

the power of  
**Petfinder**<sup>TM</sup>



petfinder.com annual report 2008

## MESSAGE FROM BETSY

We're feeling giddy! Petfinder launched adoptable pets into the upper stratosphere this past year. A 29% increase in unique visitors to our site delivered 5.2 million potential adopters every month to over 12,000 North American adoption partners. For the 13th consecutive year, we have expanded our leadership on the Web.

Petfinder facilitated more than 2.1 million adoptions in 2008, once again exceeding animal welfare experts' predictions of what was possible. Petfinder accounts for 65% of U.S. and Canadian adoptions.

Still the clear leader in the "animal" category on the Web, we are #22 in the "lifestyle" category and now rank #269 of all the billions of sites online.

I couldn't be prouder of our loyal visitors (the best adopters in the world), our happy adoption successes and our role as the number one tool used by adoption agencies.

However, none of this is possible without the hard work of the shelter staff and volunteers (who do the real work) and our amazingly supportive sponsors who pay the bills. Together, we re-direct the advertising budgets of top-notch businesses and put those dollars to work to save innocent animal lives in your hometown.

Our mission is to end the euthanasia of homeless pets and help all pets become truly valued members of the family. Be assured, we won't stop until we achieve this goal.

Thank you to all of our friends,

Betsy Saul, Co-founder  
Petfinder.com



**Betsy Saul (with Sophie)**





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For more information: [pets@petfinder.com](mailto:pets@petfinder.com)

# A Year of Successes



In 2008, Petfinder was directly responsible for facilitating the adoption of more than 2.1 million pets. For about a quarter of our shelter/rescue group members, Petfinder is responsible for 80-100% of ALL their adoptions.

## DELIVERING THE ADOPTERS

At Petfinder, every one of our programs, partnerships and promotions are designed with one objective in mind: to help each and every animal brought to our member groups find their ideal furr-ever home.

And, wow, is it working! In 2008, we helped the **12,500 shelter and rescue organizations** that make up the Petfinder family **adopt out more than two million** dogs, cats, rabbits, hamsters, guinea pigs, mice, birds, turtles, horses, pigs and more.

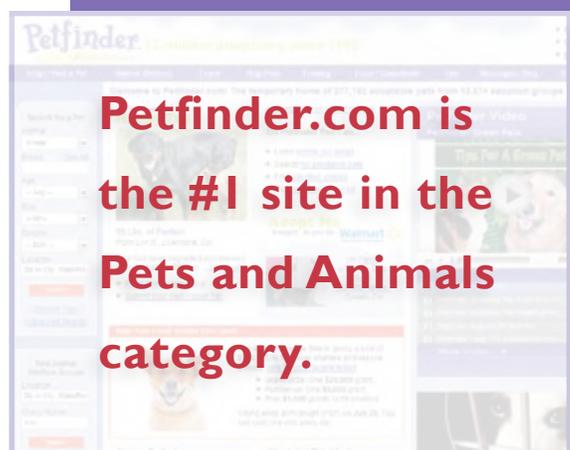
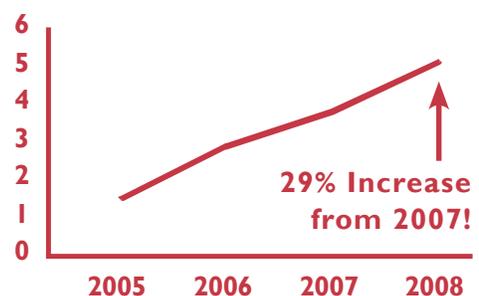
### ***Petfinder Drives Traffic***

In 1996, Petfinder.com's first full year online, we were getting a few thousand visitors a month. Today, that number has grown to **5.2 million—a 29% increase just in the last year**. Visitors stay for an average of 20 minutes and view an average of 36 pages.

But, of course, it's not just about the numbers. Our goal is to attract the RIGHT people—potential adopters looking for their next addition to the family and pet parents who want relevant and reliable information to help them give their pets the best possible life.

