



# Internet Interpet

For those who can't have a real pet at home due to rental accommodation restrictions, age and infirmity, work stresses or other reasons, there's a world of virtual pets available through a variety of sites, key among them is Neopets at [www.neopets.com](http://www.neopets.com) and it's a quirky little site that has been going for more than 10 years. But there are hundreds of sites that have taken it further.

Virtual Pets ([www.virtualpet.com](http://www.virtualpet.com)) has a set of links to faux pet sites, virtual pet games and a bizarre array of YouTube videos. An article in the Wall Street Journal in June titled 'When Dogs and Robots Collide, Somebody Needs a Talking To' by Andrew LaVallee is online here <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB121314664909963011.html>. It showed how that with the proliferations of robotic pets, there will be encounters with real pets and the results can often be hilarious. The real pets can be bewildered, anxious, aggressive, fearful or simply curious. I know that my dogs go ballistic with just a laser pointer's dot on the carpet or walls!

In the YouTube video 'Puppy v.s. Robot! Epic Battle for Territorial Domination!', it shows a small dog interacting with a Roboquad from WowWee. Mr. LaVallee also points out PETA has stepped in to encourage those introducing a robot to a pet household to do so with care. A lady in Larime Wyoming reports her two cats were biting the tail of her Aibo (robotic dog no longer produced by Sony). In order to stop them, she painted a paste made from cayenne pepper and Cholula Hot Sauce on her Aibo's tail. The cats still sniff his "backside" but they don't bite him anymore.

Pleo, the new lifelike robotic dinosaur from UGobe was designed with with "real" pet encounters in mind. John Sosoka, Chief Technology Officer of UGobe, manufacturer of Pleo, reports they did not want Pleo to be so lifelike that it would spark an aggressive reaction from pets. They had considered giving Pleo an animal scent (make it smell like an animal), but rejected that concept due to problems it might create with "real" pets.

UGobe's efforts to make Pleo less threatening to "real" pets apparently were not enough for Candie, a Yorkshire Terrier in Staten Island NY. Candie's owner reports "She's terrified of it. She bites it... That dog really believes it's another animal and apparently, a frightening animal." Candie's owner finally sent Pleo home with his fiancee's mother, who loves it and treats it like a real pet.

Robotic pets are not new. As a matter of fact in 1997 there was a major piece on The Future of the Virtual Pet Industry which covered interactions between real and fake pets, early cell phone virtual pets (which were a generation beyond the Tamigochi virtual pet on a keychain) and even virtual pet patents. It's here at <http://www.virtualpet.com/vp/future/future.htm>.

Virtual Pets World is a 3D world where you can adopt and care for your own virtual pet at [www.virtualpetsworld.com](http://www.virtualpetsworld.com) and it's much like [AdoptMe.com](http://AdoptMe.com) which is a fun website where you can adopt free virtual pets such as dogs, cats, horses, turtles, monkeys, snakes, and fish, and then take care of them online. In addition, your pet will have their own blog and profile page, it can get a job, join a pet group, chat with other pets, send e-greeting cards to other pets, enter the Pet of the Month contest, and dress up in fancy clothes. You can even chat with your pet.

Marapets, at [www.marapets.com](http://www.marapets.com), is a free virtual pet site with 16 fun-filled virtual worlds and dress up dolls. We are always creating and adding new content to the game. Pets on this virtual world are just like ones at home that have to be fed and given water, put to bed. And yes, the pet can die from neglect.

Foopets, at [www.foopets.com](http://www.foopets.com), claim to have the world's most realistic interactive virtual pets and when you go online to see, it's almost like being confronted with that panting puppy in the window. You can design your own pet and play with it by throwing a frisbee, scratch it with your cursor, decorate its room with furniture, collectables and decor from the FooMart and even compete with over two million other virtual pet owners in pet games and other fun.

If it seems silly and ludicrous, all you have to do is check out how seriously Wikipedia defines it at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital\\_pet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital_pet). It's seen as more than just an artificial human companion. They may or may not be goal oriented. They can exist as gadgets like the early Tamagochi, as web based digital pets in the examples above, as well as in artificial pet video games.

Whatever their use or origin, they are fun and well worth having a laugh delving into the virtually free world of them online.



With so many entertaining pet clips appearing on YouTube, we thought we would share a few of the best:

- These clips are of Nora the cat who appears to have aspirations of being a concert pianist

<http://ravenswingstudio.com/NoraWeb/docs/theVideos.html>

- If you have to leave your pet behind when you go to work, here's a way to prevent boredom, and also give your pet exercise as well. This Youtube clip shows that Jerry is really on the ball

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4PcL6-mjRNk>

- This kitty really wants to get the upper paw while attacking this printer problem

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kvBiSW5QFKY>

- This adorable lab is smart enough to know a cat just ain't supposed to be in two places at the one time

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/google/5767373/Dog-confused-by-double-appearance-of-cat-is-YouTube-hit.html>

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mFq\\_eMv6x2g](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mFq_eMv6x2g)