



30<sup>th</sup> September

### **Britain avoids the *Canine Crunch***

- Site reveals boom in pets market despite economic concerns -

Despite crashing shares and bank collapses, Pets are retaining their market value and their homes, with just 1% of Brits considering getting rid of their much loved companion to save cash.\* Furthermore a staggering 80% say they would rather buy economy food for their family than cut back on their pampered pet's favourite food.

Research from leading classifieds site Gumtree.com reveals that at a time when families are cutting back on household spending, demand for our furry companions is still booming. Latest figures show a 77% increase in postings in the pets section\*\* of the site in the past three months alone.

The cost of a pet's upkeep is not high on the list of priorities when choosing to purchase one. Top two concerns are the type of pet that would suit the household (74%) and whether or not they have enough space for it (67%), with cost being pushed back to third (65%).

Despite costing upwards of £1,000 when you consider pet insurance, training and vet bills, Cats and Dogs are still the two most popular choices according to the poll.\*\*\* Gumtree mirrors the results with 4,340 searches for 'kittens' and 3,630 for 'puppies' each month.

Georgina Periam from Sutton spends on average of £40 a week on her beloved cat 'Geezer'. She says: "I would never dream of spending less on him even though I've been feeling the financial strain and I would rather save money by cutting down on treats for myself than let my cat lose out."

Gumtree's figures point to an optimistic outlook for people like Lucy Kennedy, a London dog-walking business owner who feared for her business following the collapse of Lehman Brothers. Postings in the "dogwalkers" category are up 31% compared with three months ago. Similarly over a quarter (27%) of British households currently employ staff to look after their pet, from pet trainers to dog groomers, with 2% even hiring a professional goldfish feeder!

Gumtree trends analyst Trisha Routledge comments: "It's nice to see that there's at least one group in society that aren't losing out to the economic downturn. Hundreds of people are using Gumtree to snap up pet accessories and others are making a second income by offering dog-walking services. There are even some families checking their pets into dedicated hotels on the site, proving that it really is better off being a pet!"

Pet behaviour specialist, Fiona Whelan, says: "Brits view their pets as one of the family, making the pet industry one of the most recession-proof areas of life. Pets can have a very positive, calming effect on a household, and as more people are staying in to save money, pets are becoming more important to them as they offer both security and companionship."

The ever-growing pets section of Gumtree includes listings such as:

- A pet-owner looking for a loving home for a **cat gym** that her kittens have now grown out of
- A film agency looking for people to register their pets as **film extras** for upcoming movies
- A **dog walker** hiring out her skills for £5 per day and taking xmas bookings now!

**-Ends-**

**For more information or case studies please contact the Gumtree press office at Lexis Public Relations on 020 7908 6589 or email [gumtree@lexispr.com](mailto:gumtree@lexispr.com)**

**Notes to editor:**

\*Omnibus research carried out by Redshift among 1009 adults in September 2008

\*\* Incorporates postings to all sub-pages of the pet section: find a pet; adopt a pet; pet accessories; lost & found; pet sitters/walkers

\*\*\* 37% of people would purchase a dog if buying a pet tomorrow, and 33% would purchase a cat

**About Gumtree.com**

- Gumtree.com was created in London in March 2000 and now covers 60 cities across 6 countries - the UK, and US Ireland, Poland, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa
- It is the UK's biggest website for local community classifieds including flat share, flat rentals and jobs
- Some Fast Facts
  - 20,000 new ads in a day
  - 100,000 new ads in a week
  - Half a million new ads in a month
  - One million ads live on the site at any one time
  - 150 million page impressions every month
  - Around 6 million visitors a month
  - Gumtree.com users spend 5,360,000 minutes on the website each month
- Gumtree is your local community online. Home to all the things you'd expect from your local community; a place to find and advertise rooms, flats and houses, a notice board for selling and buying stuff, somewhere to find job or a date even just to chat with friends