they may not ask for much, but it seems like they get much from their owners. Pets are members of the family and they get presents and, in some cases, they are cooked for, just like any other family member. That's probably not too much to give for that feeling of joy when the front door is open and that Cocker Spaniel or Calico is waiting there to greet you after a hard day.

**TABLE 1  
HAVING A PET**

“Do you currently have a pet?”

Base: All Adults

	<b>Total</b>
	<b>%</b>
All Adults	63
<b>Gender</b>	
Men	57
Women	68
<b>Region</b>	
East	58
Mid West	67
South	63
West	63
<b>Age</b>	
Echo boomers (18-30)	59
Gen X (31-42)	71
Baby Boomers (43-61)	67
Matures (62+)	50
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	
White	67
African-American	35
Hispanic	68
<b>Education</b>	
High School or less	66
Some college	64
College graduate	57
Post graduate	54
<b>Income/Household</b>	
\$34,999 or less	60
\$35,000 – \$49,999	56
\$50,000 – \$74,999	67
\$75,000 +	68
<b>Party ID</b>	
Republican	66
Democrat	60
Independent	62

**TABLE 2  
TYPE OF PET**

“What type of pet do you have?”

Base: Has a pet

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Generation</b>			
		Echo Boomers (18-30)	Gen X (31-42)	Baby Boomers (43-61)	Matures (62+)
		%	%	%	%
Dog	70	66	68	74	71
Cat	52	50	54	54	48
Fish	15	17	21	14	4
Bird	7	5	6	8	11
Other	12	17	22	8	2

Note: Percentages may not add up exactly to 100 percent due to rounding

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**TABLE 3  
NUMBER OF PETS**

“In total, how many pets do you currently have?”

Base: Has a pet

	Total	Generation			
		Echo Boomers (18-30)	Gen X (31-42)	Baby Boomers (43-61)	Matures (62+)
		%	%	%	%
One	35	38	28	35	42
Two	25	23	23	25	29
Three	13	14	15	11	16
Four	7	9	12	7	1
Five	6	7	9	5	2
Six or more	13	10	14	16	10

Note: Percentages may not add up exactly to 100 percent due to rounding

**TABLE 4  
PET AS MEMBER OF FAMILY**

“Do you consider your pet to be a member of your family?”

Base: Has a pet

	Total	Gender		Type of pet	
		Male	Female	Dog	Cat
		%	%	%	%
Yes	88	84	93	93	89
No	7	10	5	4	6
Not sure	4	6	2	3	6

Note: Percentages may not add up exactly to 100 percent due to rounding

**TABLE 5  
THINGS PET OWNERS DO FOR THEIR PETS**

“How often have you done any of the following?”

Base: Has a pet

	Frequently/ Occasionally (NET)	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely/ Never (NET)	Rarely	Never	Not sure
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Allowed my pet to sleep in the bed with me	<b>69</b>	54	15	<b>31</b>	9	22	*
Bought my pet a holiday present	<b>65</b>	40	25	<b>35</b>	11	23	1
Bought my pet a birthday present	<b>37</b>	19	17	<b>63</b>	12	51	1
Cooked especially for my pet	<b>23</b>	9	14	<b>76</b>	20	57	1
Dressed my pet in some type of clothing	<b>18</b>	7	11	<b>82</b>	16	66	*
Took my pet to work with me	<b>10</b>	5	5	<b>89</b>	8	81	*

\* Less Than 0.5%

Note: Percentages may not add up exactly to 100 percent due to rounding

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**TABLE 6**  
**THINGS PET OWNERS DO FOR THEIR PETS – BY GENDER AND GENERATION**

“How often have you done any of the following?”  
*Those saying “Frequently/Occasionally”*

Base: Has a pet

	Total	Gender		Generation				Type of pet	
		Male	Female	Echo Boomers (18-30)	Gen X (31-42)	Baby Boomers (43-61)	Matures (62+)	Dog	Cat
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Allowed my pet to sleep in the bed with me	69	64	72	62	74	70	67	70	78
Bought my pet a holiday present	65	63	66	54	68	69	65	71	63
Bought my pet a birthday present	37	36	37	37	34	40	32	42	33
Cooked especially for my pet	23	17	27	14	19	27	31	29	18
Dressed my pet in some type of clothing	18	13	22	20	21	19	8	23	14
Took my pet to work with me	10	8	12	7	12	12	10	12	9

Note: Percentages may not add up exactly to 100 percent due to rounding

**Methodology**

This Harris Poll® was conducted online within the United States between November 7 and 13, 2007 among 2,455 adults (aged 18 and over), of whom 1,547 have a pet. Figures for age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, region and household income were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents’ propensity to be online.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments. Therefore, Harris Interactive avoids the words “margin of error” as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for pure, unweighted, random samples with 100% response rates. These are only theoretical because no published polls come close to this ideal.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris Interactive surveys. The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of the adult population. Because the sample is based on those who agreed to participate in the Harris Interactive panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

***These statements conform to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.***

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Harris Interactive Inc. 12/07

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