That's why, in addition to being the #1 site on the Web in the Pets and Animals category, we're thrilled to be climbing in the broader Lifestyle category, where we're now **#22**. And of ALL the sites on the Web, we come in 269th! This is a positive sign that more adopters are coming back to Petfinder for training and other resources. Petfinder is the place to go for all things pet!

**Petfinder.com Unique Visitors:  
Average Per Month in Millions**



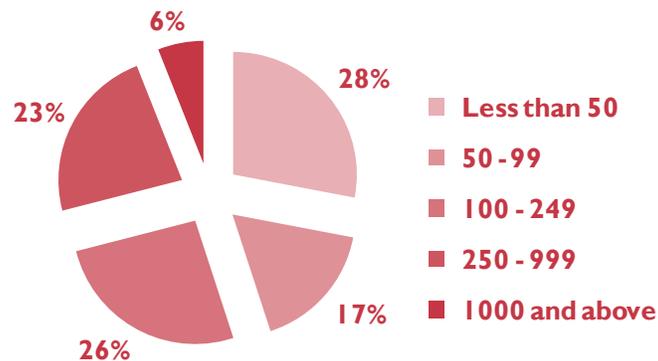
Source: Hitwise

## Who Are Our Members?

Petfinder members include many kinds of adoption groups, including shelters, rescue organizations, humane societies and SPCAs. In 2008, Petfinder added almost **1,700 new members** (more than 30 a week), bringing us to a total of more than **12,000** across the United States, Canada and Mexico.

And a busy bunch they are! Our members care for **273,000 animals** and together they post more than **2,000 pets a day** to Petfinder.com.

### Member Segmentation: Number of Pets Adopted Annually



## EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Petfinder is committed to helping our members be successful in their placement efforts. In 2008, we offered several training and development opportunities to share best practices in animal care, marketing, fundraising and client relations.

### Conferences

Our Outreach team meets with over **7,500 Petfinder member staff and volunteers** at 30 state, regional and national animal welfare conferences per year. We also provide **over \$25,000 in direct financial sponsorship** support for these events. Last year, our staff shared their expertise by presenting workshops on a wide range of topics, from “Marketing Your Pets to Increase Adoptions” to “Managing Wildlife and Feral Cat Issues.”

### Adoption Options

Petfinder’s Adoption Options is the **largest national hands-on animal welfare training program** in the country. We invite nationally renowned speakers to discuss some of the newest and most innovative ideas in animal adoptions, focusing on placement, promotion and behavior.



Last year, Petfinder developed and delivered **19 Adoption Options events**, directly reaching more than **1,500 attendees**.



*“Being involved with Petfinder is the best thing we ever did, for adoptions, support and enormous benefits we could never have hoped for on our own, and you can quote me!”*

**Rosemary Lee**  
**Yonkers Humane Society**

### **Webinars**

In partnership with Best Friends Animal Society, Petfinder delivered a number of webinars for members to discuss common issues such as feral cats, lost pets and cat handling in shelters. Each webinar featured representatives from our member groups who could share their own perspectives and experiences. In 2009, Petfinder will be expanding this program, including offering sessions for the general public.

## **CONTESTS AND GIVEAWAYS**

Contests and other special promotions are a great way to create awareness for Petfinder, drive traffic to the site, provide direct financial assistance to our members and generate enthusiasm among the public for our mission.

### **To The Rescue Sweepstakes**

Working with sponsor, SC Johnson, an Oust sweepstakes was created specifically for Petfinder members, providing five \$1000 awards as well as free product.

### **A Dog Named Christmas**

This member giveaway offered a free copy of the book *A Dog Named Christmas*, a heartwarming tale about an adopted dog’s impact on a family—and the whole town. The book also directs readers to Petfinder.com right on the jacket.



## **CATS RULE**

Petfinder solicited ads from the general public to promote cat adoption. The winning ad was awarded a full page in *Cat Fancy* magazine, with a call to action for readers to visit Petfinder and adopt a homeless cat.

