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PETS IN PRINT ADVERTISING – ARE WE SEEING MORE OF ROVER AND FLUFFY? A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF FOUR POPULAR MAGAZINES

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ABSTRACT

This content analysis of advertising in four popular magazines investigates whether the role of pets—specifically dogs and cats—has changed as they have grown in popularity and power in American culture. Analysis of print advertisements from 1994 and 2004 suggests that although the frequency with which household pets appear in print advertisements has declined slightly, portrayals of “Rover” and “Fluffy” have changed to reflect society’s growing fascination with and devotion to our furry family members.

INTRODUCTION

A dog on a leash pulls its master toward a flock of flushing pigeons in an advertisement for asthma medicine. A cat serenely naps on the couch next to a couple of apartment dwellers fretting about their home loan application in an ad for a mortgage company. A billboard purchased by a check cashing company displays two dogs - a large dog (Big Cash) and a much smaller companion dog (Little Cash).

Our favorite household pets play various roles in advertising—as major players in the key message, as message “catalysts” illuminating a key point, or as background characters that merely set a tone or mood for an ad. The connection they have to the product, service or idea being communicated occasionally is direct (i.e. a pet product), but more often is indirect, and sometimes is, arguably, outright nonexistent (i.e. a golden retriever appears in an ad for medicine). Although advertising creative directors have used dogs and cats in advertising for years, Americans’ indulgences in their pets have changed drastically (Kennedy & McGarvey, 2008). Nationally, pets account for more household spending than ever before. Whereas in previous generations, Rover and Fluffy may have gotten a bed, some food and occasional trips to the veterinarian, today’s pet owners pour money into such things as designer pet clothes, gourmet pet food, pet daycare, healthcare insurance for their pets and other products and services that make life for Rover and Fluffy more comfortable and secure (Ellson, 2008).

Likewise, the importance pets play in the lives of their owners has increased. More than mere companions, Rover and Fluffy now are likely to be treated by their owners as surrogate children, best friends, and partners that add priceless value to life. Holbrook (2008) agrees the role of pets as animal companions has been well documented. This supports the research of Fielding (2008). Utilizing the November 2007 Harris Poll survey data which found nine in 10 pet owners consider their pets members of their family, Fielding (2008) found women are more likely to support this statement (93% to 84%) and dog owners are more likely than cat owners to consider pets family members (93% to 89%).

If advertising reflects and amplifies cultural values, and if dogs and cats have attained positions of power in American culture, then one would expect to see dogs and cats play more significant or visible roles in advertisers' creative strategies.

The question this research attempts to answer is: How have the changed roles and increased value household pets play in our lives been reflected in advertising?

Financial and Social Significance of Pets

Pets have become a central part of American life and have, in recent years, even been credited with having a direct positive effect on the health of their owners (Allen, 2003). Pet owners represented 69.1 million (sixty-three %) American households and of these households, forty-five % had multiple pets (Wallenfang, 2005). As further reported by Wallenfang (2005), dogs numbered 73.9 million and were present in 43.5 million households while cats numbered 90.5 million and were present in 37.7 million households. As pets have become more and more important in the lives of their owners, it only stands to reason that marketers and advertisers would portray pets more in their communication messages.

Consumers spent \$34.4 billion dollars in 2004 (double 1994 figures) and \$36.3 billion in 2005 (APPMA, 2006) on their pets (not adjusted for inflation). During the December holidays 55% of dog owners spend an average of \$13 on Rover, and although only 37% of cat owners purchase gifts for Fluffy, those who indulge their feline companions spend \$30 per cat (Wallenfang, 2005). According to the APPMA National Pet Owners Survey, basic annual expenses for dog and cat owners include:

	DOG	CAT
Surgical vet visits	\$574	\$337
Food	\$241	\$185
Kennel boarding	\$202	\$119
Routine vet visits	\$211	\$179
Groomer/grooming aids	\$107	\$ 24

	DOG	CAT
Vitamins	\$123	\$ 32
Treats	\$ 68	\$ 43
Toys	\$ 45	\$ 29
TOTAL	\$1, 571	\$ 948

While the numbers indicate increased levels of spending for pets, there is also an increase in the types of products purchased for pets. Spending across all sectors from pet food and veterinarian care to toys and treats reflects the lengths Americans are willing to go to maintain their pets' healthy and happy lifestyles. In addition to basic services pet owners are willing to provide, other services purchased by pet owners include acupuncture, swimming lessons, massages, vacations, psychotherapy, photo shoots, and portrait packages.

To maintain their animals' lifestyles pet owners are active consumers of pet food, luxury products and health care. Pets and pet care has become the seventh largest retail segment in the U.S. (Schmelzer, 2005). Retail chains have emerged to meet the burgeoning needs of pet owners for food, grooming supplies, and veterinary care. PetsMart, for example, posted \$4.67 billion in total sales for 2007 (http://media.corporate-ir.net/media_files/IROL/93/93506/2007_AR.pdf, 2007).

James, McMellon, and Torres-Baumgarten (2004) note pet ownership is a significant new segment of marketing, with differences in pet owner beliefs and attitudes, based on their choice of dog, cat or both dogs and cats as pets. In some instances, dogs and cats have taken the place of children in the lives of their owners. They accompany their owners in travel outside the home, giving evidence to their prominence in their owners' lives. Today major hotel chains have begun marketing to pet owners by welcoming dogs and cats. Accordingly, dogs and cats represent a new segment in the travel market, and they are allowed to fly as passengers on commercial airlines and can even earn frequent flier mileage.

