

SAMSUNG



Pet Living:

How Pet Ownership is Shaping
Technology Use in the Home

Executive summary

Today, there are more European households with pets than with children^{[1], [2]}. As pet ownership continues to increase, so too will demand for technologies that can help pet owners to entertain, care for, and monitor their pets.

During the pandemic, people had the opportunity to spend more quality time with their pets at home than ever before. But now that they are returning to the office and spending more time away from the house, many pet owners are turning to new technologies to help keep their beloved pets happy and healthy.

From smartphone apps that can help train your dog to robot vacuum cleaners that can keep an eye on your pet while you're away, there are already many creative innovations available on the market today.

As our homes become smarter and better connected, the way we take care of our pets will continue to be revolutionised by new smart technologies that are built not only around our own everyday lives and routines, but also around the lives of the pets we share our homes with.

Dr Ilyena Hirskyj-Douglas,
Lecturer in Animal-Computer
Interaction, The University of Glasgow





Samsung has a long history of enriching family life through technology. We know every family unit is unique and, for many people, pets are important family members in their own right. These creatures have taken over our homes as well as our hearts, shaping our behaviour, our attitudes and even our purchase decisions.

Meanwhile, our homes are becoming these smart, connected spaces where all our devices talk to each other and work together seamlessly. But when developing these connected ecosystems, it's not just humans we're innovating for. We carried out the Pet Living survey to explore the phenomenal rise in pet ownership across Europe and to understand how pets are shaping the way people interact with technology.



Benjamin Braun,
CMO for Samsung Europe



There's no
doubt about it:
Europeans are
pet lovers



Europeans love their pets. In fact, for most people, pets aren't just animals, they're family - whether they're furry or feathered.

During the pandemic, the bond between people and their pets was solidified, as people turned to pets for comfort and companionship. With more free time, many people became pet owners for the first time. While 24% of our survey respondents said they adopted a pet during the pandemic, the majority (69%) of people surveyed were already experienced pet owners before the pandemic started.

Even now that lockdowns in Europe have long since lifted, over two-thirds (68%) of owners are still spending most or a big part of their day with their

animal companions - this is highest for pet owners in Spain (78%) and France (77%).

Some people love their pets so much, they simply cannot resist showing them off to the world on social media. Almost half (47%) of pet owners have at least one social media account dedicated to their pet, with Instagram being the most popular platform of choice (27%) closely followed by Facebook (24%). In Italy, the majority of pet owners (60%) have social media accounts for their pets, compared to 35% of owners in the UK.



Time spent with pets, even virtually, is shown to help not only our mental wellbeing - such as reducing stress and anxiety - but also our physical health. But pets need humans around too, not only to meet their basic needs but also for companionship. While some animals might be content with alone time, many pets - particularly highly social ones - can get lonely, depressed, or even suffer from behavioural issues when left at home alone for too long. These behaviours can be destructive, not only to property but to the relationship between the owner and their pet.

Dr Ilyena Hirskyj-Douglas,
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Keeping pets happy and healthy – no matter the cost

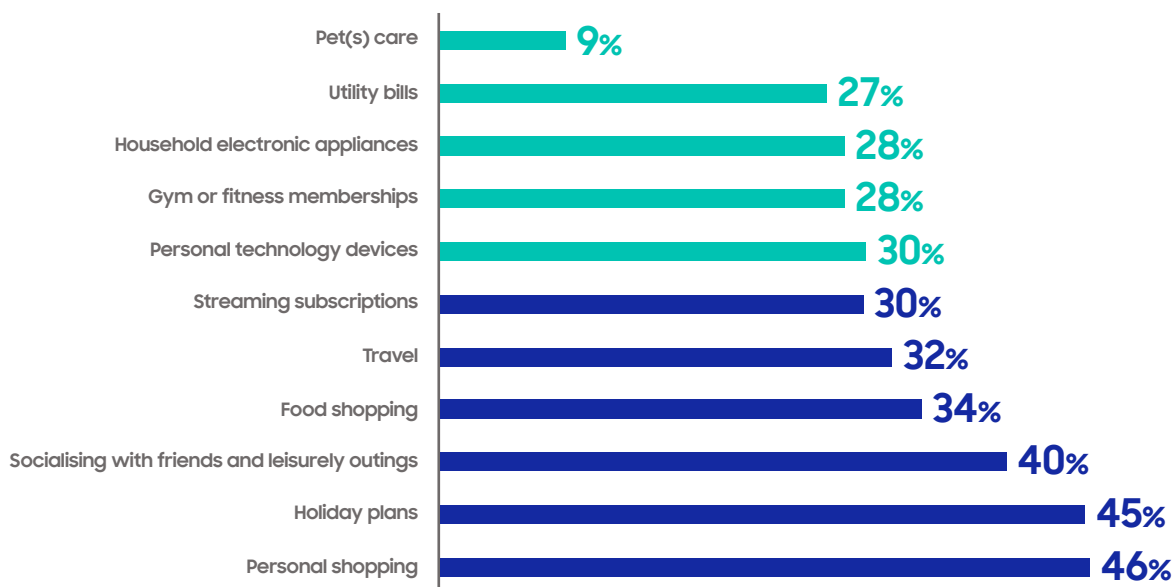
People are willing to go above and beyond to make sure their pets stay happy and healthy – and they aren't afraid to open their wallets to do so.