## MEDIA PLACEMENTS

Petfinder has developed a strong reputation as a thought leader for a wide range of pet-related issues, such as animal welfare, population management and disaster planning. Perhaps that's why so many media outlets—newspapers, magazines, TV, radio and online—turn to us when they need expert sources for their pet-related coverage. Thanks to our outreach efforts, in 2008 Petfinder received **more than 37 million media impressions**.



“Need a little love in your life? Skip the online dating sites and head to Petfinder instead.”

—TIME Magazine, “50 Best Websites 2008”

### More Than Just Good for Our Egos

The huge visibility we receive from our marketing efforts:

- Drives more families to adoption when choosing their next pet
- Positions Petfinder.com as the leading online pet adoption resource
- Helps Petfinder shape the nation's conversation on issues, policies and practices regarding pet adoption
- Generates public awareness and excitement for specific programs like fostering and seasonal initiatives



In a 2007 survey, more than 90% of members rated Petfinder's promotional efforts as "excellent."

## ADVERTISING

The Outdoor Advertising Association of America produced a high-impact ad campaign (a donation valued at three quarters of a million dollars per month) for bus shelters and billboards in Boston, New York, Chicago and Los Angeles.



## CROSS-PROMOTIONS

As a member of the Discovery Communications family, Petfinder has a unique opportunity to promote our services through a variety of Animal Planet programs. In addition to casting and editing support, promotions included links to Petfinder.com from Animal Planet microsites,



### **Puppy Bowl**

This beloved alternative to that "other" football game garnered a record **eight million viewers** in 2008. Petfinder provides the event with their puppy participants as well as the kittens leading the half-time show.

### **Petfinder TV**

This series matched shelter animals with families searching for their perfect pets. Thirteen episodes aired in 2008.



## TV EXPOSURE

In 2008, 23 different Petfinder banners were aired more than 550 times during Animal Planet programming to promote Adopt-a-Months as well as general and breed-specific adoption.



## PARTNERSHIPS

By partnering with other organizations that share our mission, Petfinder is able to provide additional financial and other assistance to our member organizations.

### *Maddie's Fund*

Maddie's Fund is a charitable foundation that was created to honor the memory of Maddie, the founders' beloved Miniature Schnauzer. Petfinder and Maddie's Fund continued our annual competition in 2007 to develop innovative marketing strategies for hard-to-place pets.

### **A Winning Campaign**

With election season in full swing, the Michigan Humane Society (MHS) set forth on a campaign—Race to the Right House—to endorse some important candidates of their own: special-needs adoption animals who are often overlooked by those seeking a pet. Their creative marketing idea won MHS a \$20,000 prize in the Maddie's Fund/Petfinder Marketing Competition.

More than \$300,000 was awarded to 121 Petfinder members for the clever and imaginative methods they've used to place elderly, disfigured, blind, deaf, unattractive and shy pets as well as dogs and cats with medical and behavioral problems.

## The ARS Shelter+ Challenge

The Animal Rescue Site \$100,000 Shelter+ Challenge and Petfinder.com brought in **millions of votes cast** to benefit 65 Petfinder member organizations.

A \$25,000 grand prize, \$10,000 runner-up, state and regional prizes plus \$1,000 weekly prizes were distributed. The contest was so popular that The Animal Rescue Site is repeating it with us again in 2009, **offering another \$100,000** to benefit Petfinder shelters and rescue groups.



### PETCO

As part of their Think Adoption First program, all PETCO stores now offer their customers an in-store option to search for adoptable pets through a Petfinder-powered kiosk.

*“On behalf of New England Border Collie Rescue, Inc., I just wanted to thank you VERY much for sponsoring this contest and for all Petfinder does on a regular basis to help homeless pets ... As an all-volunteer organization, this prize will go a long way towards helping these dogs.”*

**Monique E. Fisher**  
New England Border Collie  
Rescue, Inc.

**Connecticut State Winner of  
the ARS Shelter+ Challenge**

### HAPPY TAILS

These success stories are what we're all about. Not only do they give our members a chance to bask in the glow of another successful placement, they encourage prospective adopters by reminding them of the joy that companion animals bring to our lives every day.