Dogs and cats are the pets most associated with humans in Western culture and are the most common pets in the United States. Ownership of dogs and cats is associated with a number of psychosocial factors including companionship, cognitive development, emotional closeness, and affection. Several factors are driving the increased spending on the care of dogs and cats such as an overall increase in pet ownership and the documented health benefits of owning pets. The physical benefits of owning a dog or cat include an increased chance of surviving a heart attack, blood pressure reduction and lower levels of depression and stress. Child development scholars who have studied the role of pets in children's lives (Thelen, 2000) support pets' role in developing a child's identity and building relationships. Shumway (1999) feels cats and dogs represent a means by which urban apartment dwellers can have sympathy with the larger nonhuman environment with which they otherwise would have limited direct contact. Thus it seems pets are good for the body and the

soul and analysts agree there are untapped areas for growth in the pet industry (Kennedy & McGarvey, 2008).

Although dogs and cats do have a fairly prominent place in society as companion animals for millions of Americans, they have not been studied exhaustively or exclusively in advertising.

Animals in Advertising

Advertisers use animals to attract attention or create a positive feeling about a product. They can be used to transfer desirable cultural meanings such as loyalty, pampering, and caring to products and although their meanings are not standardized across cultures, animals are standard symbols of human qualities (Phillips, 1996).

Harbrecht (1993) agrees animals are universally popular advertising tools. Animals are easily recognized for particular traits, some of which may be used to create an advantage in advertising. Consumers understand the animal meanings and consequently can link these meanings to products. Men prefer advertisements that illustrate loyalty while women prefer advertisements that illustrate a pets' enjoyment of pampering and care by humans (Magdoff & Barnett, 1989).

Using animals in advertising is also a function of efficiency because pets are so easily recognizable. By using the associations that already exist in our culture, advertisers do not have to educate consumers as to what animal characters mean. Since they are so recognizable, dogs and cats can be used as metaphors to efficiently communicate attribute information and transfer meaning between a referent and a brand (Morgan & Reichert, 1999).

In a study of animal images on products, Feldhammer, Whittaker, Monty and Weickert (2002) hypothesized mammals would be more common than fish, birds or reptiles. Cats and dogs were in the majority at 75 % of the labels analyzed and the most common attributes of "strength, power, or tenacity" were favored for the product label messages. Animals often are used as evocative visual symbols in the promotion phase of product marketing (Margulies, 1972 and Wilkie, 1990). Typically animals are used because they are a familiar part of cultures. Phillips (1997) agrees animal symbols are pictorial metaphors used to create and project an image and implicitly communicate information.

In a study of British children's television, Paul (1996) found, while farm animals were dealt with neutrally, family pets (such as dogs and cats) were accorded a positive status in fictional work. One measure of an animal's position in advertising is whether it is made to resemble humans. Anthropomorphism is criticized as being sentimental or an oversimplification of the animal's innate nature. Others, however, see it as an extension of our ability to take the role of the other and to understand the inner world of animals (Lerner & Kalof, 1999).

Pet ownership has been recognized as an important market segmentation tool that transcends product categories. Because pets become associated with self, pet ownership is a separate category

of social identification that influences attitudes and behaviors (McMellon and Torres-Baumgarten 2004).

Advertising Studies

Frogs, dogs, lizards, puppies and a host of other animals have served as spokespersons for a variety of consumer products. Harbrecht (1993) agrees that for some time, advertising agencies have known people around the world respond very favorably to animals in advertisements on television and billboards, in magazines, and newspapers. However, he warns marketers to understand the international and cultural orientations of animals since they may convey different meanings to different groups or cultures.

Lerner and Kalof (1999) studied the message and meaning conveyed by animals in television commercials and how the messages might be subject to alternative readings. The authors found six themes animals portrayed in advertisements: animals as loved ones (a member of the family), as symbols (representation of logos or ideas), as tools (using animals for human use or consumption), as allegories, as nuisances, and animals in nature.

Spears, Mowen and Chakraborty (1996) proposed a model for understanding the impact of the use of animals in advertising. Their content analysis of 500 print advertisements examined the type of animal appearing in advertisements, the product class, and the anthropomorphic state of the animal. They found advertisers selectively associate particular animals with various product categories and found variation by product category when animals are shown in an anthropomorphic state.

Although animals have been the source of limited advertising research, studies have not examined the role of dogs and cats in print advertisements. As the role of pets has changed and increased, it is important to determine if print advertising has changed.

The research questions investigating the changes in a ten-year period of print advertising in this study are:

- 1a. How prevalent are cats and dogs in magazine advertising?
- 1b. Has the percentage of pet advertising in magazines increased during 1994 to 2004?

When cats and dogs appear in magazine advertising:

2. Which is used most often?
3. With which types of products are they most likely associated?
4. Are they more likely to be central figures in the ad or background figures?
5. Is the ad most likely to be a photograph, cartoon drawing, or portrait drawing?
6. Are they most likely to have pet, human or wild animal characteristics?

7. What type of relationship with humans characterizes the role of the pet?
8. What is their function?

METHODOLOGY

Magazines were chosen as the media for the research because magazines continue to remain a viable medium for advertisers. Even though Internet display advertising continues to grow (15.9% increase in 2007 to \$11.31 billion) magazine media has held steady in terms of advertising expenditures. (TNS Media Intelligence, 2008). Consumer magazines incurred a 7.0% gain to \$24.43 billion in 2007 while cable television spending finished 2007 at \$17.84 billion, an increase of 6.5% (TNS Media Intelligence, 2008).

To gauge changes in advertising which include dogs and cats, advertisements from 1994 and 2004 issues of four popular magazines, *Ladies Home Journal*, *Time*, *People*, and *Sports Illustrated*, were examined. These magazines were chosen because of their large circulations and because they reach different audiences. *Ladies Home Journal* first began publishing in 1883 and is the tenth largest magazine in the U.S. in terms of circulation. In 2004, paid subscriptions for this magazine numbered 4,114,353 (Audit Bureau of Circulation website at www.accessabc.com/resources/magazines.htm, 2005).