On average, people spend around €790 a year on their pets, which includes everything from veterinary care and food to accessories, and even high-tech toys to keep them entertained. In fact, 44% of people say they are willing to spend more money on their pets than on themselves.

Even at a time when many households are starting to tighten their belts, owners aren't compromising when it comes to their beloved pets. Just 9%

of survey respondents said they plan to cut down on overall spending on their pets. And 61% said they would make other sacrifices first before they consider cutting back the amount they spend on their pets. In fact, people said they would reduce their spending on necessities like utilities (27%) to leisurely activities and socialising with friends (40%) before their pets.

Which of the following will you not reduce spending on?



61%

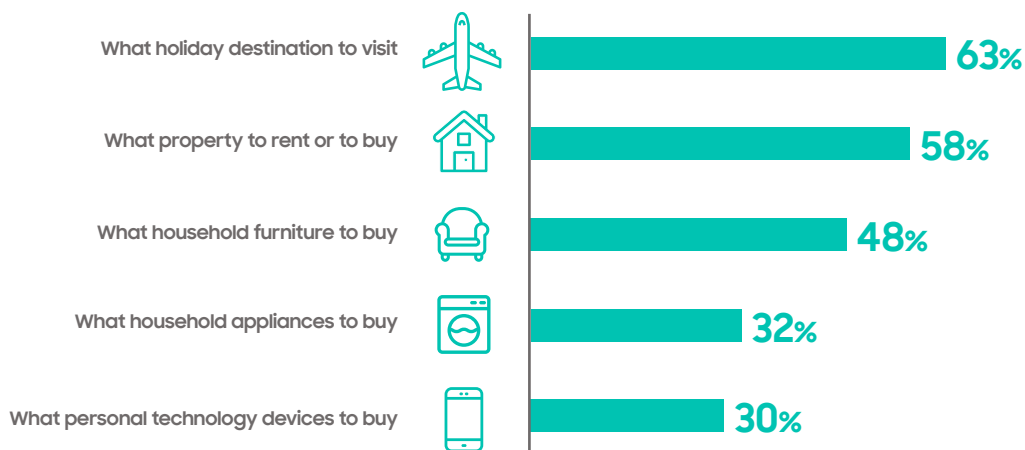
Of pet owners
would make
cutbacks else-
where before
spending less on
their pets



Pet owners are also committed to making their homes comfortable, safe spaces for their animals, even taking them into account when making key spending decisions. Almost half (47%) of owners admitted they have changed their home setup to

accommodate their pets and a third (32%) agreed having a pet impacted their decision-making when buying a new household appliance. A third (30%) also said having a pet impacted their decision on what personal technology device to buy.

My pet is a consideration for me when deciding...



Over half of owners use technology to look after their pets

When it comes to personal technology and smart home appliances, people aren't just investing in products for themselves, many are buying devices for their pets to use too.

From remotely turning on the TV to keep pets entertained to automatic feeders that feed their pets while they're away, pet owners – particularly those that are younger – are investing in technology solutions to help take care of their pets. Over half (51%) of owners use gadgets to care for their pet that aren't intended for animal use, for example tablets or baby monitors, and 16% have purchased personal technology devices just for their pets.

Interestingly, bird owners proved to be among the most tech-savvy pet owners, as they are the most likely to spend money on smart toys to keep their feathery friends entertained, while dog owners are the least likely to splash out on high-tech toys for their canines.