### DAISY

Adopted by  
Nancy of Allentown, PA  
From Whiskers in Waiting, NJ

## TOOLS FOR SUCCESS

The more tools available to an adoption group, the better their chances of success. That's why, in 2008, Petfinder delivered a variety of new resources to our members.



### Resources Directory

This is a directory of services and supplies offered by local merchants. Petfinder members who also offer services beyond adoption receive a free listing, providing them with exposure to **more than five million visitors a month** that can lead to additional opportunities to generate revenue.



#### Marin Humane Society

171 Bel Marin Keys Blvd.  
Novato, CA 94949

(415) 883-4621

<http://MarinHumaneSociety.org>

The Marin Humane Society is a progressive, award-winning animal shelter, offering a myriad of community services including adoptions, foster care, behavior and training, humane education, lost-and-found pet services, low-cost clinics, and more.

(0 reviews) [Be the first to rate this listing!](#)

### Breed Guide

One of the most important decisions potential pet parents must make is choosing a breed that will fit in well with their family. Petfinder now offers a searchable guide to cat and dog breeds to help adopters find their *purr-fect* match.



### Petfinder Blog

We encourage all our members to contribute to our blog, where they can share their thoughts on pet-related issues and current events.



### Searchable Happy Tails

Petfinder.com visitors can browse or search through our extensive database of success stories, reading heartwarming tales about successful adoptions.



## Guide to Filing for Nonprofit Status

Many members could benefit from filing for 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status but the process is daunting to say the least. To help members navigate the bureaucracy, we've created a comprehensive step-by-step guide.

[www.petfinder.com/501c3](http://www.petfinder.com/501c3)

With so many great tools available for our members, is it any wonder that nearly 1 in 10 homes with a pet has a Petfinder adoptee?

*“THANK YOU SOOOO MUCH for letting us know about that 501c3 section!!! It’s exactly what I’ve been riding myself to do lately and I didn’t know where to even start!!!”*

### More Prominent Video Presence

Members can now enhance their pet listings with videos, increasing their animals’ appeal. In 2008, **more than 40,000 videos** were posted to the site.



### Social Networking

Petfinder has begun developing a presence on popular social networking sites (such as MySpace and Facebook) to help get our pro-adoption message out to an even wider audience.



Kelly Gibson  
Puggles and Pitties  
Pet Rescue

## Now in '08! Petfinder Goes Mobile

Petfinder Mobile lets you take your pets on the road—via cell phones, BlackBerrys and iPhones. The possibilities are endless—from being able to show off pets who could not make it to an adoption event to diverting would-be purchasers at the pet store window to your much cooler adoptable pets!



# Petfinder.com Foundation



The Petfinder.com Foundation is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) public charity whose mission is to ensure that no pet is euthanized for lack of a home.

## SUPPORT DURING ROUGH TIMES

We know the financial challenges adoption groups struggle with in the best of times. But when our members are faced with additional pressures, whether from a natural disaster, a sudden influx of animals rescued from an abusive situation or a recession-related drop in donations, the challenges can seem overwhelming.

The Petfinder.com Foundation, managed by Executive Director Liz Neuschatz, was created in 2003 to further assist adoption partners through problem solving, fundraising and providing relief in times of stress or disaster.

One example of its work came about when our member survey revealed that more than 40% of adoption groups who need an emergency generator don't have one. So the Foundation partnered with Merial's Paws to Save Pets and HONDA Power to provide a generator to 450 groups across the country. The Power to the Paws program kicked off in 2008 and distribution will continue throughout 2009.

The Foundation's Sponsor a Pet program has proven to be another boon to our members' fundraising efforts, raising almost \$100,000 last year.

In total, the Foundation awarded more than \$1,000,000 in cash and product grants to our members in 2008, taking some of the added pressures off their plate so they could continue focusing on their mission of finding permanent homes for their animals.

