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Internet Interpet

By Lisa Treen

Greek Girl' is not a term most people would consider to be complementary moniker—however, I quite like the term. It doesn't bother me that some would consider my love of new technology, my Internet addiction and my TV viewing choices to be, well, nerdy.

I flopped on the couch a couple of weeks ago and was once again sucked into my own vortex of watching *The Empire Strikes Back* (don't ask how many times I've seen this movie). In a sad but true moment I realized that the outfit Princess Leia was wearing was very much the one I had in my mind on a failed shopping trip to buy some winter clothing. If I could have reached into the 45 inch Plasma and grabbed that beige puffy vest off her, I would have.

In another sad but true moment I will also reveal that I was lined up in a sea of geeks, nerds and the IT crowd when the iPhone was finally released here in Australia.

I've had mobile phones for years, but I've never loved a phone like I do my iPhone. It's so much more than a communication device because I use it to remind me when recycling week is; it beeps at me when I need to get to a meeting; it even has a GPS device to navigate me through Sydney traffic.

It also has the most useless bunch of applications on it that I've downloaded over the last couple of years. In fact it was the need to clear some space for the latest update for the GPS that made me realize what silly applications I had on my iPhone. Games like virtual air hockey, a flight simulator and a simulated Pac Man arcade game.

But it was the mass of pet related applications that made me laugh. There's the Dog Whistler Pro—a tool that's designed (I use that term lightly) to "Take control and teach your dog new tricks via this simple to use dog whistle." And so if that isn't a selling point enough for this \$1.19 application the developers also weigh in with this genius suggestion, "Besides a dog whistle, customers have reported using it as an anti-mosquito device, simple hearing test and a tool to annoy others with its high frequency pitch."

The Screen Cleaner is a totally useless, yet fun and free application that has a variety of cute pups and dogs that lick your screen. Dog Translator! is another free application that sounds like it comes straight from the movie *UP!* As the developers describe: "Ever wonder what your dog might be trying to tell you? Dog Translator is a Dog-to-English translator that allows your dog to communicate to you in a way that's easy to understand."

DIRECTIONS FOR USE:

Press the "Translate Bark" button to begin the recording/translation process.

Hold the device near your dog as it barks.

Once recording is complete, wait a moment for bark analyzation.

Your dog's message is displayed in easy-to-understand English.

Impressive.

Free for the feline lover (though the image of the cat is a little scary), is Piano Cats. "Meow out your favourite tune on a keyboard made of cats! This octave of animated feline performers have arranged themselves to mimic a piano keyboard. They're well-tempered, well behaved, eager to please, and in-tune, but otherwise just like real cats!"

If the Dog Whistler Pro won't annoy workmates and friends then Piano Cats is sure to.



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In a sea of truly useless and fanciful iPhone applications, there's a few good ones that can be considered useful. Pet Dossier is an organizer that's been developed to keep track of important information on your pets. This application allows you to have your pet's essential information available at a click of your fingers. It keeps track of your pet's medical history, medications, and appointments and emails this information directly to your pet's caregivers.

The application allows information for multiple pets and can sort contacts either consolidated or individualized by pet. Dietary and medical information can be sent to any caregiver designated in the contacts information.

Tune in next edition where we'll look at some of the networking sites available to pet lovers and those looking for love. We'll also check into sites and tools that help you set up attractive web pages dedicated to your pets.

Check out www.meetapetlover.com.au and www.livingyears.com for a sneak peak.



"[My iPhone] has the most useless bunch of applications on it that I've downloaded over the last couple of years."

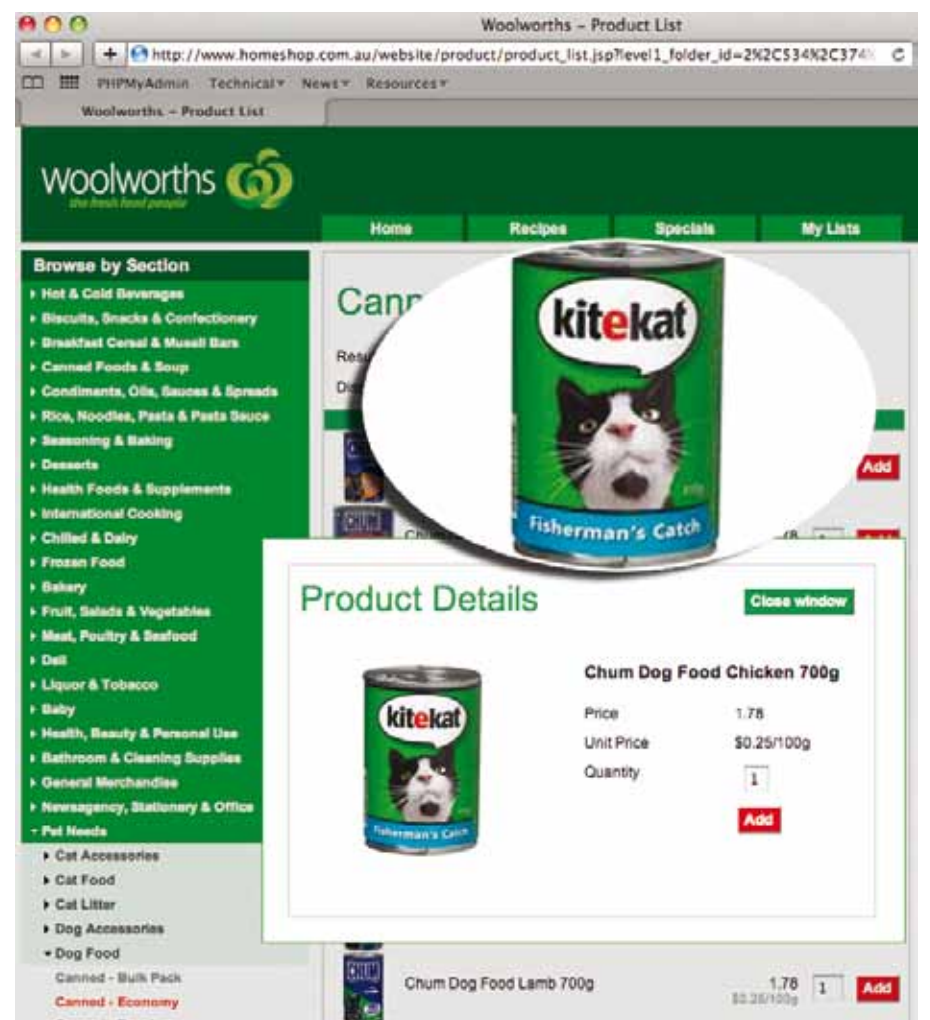
Marketing mash-ups

Occasionally we find some funny marketing blunders and mixed information out there in the pet industry and we like to share them.



PUPPY PEE-PADS THAT DELIVER A WHOLE LOT MORE

This brand of puppy pee-pads obviously offer more than most consumers would require. Offering Super Abortion instead of super absorption. Printed in China, the packaging remains in circulation. Rather than redo the packaging, marketing executives decided it was easier to place a sticker over the typo.



WHAT IS CHUM NOT TELLING US?

We found this in the Woolworths online site under dog food. We wonder what special ingredients Chum are now putting in their dog food – canned kitty anyone?