**Bird owners
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owners**



As Internet of Things (IoT) and smart devices flood our homes, pets are also being exposed to these technologies. Many pet owners repurpose their own devices (such as phones, tablets and TVs) to engage with their pets in some way – such as including them on video calls, playing them online videos, remote feeding or using smart devices to track their movements.

As younger generations increasingly adopt smart devices, and as the number of people who own pets also increases, smart technology designed with pets in mind is the natural next step.

Dr Ilyena Hirskyj-Douglas,
Lecturer in Animal-Computer Interaction,
The University of Glasgow



Did you know...



Men typically spend more on their pets than women.



Gen Z and Y spend more on their pets than older generations.



Pet owners in the UK spend the least on smart toys, but the most on entertainment subscriptions for their pets.



When it comes to buying tech for their pets, younger people spend twice as much as older people.

Loneliness is a top concern for most pet owners

As many people have returned to the office after working from home throughout the pandemic, pet loneliness is now a big concern for owners who face leaving their animal companions home alone for extended periods of time.

Nearly half (46%) of people said they are worried about their pets getting lonely when they're left at home, and this is particularly high among younger people – half of pet owners (50%) aged 18-34 said they were worried about their pets getting lonely.

In fact, when it comes to leaving their pets at home, concerns about pets feeling lonely and/or bored topped other worries such as the cost of caring for a pet and the damage pets can cause to their house, furniture or garden. And 36% of people, who owned pets pre-pandemic, said they worry more about their pets now that Covid-19 restrictions have lifted. 41% of people confirmed their pets do suffer from separation anxiety – and it wasn't just dogs or cats who

miss their owners, this was consistent across every animal type, including birds, reptiles and small mammals like guinea pigs. It appears many concerned pet owners may be turning to technology for help, with nearly half (48%) of people who use technology for their pets also worrying about their pets getting lonely.

According to Sian Ware, Senior Lifestyle Researcher at Samsung: "Remote monitoring and smart entertainment can help us to connect and talk to our pets when we are not there, reducing separation anxiety. In addition, being able to switch devices or heating on and off remotely can also help to reduce and manage our energy costs".



Did you know...

Samsung's Bespoke Jet Bot™ AI+ robot vacuum cleaner is a great pet-sitter for while you're out of the house. By patrolling your home and recording video footage of what your pet is up to, Jet Bot™ AI+ is your eyes and ears. It can even remember your pet's usual hangout areas so it knows where to look for them and if your pet hasn't moved in a while, it will send you an alert so you can check-in to make sure they're okay. Plus, through the SmartThings app, you can connect the vacuum to other products around your home, like your TV, so you can switch it on to give your pet some entertainment if they start getting restless. Jet Bot™ AI+ can even play calming music to soothe anxious pets.



As humans, when we think about how we use technology in our own lives we know it's important not to completely substitute real-life experiences with digital ones, instead we use technology to enhance our everyday lives. And the same should be true for our pets. Technology shouldn't detract from the amount of time we spend with our pets; it's not about replacing pet owners with automated robots. Instead, these devices and gadgets can help support pet owners and their animals so they can lead happier, healthier lives together.

Whether it's devices that help keep anxious pets company while they're owners are out of the house or gadgets that encourage pets to play and provide mental stimulation, these innovations have the potential to enrich the lives of pets and the people who care for them.

Dr Ilyena Hirskyj-Douglas,
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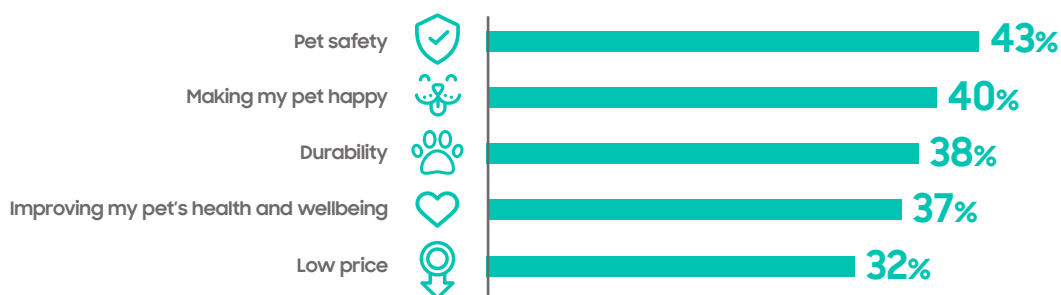
Pet owners turn to technology for a helping paw

People aren't just using technology to stop their pets from getting lonely or bored.