*“Last spring when a tornado passed through White Plains, about 1 mile from our kennel, the first call I got to see if we were all right was from someone at Petfinder. I will never forget that act of kindness.”*

**Bob and Chris Thorowgood  
Jack's Place, Inc.**

## GRANTS AWARDED

### **Cat Hide Perch and Go Boxes**

These cleverly designed boxes give shelter cats a place to both hide and/or perch, depending upon their preference. The box (a specially coated/durable cardboard) also converts to a cat carrier—with each cat's own familiar smells—that adopters can use to take him or her home. Studies have shown these boxes reduce stress (and therefore, illness) in both the shelter and the cat's new home.

The Petfinder.com Foundation, together with the PETCO Foundation, made a grant of **80,000 Hide, Perch and Go units** to select Petfinder members. Pima Animal Control (PACC) reports that 100% of their cats are using the boxes and instantly feel more comfortable in the kennel. PACC Animal Care Advocate Justin Gallick stated that he “would definitely recommend that all shelters get the HPG boxes.”



### **Disaster Relief Grants**

In 2008, as hurricanes, tornadoes and floods wracked the nation, Petfinder staff reached out to our member shelter and rescue groups. In personal calls with over 750 members, we asked them what they needed most and the Petfinder.com Foundation, in partnership with Merial's Paws to Save Pets, provided **over \$400,000 in grants to 84 Petfinder members.**



## MS. PIGGY

Adopted by  
Melissa of Battle Creek, MI  
From Heartland Small Animal Rescue Inc., IN

In 2008, the Petfinder.com Foundation awarded more than \$1,000,000 in cash and product grants.

**Power to the Paws \$1,000,000  
Generator Donation Program**

With support from Merial's Paws to Save Pets and HONDA Power, the Foundation has notified over **450 Petfinder members** that they will receive a power generator to assist with disaster preparedness planning. As you can see, the first set delivered have already "generated" lots of excitement at the recipients' shelters, including Basset Rescue Network Inc. and 2nd Chance Rescue. Fulfillment will continue throughout 2009.



*"Wow—thank you SO MUCH!  
This has been a horrible year  
with the temp being below  
zero a lot more than usual.  
It is a constant worry to me  
wondering if the heat will  
go out. We of course have  
contingency plans, but having  
a generator means one less  
worry for me—and that means  
a lot."*

Lori Drew  
Center for Avian Rehab



**Sponsor a Pet Program**

Many of the visitors to Petfinder.com want to help the pets they see there but are not able to adopt one of them right then and there. That's why we developed the Sponsor a Pet program, which gives our supporters the power to fundraise on their own Petnotes pages. Almost 950 Petfinder member shelters and rescue groups participated in the SAP program in 2008, receiving **more than 2500 donations and raising close to \$100,000.**

# Looking Forward



With so many successes in 2008, we're fired up and ready to continue our winning ways.

## **WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?**

Petfinder and the Petfinder.com Foundation are continuing to develop innovative programs and services to help our members achieve their objectives.

Our areas of focus for 2009 are increasing visibility for the "adoption first" message, sharing best practices for a number of topics (for example, shelter operations and animal care) and technical and administrative enhancements to allow members to spend less time on routine clerical tasks and more time on high-impact activities that have a more direct effect on improving rates of adoption.

*"It's hard to imagine what we did before Petfinder.com. Petfinder adoptions account for three out of every five dogs we place. We placed 1,000 pets last year!"*

**Susan Ragland  
Animal Rescue Force**

## FOR MEMBERS

### ***Sharing Best Practices***

In 2009 we will launch a series of “Best Practices” for shelters and rescue groups to help our members take their operations to the next level. By making adoption not only the ethically right choice, but also an excellent experience through high-quality customer support, members will be able to increase their community support, which translates into lifesaving support for pets.

### ***Partnerships, PR and Marketing***

Creating greater public awareness of the importance of choosing adoption first is always a top priority for Petfinder. Our team is currently busy developing new themes and angles to increase our media coverage, creating a series of promotional sponsorship opportunities and expanding our presence in social media.

### ***Upgraded Administrative System***

Major additions and improvements to the management system will allow enhanced data tracking of pets within Petfinder and improve member efficiency and reporting capabilities.

## New Ad Council Campaign to Send People to Petfinder.com

For more than 60 years, the Ad Council has created some of the most compelling and memorable public service campaigns for print, broadcast media and the Internet. (Think “Friends don’t let friends drive drunk.”)

