

# Give pets their own Technology



Wearable tech is no longer just for humans, and with a growing range of collar mounted or microchip operated products for pets on the market, can you afford not to explore the options?

WORDS EMILY FOWLER, PET SPECIALIST JOURNALIST

With the importance of pet welfare continuing to be at the forefront of consumers' minds (and quite rightly so), the market for pet-related technology is developing like never before. Owners are increasingly going to greater lengths to make sure their pets are taken care of, and these days that means more than feeding their favourite treats and giving them a weekly brush.

From tracking pets' movements to monitoring their health, the desire to keep pets safe and healthy has encouraged a booming wearable tech industry for pets. Here's a roundup of the latest and most popular wearable tech for pets, as well as a look at what might be coming on the future.

## Animal tracking devices

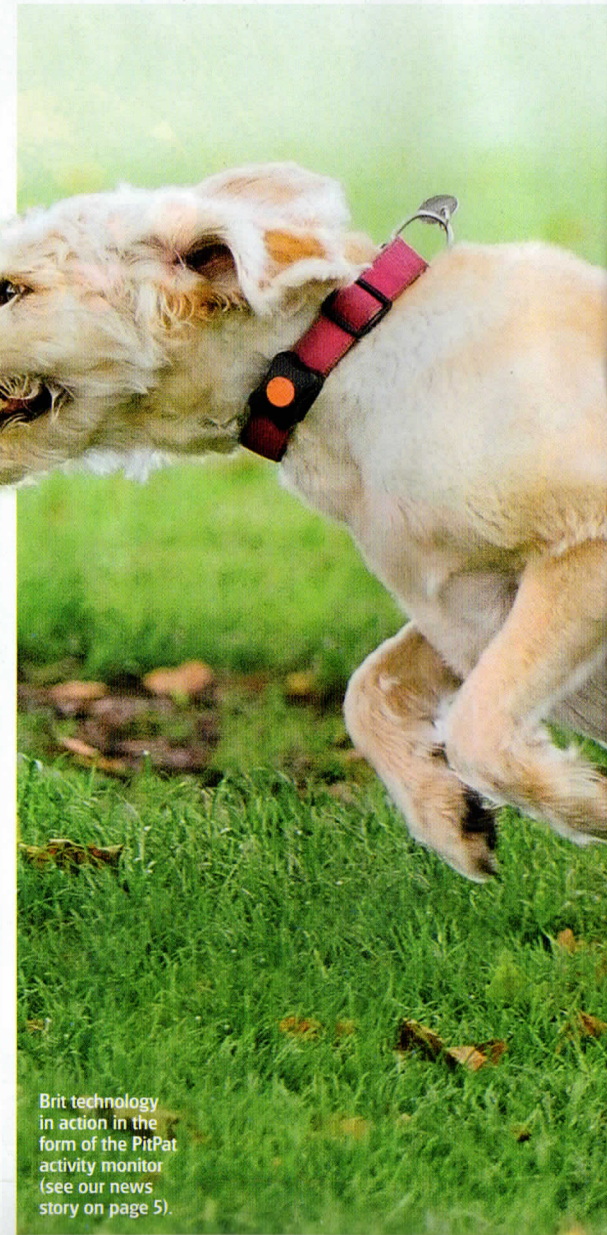
Although exact numbers are hard to gauge, Petlog identified over 70,000 pets



Tractive is a GPS device which works with a choice of subscription plans.

Another product, Tractive for dogs, cats and other pets (for animals over 4.5kg), is a lightweight GPS tracking device that can be attached to your pet's current collar and works in

or even just intrigued, about where their pets disappear to, this is perfect for cat owners who want a better insight into their cat's territory and daily movements. (More info: [www.g-paws.com](http://www.g-paws.com))



Brit technology in action in the form of the PitPat activity monitor (see our news story on page 5).

## Audio/visual gadgetry

Motorola adds to its range of pet monitoring and training devices with the Motorola Scout 5000. A fairly substantial device that mounts onto a collar, the



Although exact numbers are hard to gauge, Petlog identified over 70,000 pets reported missing by their owners in the UK in 2014. Even though cats are more likely to go missing as they're usually free to roam, dogs are also at risk of getting lost when they're off lead or left alone in a garden.

New for 2016, the Tabcat is based on radio frequency technology and will replace Loc8tor's current pet trackers. Marketed as having much greater accuracy than GPS trackers, it has a range of up to 400 feet and comes with lightweight tag collars to be worn by the cat and a slimline handset that allows owners to home in on their missing moggy's location. Part of the attraction of the Tabcat is that there are no monthly fees, unlike GPS tracker services, which makes it a more affordable option for your customers.