Ladies Home Journal's audience is primarily female and features stories about health and fitness, relationships, beauty and fashion, homemaking and cooking, and family life. It is published monthly by the Meredith Corporation. *Time*, the nation's first weekly news magazine, was first published in 1923. Paid subscriptions in 2004 rank it 11th in size with a circulation of 4,034,272. *Time* offers news features covering national and international news, as well as science, business and cultural news. *People*, which debuted in 1974, is published by the same parent corporation as *Time*. The magazine is published weekly with content that focuses on celebrity and pop culture news. *People's* audience is mostly young people. In 2004 it was the 12th largest magazine with a circulation of 3,690,387. *Sports Illustrated* was started in 1954 to satisfy the information needs of America's sports fans. Its readership is primarily male. Circulation figures in 2004 rank it the 16th largest with 3,319,300 paid subscriptions (Audit Bureau of Circulation website at www.accessabc.com/resources/magazines.htm, 2005)

Because *Time*, *People* and *Sports Illustrated* are weekly and *Ladies Home Journal* is monthly, random issues of the weekly magazines were selected from each month to generate an equal number of issues for both years. All advertisements of at least a quarter page or larger were examined for the presence of dogs or cats. Besides the magazine name and year, coders recorded whether dogs and cats were present, whether humans were present, the product category of the ad, and how the pets are rendered (cartoon, portrait or photograph). See Exhibit A for the coding sheet used. Variables of interest in this study also required coders to make judgments. For example, coders determined the type of characteristics portrayed by the dogs and cats in the advertisements

(wild animals, pet, or human), their relationship with humans in the advertisements (family member, companion, or none), the functionality depicted (assistant/aide, companion, expert, rescuer, teacher, entertainer, or none) and the centrality of the pet in the ad (central, prop, or background).

Two students majoring in marketing reviewed the advertisements during November and December 2005. After initial training, conducted by two of the authors, a sample of advertisements was coded to determine intercoder reliability for content analysis (See Krippendorff, 1980 for a review of content analysis). It was determined that additional training as well as changes in variable definitions was needed. Vague wording was eliminated and definitions were redesigned to clarify how to examine the advertisements. An intercoder reliability coefficient of 82.4 using Cohen's alpha was achieved in a second reliability assessment.

RESULTS

The findings yield interesting results. The discussion below follows the order of the research questions.

1. a. How prevalent are cats and dogs in magazine advertising?

A total of 4,565 advertisements were viewed of which 132 (2.9 %) had dogs, cats, or both dogs and cats present (see Table 1). Sixty-eight (51.5 %) of these advertisements are from the 1994 sample and 64 (48.5 %) are from the 2004 sample. *Ladies Home Journal* is a monthly and the other magazines are weeklies, thus the number of pages of advertising is greater for this magazine than the other magazines studied. Because of this *Ladies Home Journal* accounted for about four in every ten advertisements reviewed in this study (43.8 % in 1994 and 41.8 % in 2004). Except for *Time* in 2004 and *Sports Illustrated* in 1994 and 2004, the proportion of advertisements with dogs and cats to total advertisements per magazine remains fairly constant, at just over 3% of the advertisements.

Magazine	<i>Time</i>		<i>Sports Illustrated</i>		<i>Ladies Home Journal</i>		<i>People</i>		Yearly Total		Total
	1994	2004	1994	2004	1994	2004	1994	2004	1994	2004	
Total Advertisements with Dogs and Cats Present	14 20.6	4 6.3	7 10.3	7 10.9	30 44.1	33 51.6	17 25.0	20 31.3	68 51.5	64 48.5	132
Presence*											
Dog	13 92.9 26.0	2 50.0 4.3	7 100.0 14.0	7 100.0 15.2	15 50.0 30.0	23 69.7 50.0	15 88.2 32.6	14 70.0 30.4	50 73.5 52.1	46 71.9 47.9	96 72.7

Table 1: Presence of Dogs and Cats in Advertisements

Magazine	Time		Sports Illustrated		Ladies Home Journal		People		Yearly Total		Total
	1994	2004	1994	2004	1994	2004	1994	2004	1994	2004	
Cat	1 <i>7.1</i> 6.3	0	0	0	15 <i>50.0</i> 93.8	7 <i>21.2</i> 53.8	0	6 <i>30.0</i> 46.2	16 <i>23.5</i> 55.2	13 <i>20.3</i> 44.8	29 <i>22.0</i>
Dog & Cat	0	2 <i>50.0</i> 40.0	0	0	0	3 <i>9.1</i> 60.0	2 <i>11.8</i> 100.0	0	2 <i>2.9</i> 28.6	5 <i>7.8</i> 71.4	7 <i>5.3</i>

*The top number represents the number of advertisements in the sample for that cell. The second number (in bold italics) represents the percentage of advertisements in that cell to the total advertisements that year for that magazine (ex: $13/14 = .929$). The third number (in bold) is the percentage of advertisements in that cell to the total number of advertisements for that category for that year (ex: $13/50 = .26$).

1. b. Has the percentage of pet advertising in magazines increased during 1994 to 2004?

In 1994, 68 of the 2,504 advertisements in the four magazines reviewed featured pets. In 2004, of the 2,061 advertisements in the four magazines, 64 featured pets. The results indicate the number of advertisements (as a percentage of the total advertisements) has increased only slightly (2.7% in 1994 to 3.1% in 2004) and this increase is not significant (at the 0.05 level).

