

Tech tethers dog lovers remotely to their pets

January 8 2016, by Glenn Chapman



Wonderwoof bow-tie shaped activity trackers for dogs were among the innovations at the Consumer Electronics Show virtually tethering people to their canine companions as seen on January 7, 2016 in Las Vegas, Nevada

Gadgets galore are letting dog lovers stay connected to their pets even when they can't take canine companions with them on the go.

A sea of innovations on display at the famously people-centric Consumer Electronics Show on Friday included a wave of technology aimed at those who consider pets cherished family members.

"Everybody loves their pets," said Mike Jander of Trackimo, one of several companies showing off tracking devices that can be affixed to collars and reveal where animals run off to.

A Trackimo clip-on device, which was on display at CES, can send an alert to an owner's smartphone if a dog ventures past a geo-fence—a designated virtual barrier—and then track the pet's whereabouts by satellite, according to Jander.

'Fitbit for dogs'

Wondermento, which has offices in the US and Britain, showed off a bow-tie-shaped plastic activity tracker—the Wonderwoof—that chief technology officer Joe Morsman described as "a Fitbit for dogs."

"There are other pet trackers out there, but this is purely about the health," Morsman said of Wonderwoof.

"This is a fun, social way to exercise your dog."

He recounted leaving his dog at a kennel that promised four long walks daily, only to be shown by the device that the pet got only two brief outings a day.



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"We now do home stays with other dog owners," Morsman said.

Applications tailored for mobile devices powered by Apple or Android software come free with the \$95 Wonderwoof bow tie.

The apps let users see if other Wonderwoof-wearing dogs are out and about. Wondermento plans to add features allowing those owners to connect with each other while out.

"We are trying to accentuate the social element of walking your dog," Morsman told AFP.

"Wonderwoof is also very much a talking point; people stop you to ask what it is."

Wondermento describes the doggy device as a "fashion-forward brand with a fun social element."

The company is working on an enhanced indoor version that will use location sensing to let people know if pets are pining at a door or making unusually frequent trips to water bowls.

The company is also developing an activity tracker for cats.

'Massive market'

"There is a huge interest in [pet](#) wearables," Morsman told AFP.

"It is a massive market."

People don't want to feel they are abandoning their dogs while off at work, he said, and technology is letting them stay virtually tethered.

A Petcube camera that links to wireless internet in homes lets people not only look in on pets but play with them remotely. Owners can use a smartphone app to make a point of laser light appear and flit about in the house while a cat or dog pursues it.

Petcube also has a speaker and microphone so people can talk to pets, whether to comfort them or to stop them from nosing into trash or hopping onto counters.

Petnet was at CES with a SmartBowl that incorporates scales and nutritional information to make sure dogs get just the right amount of food.

"Most people just guess at how much to feed their [dogs](#)," said Petnet founder Carlos Herrera. "This lets them know."

The California company also has a SmartFeeder that lets people remotely monitor eating habits and dispense meals.

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