Simple to use, the handset displays colour-coded lights that show when the cats are near (each handset can find up to four cats), as well as a series of beeps. (More info: [www.mytabcat.com](http://www.mytabcat.com))



Cat tracking devices can now come with no monthly fees.



G-Paws owners can download a cat's activity.

can be attached to your pet's current collar and works in over 80 countries. With a choice between two monthly subscription plans, the

Tractive also comes with an app that helps owners to manage their pets' vet

appointments and medical information. (More info: [tractive.com/en](http://tractive.com/en))

While the G-Paws GPS Recorder doesn't offer live GPS tracking, it lets owners download their pets' movements after a day spent exploring. Ideal for consumers who are worried,



their cat's territory and daily movements. (More info: [www.g-paws.com](http://www.g-paws.com))

### Feeding solutions

Last year SureFlap capitalised on its already strong position in the pet trade by introducing its SureFeed Microchip Pet Feeder. Working on the same technology as the

The Surefeed solves a problem in multi-pet households.



SureFlap microchip operated cat flap, the SureFeed consists of a sealed food bowl that only opens when a specific cat's microchip or RFID collar tag (included with the SureFeed) is detected, and shuts again when that cat is out of range. The Surefeed device is designed to make multi-cat owners' lives easier, particularly if they have one cat on a veterinary or weight-management diet, or just one greedy cat that pinches the others' food! It can help with some forms of cat stress. (More info: [www.sureflap.com](http://www.sureflap.com))

monitoring and training devices with the Motorola Scout 5000. A fairly substantial device that mounts onto a collar, the Scout 5000 isn't simply a GPS tracker, it also includes a video camera and Wi-Fi connectivity – meaning owners can stream live video of their pet's movements to their phone and even talk to their pet via the collar. Although a UK release date hasn't been confirmed, the launch is sure to follow that of the US. For smaller pets, there'll also be the launch of the Scout 2500, a cheaper and smaller device that doesn't come with a camera. (More info: [www.motorola.com](http://www.motorola.com))

The thrill seekers among your customers will probably already be aware of GoPro's range of 'action cams', and the Fetch™ harness is, unsurprisingly, designed specifically for dogs (suitable for those weighting 7kg to 54kg). Consumers simply mount their GoPro camera (sold separately) either on the back or the chest of their dog's harness and enjoy either 'bone-chewing, digging and front-paw action' (chest mount) or 'over-



Motorola's Scout 5000 allows live video streaming.



GoPro camera mounts for the most talented video artists.



the-head shots of running, jumping, fetch and more' (back mount). The harness itself is padded for a more comfortable fit, as well as washable and water-friendly for dogs who enjoy swimming and splashing around in mud. Just remind your customers to make sure that they're using one of GoPro's waterproof cameras if that describes their dog in action. (More info: [www.gopro.com](http://www.gopro.com))

### Keeping pets safe

Wearable technology has applications around winter safety and visibility, with torches and visibility aids which are collar mounted. One of the best is Orbiloc Dog Dual, a Danish-made LED safety light that can be seen



Orbiloc is a standout visibility product; tough and well designed.

from up to 5km away – it's designed to be clipped over a collar, harness or lead. Five colours of light are available and it's waterproof and tough – it'll withstand a load of 100kg without breaking.

### Pet health monitors

Only available in the UK since early in 2015, the PetPace collar (pictured, right) is currently the only full real-time pet health monitoring system that exists in the world.

Designed to be used with cats and dogs over 8lbs, PetPace monitors factors including temperature, pulse and activity levels and analyses the information it receives. The results are available to owners and vets via their computer or smartphone and any abnormalities are sent

PetPace monitors and analyses activity, pulse and body temperature, and owners receive a text about any abnormal readings.