2. When cats and dogs appear in magazine advertising, which is used most often?

According to this sample, dogs are more favored than cats by advertising directors by about three-to-one (Table 1). Dogs account for 72.7 % of the advertisements and cats account for 22 % of the advertisements in this study. Only 5.3 % of the advertisements use both dogs and cats. Overall dogs and cats declined in advertisements from 1994 to 2004, but there was a slight overall increase in the number of advertisements featuring dogs and cats together. Dogs gained favor and cats lost their appeal between 1994 and 2004 in *Ladies Home Journal* advertisements. Advertisements with only dogs in *Ladies Home Journal* accounted for 30 % of the advertisements in 1994 (15 of 50) and this increased in 2004 to 50 % (23 of 46) of the advertisements. However, *Ladies Home Journal* advertisements with only cats accounted for 93.8 % (15 of 16) of all advertisements in the sample in 1994 but this decreased to 53.8 % (7 of 13) of advertisements in 2004. Dogs in advertisements were limited in *Time* [13 of 50 (26 %) in 1994 and only 2 of 46 (4.3 %) in 2004]. Cats gained ground in advertising in *People*. There are no advertisements in the sample from *People* featuring only cats in 1994 but in 2004 six of the 13 advertisements (46.2 %) featured only cats.

3. When dogs and cats appear in advertisements, with which types of products are they most likely associated?

Dogs and cats are used to sell non-pet products in a majority of the advertisements in this study (Table 2). Advertisements for pet products (food, grooming, hygiene, health and other pet products) account for 48.5 % of the advertisements. In 1994, 38 (55.9%) of advertisements with dogs and cats present were for pet products, compared to 26 (40.6%) of advertisements in 2004. Overall, non-pet products were the subject of 30 (44.1%) advertisements in 1994 and non-pet advertisements increased to 38 (59.4%) in 2004. *Ladies Home Journal* and *People* exhibited this pattern.

Magazine	<i>Time</i>		<i>Sports Illustrated</i>		<i>Ladies Home Journal</i>		<i>People</i>		Yearly Total		Total
	1994	2004	1994	2004	1994	2004	1994	2004	1994	2004	
Total Advertisements with Dogs and Cats Present	14 20.6	4 6.3	7 10.3	7 10.9	30 44.1	33 51.6	17 25.0	20 31.3	68 51.5	64 48.5	132
Product Category*											
Pet Products/Services	4 28.6 10.5	0	0	1 14.3 3.8	23 76.7 60.5	18 54.5 69.2	11 64.7 28.9	7 35.0 26.9	38 55.9 59.4	26 40.6 40.6	64 48.5
Non-Pet Products/Services	10 71.4 33.3	4 100.0 10.5	7 100.0 23.3	6 85.7 15.8	7 23.3 23.3	15 45.5 39.5	6 35.3 20.0	13 65.0 34.2	30 44.1 44.1	38 59.4 55.9	68 51.5

* **The top number** represents the number of advertisements in the sample for that cell. The second number (in bold italics) represents the percentage of advertisements in that cell to the total advertisements that year for that magazine (ex: 4/14 = .286). The third number (in bold) is the percentage of advertisements in that cell to the total number of advertisements for that category for that year (ex: 4/38 = .105).

4. When cats and dogs appear in advertisements, are they more likely to be central figures in the ad or background figures?

The pet is the central character in 62.1% of advertisements (See Table 3). Dogs and cats are a prop for a central character in 18.9 % and are background and/or periphery in another 18.9 %. No significant shift occurred in these variables in 2004 as compared to 1994. *Ladies Home Journal* had a significant increase in the prop-to-central-character and *People* had an increase in the pets as central characters category.

Magazine	<i>Time</i>		<i>Sports Illustrated</i>		<i>Ladies Home Journal</i>		<i>People</i>		Yearly Total		Total
	1994	2004	1994	2004	1994	2004	1994	2004	1994	2004	
Total Advertisements with Dogs and Cats Present	14 20.6	4 6.3	7 10.3	7 10.9	30 44.1	33 51.6	17 25.0	20 31.3	68 51.5	64 48.5	132
Centrality*											
Central Character	4 28.6 9.5	0	3 42.9 7.1	4 57.1 10.0	24 80.0 57.1	22 66.7 55.0	11 64.7 26.2	14 70.0 35.0	42 61.8 51.2	40 62.5 48.8	82 62.1
Prop to Central Character	7 50.0 58.3	3 75.0 23.1	1 14.3 8.3	0	2 6.7 16.7	8 24.2 61.5	2 11.8 16.7	2 10.0 15.4	12 17.6 48.0	13 20.3 52.0	25 18.9
Background/periphery	3 21.4 21.4	1 25.0 9.1	3 42.6 21.4	3 42.6 27.3	4 13.3 28.6	3 9.1 27.3	4 23.5 28.6	4 20.0 36.4	14 20.6 56.0	11 17.2 44.0	25 18.9

* **The top number** represents the number of advertisements in the sample for that cell. The second number (in bold italics) represents the percentage of advertisements in that cell to the total advertisements that year for that magazine (ex: 4/14 = .286). The third number (in bold) is the percentage of advertisements in that cell to the total number of advertisements for that category for that year (ex: 4/42 = .095).

5. When dogs and cats appear in advertisements, is the ad most likely to be a photograph, cartoon drawing, or portrait drawing?

The most common way of depicting a dog or cat in magazine advertising, according to this sample, is using a photograph (see Table 4). Two-thirds of the total advertisements in this study use photographs, whereas 19.7% use cartoon drawings and 13.6 % use portrait drawings. The use of photography to show a dog or cat in advertising increased in this study in 2004 as compared to 1994. In 2004 the use of cartoons and portraits to show dogs and cats in advertising fell to 7.8 % each and the use of photography increased to 84.4%. Considering the four magazines studied, a significant shift occurred in both *Ladies Home Journal* and in *People*. *Ladies Home Journal* relies on cartoon and portrait drawings in 63.3 % of the advertisements and photography in 36.7 of the advertisements in 1994. But in 2004, *Ladies Home Journal* has cartoon and portrait drawings in 12.2% of pet advertisements and relied on photographs in 87.9% of the advertisements. *People* shifted from 41.2% use of cartoon and portrait drawings in 1994 to 90 % photography in 2004.