Tech-savvy pet owners would like to use pet tech for a variety of reasons, from cleaning up after their pets using vacuum cleaners (53%), keeping them fed using automatic feeders (49%) and using location trackers to monitor their movements (48%). Of those who do use technology do so to either keep their pets safe (36%) or for their own peace of mind (36%), as well as convenience (33%).

When considering purchasing a new device, appliance or gadget for their pets, people aren't too picky about brand name or aesthetics. Safety is their main concern (43%), followed by making their pet happy (40%), durability (38%), improving their pet's health and wellness (37%) and a low price tag (32%).

Top five considerations when purchasing technology for pets



Pet owners are optimistic about the benefits technology can bring to their pets' lives. More than half of people think technology can help improve their pets' wellbeing (56%), can keep them active (56%), improve their health (52%) and reduce separation anxiety (52%). In fact, there is desire among pet owners for more pet tech innovations; 52% believe that pet-friendly technology should be a standard in smart homes, 49% want to see more pet-friendly technologies and almost two-thirds

(62%) think this is just as important as child-friendly technology.

But in the same way that people are concerned about their own privacy and data, pet owners also want to make sure their pets are protected in this new digital world. Almost half (47%) of survey respondents said they were worried about privacy and 45% were worried about data collection from technology devices and gadgets designed for their pets.

Did you know...

Samsung SmartThings now supports Matter, a new language for smart homes that enables different devices from different brands to talk to each other and work together in harmony. That means you can now control all your Matter-compatible smart devices from one place, which is more secure and convenient.



In our increasingly connected world, data protection and privacy has never been more important. For tech-savvy pet owners who are looking to build a smart home ecosystem that works for their whole family, including their pets, security is a top concern. At Samsung, we work hard to help people protect what matters most to them.

That's why we developed Knox Matrix which acts like your own private blockchain system, protecting all your connected devices and making sure no unauthorised users can gain access to your smart home setup - you stay in control.

Benjamin Braun,
CMO for Samsung Europe



The powerful potential of pet tech

People and pets clearly have a powerful and important bond. It's no wonder that as more people welcome pets into their homes, pet owners are going to ever greater lengths to give these important members of the family the best quality of life they possibly can.

People and pets clearly have a powerful and important bond. It's no wonder that as more people welcome pets into their homes, pet owners are going to ever greater lengths to give these important members of the family the best quality of life they possibly can.

Particularly as the new generation of digital natives – Gen Z and Y – become sole responsible pet owners for the first time, demand for technology that

helps people to take better care of their pets will likely only increase.