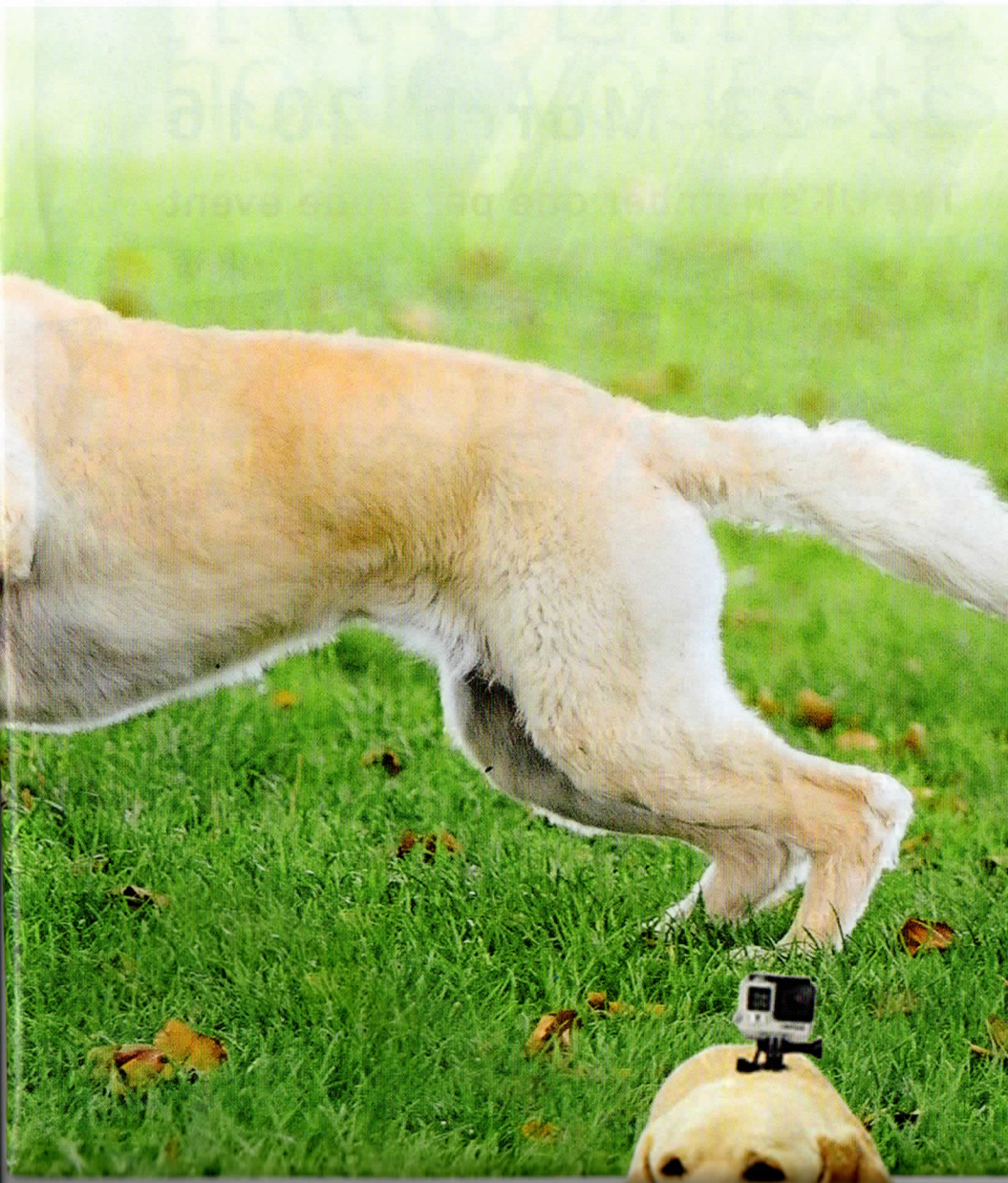
immediately via text.

"We're excited to expand our distribution to UK pet owners," said PetPace CEO Abraham Menkes. (More info: [www.petpace.com](http://www.petpace.com))

The Americans don't have a monopoly on technology that monitors pet health.

The PitPat activity monitor for dogs was unveiled at PATS Telford in the Autumn and is designed and manufactured in the UK. It's collar mounted and measures how much activity a dog has in a day. This data is then synched with a free Android or iOS app which tells owners how much walking, running, resting and playing the dog has been doing and compares it to an exercise goal. 🐾





## The future of pet tech...

Looking ahead to future trends, 'pet tech' doesn't always have to fit into the wearable bracket. The Tailio Smart Health Monitor turns cat litter trays into a system that can monitor the health of pet cats using a combination of a health monitoring unit that sits underneath a litter tray, a smartphone app and comprehensive data analysis. It monitors cats' weight and frequency of visits to the litter tray, both common gauges of illness that owners often miss. With alerts to users' smartphones when issues are discovered (including when the litter needs changing), owners are able to take their cat to the vet as soon as problems arise, which can mean the difference between life and death in some cases.

I asked Alex Treiner, the founder of Pet Wireless (the company behind the Tailio), whether the Tailio would work in multi-cat households, and he confirmed that it wouldn't be a problem, "Tailio identifies

each individual cat based on their data, and can work with any combination of multiple cats and multiple litter boxes in a household, assuming there is a Tailio device underneath each litter box."

The manufacture of Tailio came about following a successful international Kickstarter campaign, and with backers from 25 countries, the UK is the second highest in terms of pre-orders. Tailio starts shipping in March, and the company is keen to talk to UK distributors and retailers. (More info: [www.tailio.com](http://www.tailio.com))