Table 4: Rendering of Pets in Advertisements

Magazine	Time		Sports Illustrated		Ladies Home Journal		People		Yearly Total		Total
	1994	2004	1994	2004	1994	2004	1994	2004	1994	2004	
Year	1994	2004	1994	2004	1994	2004	1994	2004	1994	2004	Total
Total Advertisements with Dogs and Cats Present	14 20.6	4 6.3	7 10.3	7 10.9	30 44.1	33 51.6	17 25.0	20 31.3	68 51.5	64 48.5	132
Rendering of Pet*											
Cartoon Drawing	1 <i>7.1</i> 4.8	1 <i>25.0</i> 20.0	2 <i>28.6</i> 9.5	1 <i>14.3</i> 20.0	16 <i>53.3</i> 76.2	2 <i>6.1</i> 40.0	2 <i>11.8</i> 9.5	1 <i>5.0</i> 20.0	21 <i>30.9</i> 80.7	5 <i>7.8</i> 19.3	26 19.7
Portrait Drawing	4 <i>5.9</i> 30.8	0	1 <i>14.3</i> 7.7	2 <i>28.6</i> 40.0	3 <i>10.0</i> 23.1	2 <i>6.1</i> 40.0	5 <i>29.4</i> 38.5	1 <i>5.0</i> 20.0	13 <i>19.1</i> 72.2	5 <i>7.8</i> 27.8	18 13.6
Photograph	9 <i>64.3</i> 26.5	3 <i>75.0</i> 5.6	4 <i>57.1</i> 11.8	4 <i>57.1</i> 7.4	11 <i>36.7</i> 32.4	29 <i>87.9</i> 53.7	10 <i>58.8</i> 29.4	18 <i>90.0</i> 33.3	34 <i>50.0</i> 38.6	54 <i>84.4</i> 61.4	88 66.7

* **The** top number represents the number of advertisements in the sample for that cell. The second number (in bold italics) represents the percentage of advertisements in that cell to the total advertisements that year for that magazine (ex: 1/14 = .071). The third number (in bold) is the percentage of advertisements in that cell to the total number of advertisements for that category for that year (ex: 1/21 = .048).

6. When dogs and cats appear in advertisements, are they most likely to have pet, human or wild animal characteristics?

Maintaining pet-like qualities for dogs and cats in advertising is the most desired strategy for advertisements in this study (Table 5). About seven in every ten advertisements with dogs and/or cats (69.7%) depict them with pet characteristics. Seventeen of the 132 advertisements in this study (12.9%) show dogs and cats with human characteristics and 15.9% of the advertisements use dogs and cats with both pet and human characteristics simultaneously. No advertisements portray dogs and cats as having wild animal characteristics, nor are any dogs and cats given both wild animal and human characteristics, nor are there advertisements with all three characteristics (wild animal, pet and human qualities) present.

Table 5: Characteristics of Pets in Advertisements

Magazine	<i>Time</i>		<i>Sports Illustrated</i>		<i>Ladies Home Journal</i>		<i>People</i>		Yearly Total		Total
	1994	2004	1994	2004	1994	2004	1994	2004	1994	2004	
Total Advertisements with Dogs and Cats Present	14 20.6	4 6.3	7 10.3	7 10.9	30 44.1	33 51.6	17 25.0	20 31.3	68 51.5	64 48.5	132
Pet Characteristics*											
Wild Animal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pet Animal	7 50.0 14.9	3 75.0 6.7	2 28.6 4.3	3 42.9 6.7	25 83.3 53.2	27 81.8 60.0	13 76.5 27.7	12 60.0 26.7	47 69.1 51.1	45 70.3 48.9	92 69.7
Human	2 14.3 15.4	1 25.0 25.0	3 42.9 23.1	2 28.6 50.0	5 16.7 38.5	0	3 17.6 23.1	1 5.0 25.0	13 19.1 76.5	4 6.3 23.5	17 12.9
Wild Animal & Pet Animal	0	0	0	0	0	2 6.1 100.0	0	0	0	2 3.1 100.0	2 1.5
Wild Animal & Human	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pet Animal & Human	5 35.7 62.5	0	2 28.6 25.0	2 28.6 15.4	0	4 12.1 30.8	1 5.9 12.5	7 35.0 53.8	8 11.8 38.1	13 20.3 61.9	21 15.9
All Three	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

* **The** top number represents the number of advertisements in the sample for that cell. The second number (in bold italics) represents the percentage of advertisements in that cell to the total advertisements that year for that magazine (ex: 7/14 = .500). The third number (in bold) is the percentage of advertisements in that cell to the total number of advertisements for that category for that year (ex: 7/47 = .149).

7. When cats and dogs appear in advertisements, what type of relationship with humans characterizes the role of the pet?

Nearly six in every ten advertisements (59.1%) have pets but no humans present (Table 6). In advertisements with humans, however, the dog or cat is presented as a family member nearly half the time (46.3%) and as a companion about a quarter of the time (25.9%). No relationship is depicted in 27.8 % of the advertisements in this sample. Dogs and cats enjoyed a significant shift in status. Only 32% of the advertisements depict the relationship pets have with humans as a family member in 1994, but in 2004, 68% of the advertisements show dogs and cats as family members.