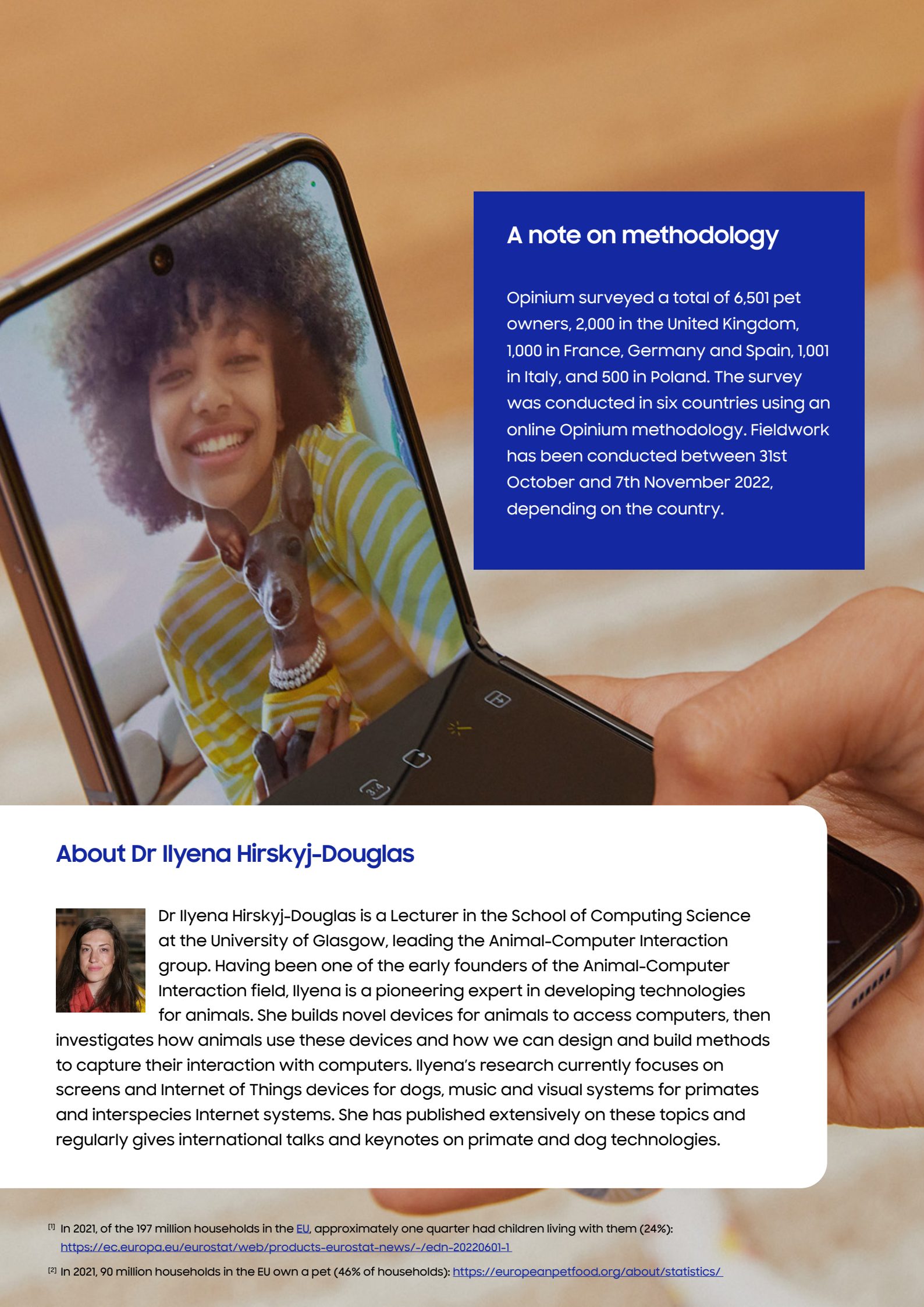
Already, this generation tends to spend more on their cherished pets and are more inclined to turn to technology to help overcome some of the pain points of pet parenthood. So, when coming up with new tech products or services, innovators must bear in mind that they're not just designing for people, they're designing for the animals we share our homes with too.



Most people are now very familiar and trusting in the use of technologies as part of our everyday life and the way in which can help us. Wellbeing technologies such as wearables could be helpful in better understanding the health of our pets. The future of AI and data is also bringing new ways for us to see the world. The more we learn about our pets and how they like to interact with our homes and us the better provision of care we can give to them.

Sian Ware,
Senior Lifestyle Researcher at Samsung





A note on methodology

Opinium surveyed a total of 6,501 pet owners, 2,000 in the United Kingdom, 1,000 in France, Germany and Spain, 1,001 in Italy, and 500 in Poland. The survey was conducted in six countries using an online Opinium methodology. Fieldwork has been conducted between 31st October and 7th November 2022, depending on the country.

About Dr Ilyena Hirskyj-Douglas



Dr Ilyena Hirskyj-Douglas is a Lecturer in the School of Computing Science at the University of Glasgow, leading the Animal-Computer Interaction group. Having been one of the early founders of the Animal-Computer Interaction field, Ilyena is a pioneering expert in developing technologies for animals. She builds novel devices for animals to access computers, then investigates how animals use these devices and how we can design and build methods to capture their interaction with computers. Ilyena's research currently focuses on screens and Internet of Things devices for dogs, music and visual systems for primates and interspecies Internet systems. She has published extensively on these topics and regularly gives international talks and keynotes on primate and dog technologies.

^[1] In 2021, of the 197 million households in the [EU](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/edn-20220601-1), approximately one quarter had children living with them (24%); <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/edn-20220601-1>

^[2] In 2021, 90 million households in the EU own a pet (46% of households): <https://europeanpetfood.org/about/statistics/>