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643  
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# Research Questions

Why and how are **pet micro-celebrities** created?


a. Why do pet owners feel **the need to create social media accounts for their pets**?

b. What **strategies** are implemented by the pet owners managing the accounts (types of posts, captions, and corporate contacts)?

c. Are there different types of **pet micro-celebrity social media account managers**?




# Methodology



**I. 8 out of 20** planned **in-depth interviews** were conducted with pet social media account managers


## Questions inquire about



- The **motivations** behind **managing the accounts**
- How the visual **content** and text captions to be posted on social media are chosen, also known as **Meowlogisms**; i.e. meowmy, pawty, tunatini, purrfect, caturday., furriend, etc.
- The nature of the **relationships** forged **with other online pet accounts**.



**2. Content analysis** of the pet social media accounts.

# (Wo)man's best social media proxy: Pet Micro-celebrities on Instagram





## Context

Instagram is a social media platform which has attracted **700 million** users amongst whom are users classified as **micro-celebrities**.

**Micro-celebrities** are social media celebrities who attract **large numbers of followers**. These followers check the micro-celebrity's **posts religiously** and are consequently

(a) inspired,


(b) touched, or

(c) simply entertained and at times


(d) marketed at.

**Micro-celebrities**, given their influence on their followers, have been **recruited by companies** to **market their products** and **represent their brands**.


A specific form of micro-celebrity with a **HIGH LEVEL** of likeability and authenticity is the **pet micro-celebrity**. Through these accounts, people present their pets with human-like characters, feelings, or behaviors through the use of visual content, and text captions.



**Nala**, the half Siamese, half tabby cat, has **3.7 million followers**.





**Grumpy cat**, with his permanently grumpy expression, has **2.4 million followers**.





**Lil Bub**, the adorable permanent kitten, has amassed **1.9 million followers**.


Pet micro-celebrities are also being recruited by corporations and their owners are compensated, making the phenomenon **lucrative** and **profitable** to engage in.

Cat micro-celebrity **Lil Bub** makes **\$30,000** per YouTube video post, while, **Grumpy cat**, on the other hand, is rumored to have a net worth of **\$100 million!**







## Analysis




**Fame Hounds**  
High DF  
Low DSC



**One-eyed Cats**  
High DF  
High DSC



**Lone Wolves**  
low DF  
Low DSC



**Cat Herders**  
High DSC  
Low DF

High



Low

Low

High

Desire For Fame (DF)

Desire For Social Connection (DSC)



## Contributions

### Theoretical Contributions

- Better understand the medium between the pets and their followers: the social media account manager or the pet owner.

### Managerial Contributions

- Inform current and future social media platforms about **how their platform is being used** by their consumers. Thereby allowing these companies to **improve their product** while bearing in mind its **value to their users**.
- Provide marketers with a detailed understanding of the **existing types** of both **account managers** of the pet micro-celebrities.
- Facilitate a company's task of **choosing a pet micro-celebrity to represent their brand**.