Table 6: Relationship of Pets to Humans in Advertisements

Magazine	Time		Sports Illustrated		Ladies Home Journal		People		Yearly Total		Total
	1994	2004	1994	2004	1994	2004	1994	2004	1994	2004	
Total Advertisements with Dogs and Cats Present	14 20.6	4 6.3	7 10.3	7 10.9	30 44.1	33 51.6	17 25.0	20 31.3	68 51.5	64 48.5	132
Advertisements with Dogs and Cats But No Humans*	8 57.1 16.7	1 25.0 3.3	3 42.9 6.3	1 14.3 3.3	23 76.7 47.9	19 57.6 63.3	14 82.4 29.2	9 45.0 30.0	48 70.6 61.5	30 46.9 38.5	78 59.1
Advertisements with Dogs and Cats and Humans	6 42.9 30.0	3 75.0 8.8	4 57.1 10.0	6 85.6 17.6	7 23.3 35.0	14 42.4 41.2	3 17.6 15.0	11 55.0 32.3	20 29.4 37.0	34 53.1 62.9	54 40.9
Relationship with Humans											
Family Member	3 50.0 37.5	0	2 50.0 25.0	1 16.7 5.9	0	8 57.1 47.1	3 100.0 37.5	8 72.7 47.1	8 40.0 32.0	17 50.0 68.0	25 46.3
Companion	1 16.7 14.3	0	0	1 16.7 14.3	6 85.7 85.7	5 35.7 71.4	0	1 9.1 14.3	7 35.0 50.0	7 20.6 50.0	14 25.9
No Relationship Depicted	2 33.3 40.0	3 100.0 30.0	2 50.0 40.0	4 66.7 40.0	1 14.3 20.0	1 7.1 10.0	0	2 18.2 20.0	5 25.0 33.3	10 29.4 66.7	15 27.8

* **The** top number represents the number of advertisements in the sample for that cell. The second number (in bold italics) represents the percentage of advertisements in that cell to the total advertisements that year for that magazine (ex: $3/14 = .214$). The third number (in bold) is the percentage of advertisements in that cell to the total number of advertisements for that category for that year (ex: $3/8 = .375$),

8. When dogs and cats appear in advertisements, what is their function?

Companionship is the function most commonly portrayed by dogs and cats (see Table 7). When functionality is portrayed, companionship accounts for 51% of the advertisements. The pet-as-expert is depicted in 33.3% of the advertisements where functionality is portrayed. Portrayals of pets as assistants or aides to humans and depictions of pets as rescuers were not present in this study. No functional relationship is depicted in 61.4% of the advertisements.

Table 7: Functionality of Pets in Advertisements

Magazine	Time		Sports Illustrated		Ladies Home Journal		People		Yearly Total		Total
	1994	2004	1994	2004	1994	2004	1994	2004	1994	2004	
Total Advertisements with Dogs and Cats Present	14 20.6	4 6.3	7 10.3	7 10.9	30 44.1	33 51.6	17 25.0	20 31.3	68 51.5	64 48.5	132
No Functionality Portrayed*	10 <i>71.4</i> 25.0	4 <i>100.0</i> 9.8	4 <i>57.1</i> 10.0	4 <i>57.1</i> 9.8	17 <i>56.7</i> 42.5	19 <i>57.6</i> 46.3	9 <i>52.9</i> 22.5	14 <i>70.0</i> 41.1	40 <i>58.8</i> 49.4	41 <i>64.1</i> 50.6	81 <i>61.4</i>
Functionality is Portrayed	4 <i>28.6</i> 14.3	0	3 <i>42.9</i> 10.7	3 <i>42.9</i> 13.0	13 <i>43.3</i> 46.4	14 <i>42.4</i> 60.9	8 <i>47.1</i> 28.6	6 <i>30.0</i> 26.1	28 <i>41.2</i> 54.9	23 <i>35.9</i> 45.1	51 <i>38.6</i>
Type of Functionality of Pet in Ad											
Assistant/Aide to Human	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Companion	3 <i>75.0</i> 25.0	0	2 <i>66.7</i> 16.7	2 <i>66.7</i> 14.3	5 <i>38.5</i> 41.7	6 <i>42.9</i> 42.9	2 <i>25.0</i> 16.7	6 <i>100.0</i> 42.9	12 <i>42.9</i> 46.2	14 <i>60.9</i> 53.8	26 <i>51.0</i>
Expert	0	0	1 <i>33.3</i> 7.7	1 <i>33.3</i> 25.0	6 <i>46.1</i> 46.2	3 <i>21.4</i> 75.0	6 <i>75.0</i> 46.2	0	13 <i>46.4</i> 76.5	4 <i>17.4</i> 23.5	17 <i>33.3</i>
Rescuer	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Teacher	0	0	0	0	0	3 <i>21.4</i> 100.0	0	0	0	3 <i>13.0</i> 100.0	3 <i>5.9</i>
Entertainer	1 <i>25.1</i> 33.3	0	0	0	2 <i>15.4</i> 66.7	2 <i>14.3</i> 100.0	0	0	3 <i>10.7</i> 60.0	2 <i>8.7</i> 40.0	5 <i>9.8</i>

* **The** top number represents the number of advertisements in the sample for that cell. The second number (in bold italics) represents the percentage of advertisements in that cell to the total advertisements that year for that magazine (ex: 3/14 = .214). The third number (in bold) is the percentage of advertisements in that cell to the total number of advertisements for that category for that year (ex: 3/12 = .250).

DISCUSSION

This content analysis of magazine advertising portraying dogs and cats gives mixed results. If pets have become more central to the lives of many Americans and dogs and cats have attained greater positions of power in American culture than ever before as suggested by sociologists, psychologists, and marketers, one would expect to see an increase in their use in advertising and a

shift in the portrayals of dogs and cats in advertising to reflect their more central role in the lives of consumers.

However, the frequency with which pets appear in magazine advertising shows a slight decline between 1994 and 2004, but the varying portrayals of dogs and cats do suggest recognition of their growing power and changing role in Americans' lifestyles. The total number of advertisements with dogs and cats in this study decreased slightly from 1994 to 2004 (51.5% of the total advertisements with pets in them in 1994 and 48.5% in 2004). But, the advertisements in which dogs and cats appeared shifted from 1994 to 2004 from being predominantly pet products/services (55.8% in 1994) to predominantly non-pet products/services (59.5% in 2004). This suggests that over this period of time advertisers began to see greater value in portraying the relationship humans have with their pets across a broader range of products/services than just pet-related products/services. This is also reflected in the presence of pets in advertising across all non-pet product/service categories coded in the 2004 sample.

