

# Pet ate your iPhone? Licked your laptop? You're not alone, survey shows

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About 1 in 10 U.S. pet owners have had their Fido or Fifi damage one of their electronic gadgets, according to a new survey.

The animals' favorite chew toy: power cords, according to San Francisco-based SquareTrade, which sells extended warranties for laptops, tablets, mobile devices and other electronics.

The survey, which also found that male dogs are 86 times more likely than female pooches to damage a device, was conducted in May by Survey Sampling International, which collected feedback from 1,012 dog and cat owners.

Laura Berry, an educational consultant who lives in Orland Park, Ill., said one of her five cats, 8-year-old Sophie, in March threw up on the keyboard and mouse of her Hewlett-Packard all-in-one computer.

Sophie is a timid cat who spends most of her day in a cardboard box on a kitchen counter.

"In morning I feed her and she comes over and gets cat cookies," said Berry, 59. "She has a weak stomach and just threw up on the keyboard, and it didn't work well after that."

Berry, who is also a member of the board of education of Orland School District 135, then remembered that her HP was under extended warranty with SquareTrade.

"I gave them a jingle, and then sent them a receipt for a replacement keyboard, and they sent me a check," Berry said. She was initially skeptical about extended warranties but said SquareTrade didn't give her any hassle. Berry estimates that it would have cost about \$30 to replace the keyboard.

The question of whether extended warranties are worth it comes up frequently.

Consumers don't have to buy the warranty from the store that sells the item. They can shop around for warranties online like they shop for products themselves, comparing prices and coverage. That's one reason why SquareTrade has become popular for electronics service plans. In 2012, the privately held company raised \$238 million from investors that included Bain Capital.

SquareTrade said it commissioned the survey because it is seeing frequent repairs and replacements from pet-related damage for increasingly popular gadgets. It didn't provide specific numbers on claims it is seeing.

Cell phones account for almost a third of damaged devices, the survey found. The incidents range from a pet knocking the device off a table to vomiting or urinating on it.

Jealousy is believed to be a factor, as a quarter of [pet owners](#) said they were using the electronic item when the pet damaged it. Pets younger than a year old are three times more likely to damage a device than older pets.

To reduce instances of damages from pets, SquareTrade recommends that pets get plenty of exercise so they're less interested in your gadgets; to leave devices up high to make it harder for dogs and cats to get to

them; to conceal power cords for devices and chargers behind furniture; to keep devices away from liquids that might tempt pets; and to use a protective case.

Separately, the survey also found that 1 in 6 pet owners have created a social media account for a pet, and 1 in 4 is a "friend" or "follower" of a pet's [social media](#) account.

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