This year, the Council is developing its first-ever animal welfare-oriented campaign in partnership with the Humane Society of the United States and Maddie’s Fund. Its call to action will direct viewers to a Web site that will allow people to search for adoptable pets (powered by the Petfinder listing database), as well as other resources to emphasize the joy that comes from adopting a pet.



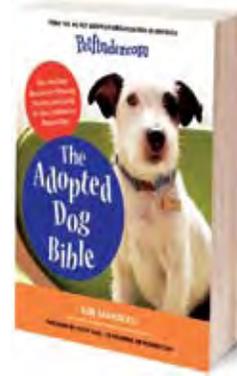
For more information, visit the Web site at:

**[www.theshelterpetproject.org](http://www.theshelterpetproject.org)**

## The Adopted Dog Bible

Written by our Vice President of Shelter Outreach and Public Relations, Kim Saunders, this book that was published in January 2009 provides potential adopters and new pet parents a comprehensive guide to building a strong and long-lasting relationship with their new canine companion.

Members can use the book as a fundraising tool by reselling copies purchased for a volume discount.



## FOR THE PUBLIC

### **Improved Site Search Capabilities**

We are making upgrades to provide significant improvements in the speed, flexibility and power of our search function to better serve potential adopters and help them easily connect with their perfect matches.

### **New Content Pages**

We believe that the more valuable information we can provide pet parents to help them deal with common issues, the more engaged they will be with Petfinder and the more likely they will be to return when they decide to add another new family member.

In 2009, we're adding comprehensive sections on a variety of topics to make us a one-stop answer shop, including:

- What to know before you adopt
- Your first days with your new pet
- Pet care (grooming, nutrition, safety and more)
- Pet health and veterinary care
- Behavior and training
- Your pet and you (allergies, travel, going green)
- How you can help pets



## GIZMO

Adopted by  
Donna of Woodstock, CT  
From RetroDoggy Rescue, MI

# A Wealth of Resources



Petfinder is committed to providing our members with the programs, tools, services and support they need to achieve their missions. That's why so many of them tell us we're an indispensable key to their success.

## MORE PETFINDER PERKS

Below is a sampling of the wide variety of additional benefits available to our members.

### **Data Syndication**

When an adoption group signs up with us, they're not just getting the power of Petfinder.com. **Our listing database powers 275 popular Web sites** like AOL, Petco.com, Walmart.com, Oodle and Facebook, reaching even more millions of potential adopters every year.

### **Web Site Hosting and Services**

Any animal welfare organization can have free hosting on the Petfinder.com site, where they can add photos, event information, adoption forms, staff information and more—all at no charge.

### **Volunteer Database**

Visitors to Petfinder.com can register with our volunteer database, detailing their specific skills and interests. Members can then search through the listings to find people to help them with their various projects.

### **Event Calendar**

Members can upload information about local fundraisers, adoption fairs and other events they're sponsoring.

### **Kuranda Bed Discounts**

These cots, specially designed for kennel use, are offered to Petfinder members at more than 40% off retail price.

## Ongoing Support

Every year, Petfinder's Support and Outreach team responds to more than 50,000 requests for assistance, from routine inquiries to technical issues to situations requiring law enforcement involvement.

Here are just a few examples of the types of daily services we provided in 2008:

- Wrote and distributed almost 2,000 press releases on behalf of our members
- Created 700+ unique Petfinder.com URLs (e.g. noahsark.petfinder.com instead of www.petfinder.com/shelter/NJ19.html) to enhance member branding
- Created 450+ automatic import accounts so members can upload pet data directly from shelter management software, reducing their administrative burden



Petfinder continues to dramatically increase public awareness of the availability of high-quality adoptable pets and enable shelters and rescue groups throughout North America to continue to increase adoptions. We have made great strides towards our goal of ending the euthanasia of adoptable pets.

**Petfinder**<sup>TM</sup>  
ADOPT A HOMELESS PET

[www.petfinder.com](http://www.petfinder.com)