In 1994 dogs and cats were more likely to be used in advertisements for pet-related products, thus they could be viewed as "experts" for the products that meet their wants and needs. In 2004, dogs and cats were used in more advertising for non-pet products which emphasized their companionship role to the product users. In terms of their centrality in the advertisements, in both the 1994 and 2004 samples when pets appeared, they were likely to be the central character in the ad (61.8 % in 1994 and 62.5 % in 2004).

How pets are depicted in advertisements in either drawings or photographs also suggests a shift, albeit slight. Cartoon drawings of pets were used in nearly one in every three advertisements (30.9%) in the 1994 sample, but in 2004 cartoon drawings were used in less than 10 advertisements (7.8%). The use of photographs to depict pets, on the other hand, increased from 50 % in 1994 to 85% in 2004. In other words, in 2004 pets were more likely to be used by advertisers as real players with important roles in humans' lives, as photography reflects, rather than imaginary, fantastical creatures as cartoon drawing suggest.

One would expect the characteristics of pets portrayed in advertising to reflect a similar shift over this period of time, but that is not the case. Dogs and cats with pet characteristics were portrayed in about half the advertisements in both the 1994 sample (51.1 %) and the 2004 sample (48.9 %) and pets with human characteristics experienced a decline (19.1 % in 1994 to 6.3 % in 2004). This could be due to decline in use of cartoon drawings in which pets can take on human characteristics. Dogs and cats with both pet and human characteristics increased (11.8 % in 1994 to 20.3 % in 2004) but this accounted for a small proportion (15.9 %) of all advertisements with dogs and cats.

Pets' relationships with humans showed a dramatic change between 1994 and 2004 as pets were portrayed as more integrated into humans' lives. In 2004 half the advertisements with pets and humans portrayed pets as members of the family. In 1994 pets were nearly as likely to be shown as mere companions (35%) as family members (40%).

No functionality was portrayed in nearly six in every ten advertisements with pets (61.4 %) in the total sample. Of those that did, companionship was the dominant function (19.7 %) and pets-as-expert was the next most dominant (12.9%) across the total sample. Companionship increased (42.8% in 1994 and 60.9 % in 2004) and pets-as-expert decreased (46.4% in 1994 and 17.4% in 2004). This likely reflects the shift in the types of products for which dogs and cats appeared in advertising.

CONCLUSION

This content analysis of 1994 and 2004 issues of four popular magazines, *Time*, *People*, *Ladies Home Journal* and *Sports Illustrated*, has examined the role dogs and cats play in advertising. Pets have achieved a prominent status in American consumers' lifestyles as reflected in the myriad of products and services aimed at pet owners and documented by sociologists and psychologists. This study investigates whether or not magazine advertising reflects this status change. Results indicate that although the frequency of use of pets in magazine advertising actually shows a slight decline in 2004 from 1994 levels, the ways in which dogs and cats are portrayed do reflect a recognition on the part of advertisers that pets play a more important role in consumers' lives than ever before. This is suggested by the variety of product/service advertising in which pets appear and a greater tendency to show pets as fully integrated into the everyday life of consumers and in the companionship role.

Because of the static nature of print, analyzing print media advertising presents some challenges, especially when judging relationships between characters. An examination of television advertising in which relationships between characters are more fluid would provide a richer examination of variables related to this facet. Magazines included in this study were chosen because of their circulation size and appeal to diverse audiences. Examinations of other publications, for example family-oriented periodicals (example: *Good Housekeeping*, and *Southern Living*), might yield different results. The time periods examined in this study, 1994 and 2004, also offer a restricted period in which shifts in pets used in advertising are expected to occur. An examination over a longer period of time would likely reveal more dramatic changes.

Magazines continue to remain a viable medium for advertisers even though Internet display advertising continues to grow (15.9% increase in 2007 to \$11.31 billion) (TNS Media Intelligence, 2008). According to additional data from TNS Media Intelligence (2008) magazine media has held steady advertising expenditures. Consumer magazines incurred a 7.0% gain to \$24.43 billion in 2007 while cable television spending finished 2007 at \$17.84 billion and increase of 6.5%. However the role of pets in other media should be studied.

Future studies should include broadcast advertising and examine the use of pets in advertising over a longer period of time. Social and cultural characteristics such as single-parent households, adults living alone and aging adults, should be examined to explore how pets are used in advertising

when these characteristics are present. The role of pets in such instances may be different than when they are absent.

A deeper examination of the types of product/service advertising in which pets appear and the attributes associated with pets might reveal information about creative strategy. For example, what characteristics of dogs most amplify product/service attributes and what characteristics of cats might do the same? Further study is also needed to determine consumer reactions to pets in general and specifically to dogs and to cats as well as to determine differences in attitudes, opinions, and interests among pet owners and non pet owners. Also of interest would be if differences can be applied to decision making for marketing and advertising efforts. As pet owners continue to increase the dollars spent on pet related products, the study of pets in advertising should garner more and varied interest.

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EXHIBIT A

Coding Instructions

Summary

You are to examine all advertisements in four magazines: *Time*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Ladies Home Journal*, and *People*. All of these publications except *Ladies Home Journal* are weekly magazines. *Ladies Home Journal* is monthly. Issues of *Time*, *Sports Illustrated* and *People* have randomly selected for each month. You must do this for the years 1994 and in 2004. The purpose of the study is to examine the use and portrayals of dogs and cats in magazine advertising. Advertising tries to evoke emotional responses from consumers and dogs and cats possess characteristics that trigger these responses. About 40 % of American households own at least one dog and 36 % own at least one cat.

What to code

All display advertisements one-quarter page or larger appearing in one of the magazines must be coded. A display ad is the opposite of a classified ad and usually has a large headline and/or illustration, body copy and the company's logo. It is important to code each one so that some idea of number or percentage of advertisements with dogs or cats in them can be determined. If no dog or cat appears in an ad, simply mark the coding sheet appropriately and move to the next ad.

