

Internet's Best Friend

By *srlinuxx*

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On the Web you'll find the Infinite Cat Project but no Infinite Dog. My Cat Hates You is big on the Web, but there is no site named My Dog Hates You. (Dogs Hate Bush exists, but then so does Cats Hate Bush.) As any good Web hound can tell you, Rathergood.com is filled with crazy crooning cats. But where, oh where, are the singing dogs? (New Guinea singing dogs, a real breed, do not count.)

Cats are the Web's it-animals. They're everywhere. When you look up Devil Cats, you'll see comics about cat owners who love too much and the cats that cheat on them. Look up Devil Dogs, and you'll be offered apparel for the Marine Corps and information about Drake's cakes. Under the heading "Animal Antics," ifilm.com has four "Viral Videos" of cats, none of dogs. There are tons of badly drawn cats at www.tiddles.co.uk, but there's no such site for dogs.

Sure, there are dog sites aplenty, including fanciers' sites, funny sites and even an occasional hoax site, like thedogisland.com. But most don't have the buzz of Infinite Cat or Rathergood.

Why cats and not dogs?

Perhaps mycathatesyou.com will provide a clue. This site, founded in 2000, offers what it calls "the largest collection of sour-faced, indignant felines on the Internet." There you can see a squinty-eyed, snaggletoothed cat named Guapo, who appears ready to tear someone's head off. If you posted a picture of a dog as scary as that, no one would laugh. They would send for the dogcatcher.

Now take a look at Litterboxcam.com, where a live camera is trained on the litter boxes of two cats, Grey and Black. Every 60 seconds the image is refreshed. Counting down to zero and waiting for the cats to come into the frame is strangely and annoyingly suspenseful.

But if you Google poop and dog, you'll be led to a site called smellypoop.com/photogallery.html, which is more disgusting than funny. Or you may find the story of the "dog poop girl," also known as the "puppy poo girl," or in Korean "gae-ttong-nyue," which, believe it or not, is also not funny.

This is her story. Last month a woman let her dog relieve itself on the subway in Seoul. She was caught, by a cellphone camera, doing nothing about it. Within days, her picture, her identity, her family's identity and her past were revealed to the world on the Web. She quit her university in shame. The Washington Post and The Columbia Journalism Review weighed in. On Wikipedia there's already a "dog poop girl" entry logged, and a movement to delete it.

Interesting, yes, but not funny. Maybe the difference is that dogs are public, everyone's business. They go on subways and they go in parks. They are always caught in flagrante defecato. Cats stay home. They are private, nobody's

business. To watch them in their homes is a privilege. They are perfect for the Web, the medium of voyeurs.

For example, go to the "Educational Videos" on zefrank.com, where you can catch the cat named Annie B., also called Mooshie, in 15 different scenarios, including one in which she re-enacts the shower scene in "Psycho." It's special. It's intimate. And another thing: she seems content with her small apartment. Cats are O.K. living in tight places and never going out. They don't mind if their owners spend every waking hour on the Internet.

Dogs would die if they had to wait for their owners to go off line. And who wants to post pictures of a dead animal? Serious bloggers, the kind who float to the top of Google regularly, just don't have time or space for dogs.

But can that be the whole story? There's a deeper answer to be had at infinitecat.com, where users post pictures of their cats gazing at pictures of other cats already posted on the Infinite Cat site. You see an infinite regress: pictures of cats looking at pictures of cats looking at pictures of cats.

Remind you of anything? Those cats are like so many bloggers sitting at home staring into their computer screens and watching other bloggers blog other bloggers. Cats, who live indoors and love to prowl, are the soul of the blogosphere. Dogs would never blog.

By SARAH BOXER

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