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PET GIZMOS

iPet Companion lets people play with real kitties over the internet

By Ben Coxworth

16:20 March 31, 2011

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iPet Companion is a system that allows internet users to remotely play with cats living in animal shelters, via their computers and in real time
(All images courtesy AprioriControl)

[Image Gallery \(3 images\)](#)

It seems to be one of those "well-known facts" that petting an animal can lower a person's blood pressure – and yes, we're assuming that the animal isn't a piranha. Unfortunately, many people are unable to own a pet, or they at least have to spend their stressful workday away from their cuddly critter. A new system called iPet Companion, however, lets users play with real, live cats – in real time – via the internet.

The business end of [iPet Companion](#) is a robotic device containing three user-movable cat toys, which is set up in the "cat room" of an animal shelter. A high-resolution web camera is pointed at the device, and feeds a live signal to the internet. Users go to the shelter's website and access the iPet interface, then wait in a queue for a free two-minute session at the device's onscreen controls, watching and responding to the live reactions of the kitties.

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