How to code

It is important to use the coding sheet correctly. The coding sheet is the list of variables you need to examine in each of the advertisements. Each variable has a numerical value you must assign from your examination of the ad and write in the space on the far right.

Variables

The variables of interest and an explanation of the numerical values are as follows:

Magazine: 1 = *Time*
 2 = *Sports Illustrated*
 3 = *Ladies Home Journal*
 4 = *People*

Year: 1 = 1994
 2 = 2004

Pet Presence: 1 = None
 2 = Dog
 3 = Cat
 4 = Dog and Cat

Note: If no pet appears in ad mark 1 in the space to the far right, and go to next ad in magazine. Some advertisements may use a dog and a cat. Mark those advertisements 4 in this space. It doesn't matter how many of either or both at this point.

Human Presence: 1 = No
2 = Yes

Size: 1 = one-quarter page
2 = half-page
3 = full-page
4 = two-page
5 = advertising supplement

Note: Most of these are self explanatory. An advertising supplement is a multi-page advertisement. It may have multiple illustrations (cartoons, portraits, and photographs). Treat the entire supplement as one ad.

Product category: 1 = Pet product/service
2 = Non-pet product/service

Note: If the product/service being promoted is neither pet food, pet grooming (combs, brushes, shampoo, etc), or pet hygiene/health (flea and tick powder, heart worm medicine, cat litter, hair-ball remedy, etc.) nor some other product/service aimed at pet owners categorize it as a non-pet product/service.

Number of dogs 1 = none

in the ad: 2 = one
3 = two
4 = three
5 = four
6 = five
7 = more than five

Note: These are categorical data so simply writing the number is not suitable for statistical analysis.

Number of cats See above.

in the ad:

Rendering: 1 = Cartoon drawing
2 = Portrait drawing
3 = Photograph

Note: A cartoon drawing will exaggerate some element of animal(s): big nose, floppy ears, huge gut, long tail, etc. A portrait drawing will be a painting or sketch that attempts to capture what the animal truly looks like. You should know what a photograph looks like.

- Pet characteristics:**
- 1 = wild animal-like
 - 2 = Pet animal-like
 - 3 = Human-like
 - 4 = Wild and pet animal
 - 5 = Wild animal and human
 - 6 = Pet animal and human
 - 7 = All three.

Note: A wild animal-like characteristic will show the animal in a ferocious or threatening pose, or in some setting in the wild (the forest, for example). A pet animal-like characteristic will show the animal in a friendly or companion-like pose or in a setting with humans (family), a yard, a vehicle, or home doing “pet-like” things. A human-like characteristic will show the animal in some pose similar to humans (sitting at a dinner table, driving an automobile, buying a product, speaking English, for examples)

- Setting of ad:**
- 1 = In the home
 - 2 = On the porch/in the yard
 - 3 = In/near a vehicle
 - 4 = At the vet
 - 5 = At a retail store
 - 6 = In the wild
 - 7 = Can’t tell/no background

Note: These are pretty self-explanatory. Make sure to differentiate between a yard and the woods (the wild). By near automobile or truck/SUV this means about to get into, near open door of, and/or looking into the window of these vehicles (they are not in the vehicle but the intent of the illustration is to show they either are about to get into or want to get into the vehicle).

- Centrality of pet**
- 1 = Central character
- in ad:**
- 2 = Prop to central character
 - 3 = Background/ periphery.

Note: Central character means the pet occupies the center of the ad and other elements in the illustration are secondary. Prop to central character means some other element (a human, for example) is the central character and he/she has a dog and/or cat with him/her. Background/periphery means other elements in the illustration are central to the visual focus. The dog and/or cat is/are on the outer edges of the illustration or in the background, behind the central focus.

- Relationship**
- 1 = No humans in ad
- with humans:**
- 2 = Family member
 - 3 = Companion
 - 4 = Other
 - 5 = No relationship

Note: If no humans appear in the ad there can be no relationship with them. Family member means the dog or cat is portrayed as a member of the family (lying on the couch with children, in the backseat of the family SUV, playing in the

yard with children, waiting to be fed, for examples). Companion means there is a sole human character in the ad with whom the dog or cat is identified (A woman is petting her cat, a child petting his/her dog, a man scratching the ears of his dog, a child playing with his/her cat, for examples).

Age of humans in ad: 1 = No humans
2 = Adult
3 = Child
4 = Both adult and child

Note: Advertisements tend to be pretty obvious in their depictions so there should be not trouble differentiating between an adult and a child. Teenagers may present a challenge, however.

Gender of humans: 1 = No humans
2 = Male
3 = Female
4 = Both male and female

Functional portrayal: 1 = Assistant/aide to human
2 = Companion
3 = Expert
4 = Rescuer
5 = Teacher
6 = Entertainer
7 = Other
8 = No functionality

Note: Assistant/aide means the dog or cat is lending its assistance to some human or other animal (a seeing-eye dog, for example). Companion means the dog or cat is portrayed as a faithful friend for a human or other animal. Expert means because of the animal's characteristics, its skills are valued (a cat's balance or a dog's sense of smell, for examples). Rescuer means the pet is coming to the aid of someone in distress (a St. Barnard rescuing a lost hiker, a cat protecting its owner from a mouse, for examples), Teacher means the pet is explaining some "law" or conveying some information needed by the human or animal student (a dog explaining the importance of protein in his/her diet, a cat explaining the essence of independence, for examples). Leader means the pet is given leadership skills that are important for the product/brand (a dog leads its owner through a combat zone, for example). Entertainer means the pet is portrayed as a source of entertainment (playing Frisbee with a dog or dangling a fuzzy ball on the end of a string for a cat to play with, for examples). If there is no category listed for what you see as a distinct portrayal, describe it the space provided and write 7 in the space to the right. If you can see no functionality (a pet is shown standing alone with not background, for example) write 8 in the space to the right.