

Working K9 to 5

Some people aren't content with just taking their dog to work with them - they focus their entire careers on their four-legged friends

For many people - including most *Dogs Today* readers, I suspect - dogs are their lives. We read about them, we stop in the street to pat a friendly one, we buy all the coolest accessories and gadgets, we feed them the best, we research the latest veterinary treatments if Fido is ill, and so on. But some people don't stop there. Such is their canine obsession, they even go on to set up their own doggie businesses. But is it always wise to let a 'hobby' become your means of living? We talked to some pet entrepreneurs to find out...

didn't have that facility, so Jenny set up her own web page and invited others to email their own photos to her.

It proved so popular that, in June 2004, Jenny started D for Dog, which consisted mainly of a photo gallery and K9 shrine. "I also included some information on bereavement in the shrine section," says Jenny, "as I felt that the grief at losing a faithful companion was often overlooked."

From here, the site grew and grew, and now includes links and books, where dog lovers can share their views on any good websites they have encountered or books they have enjoyed or found helpful. The services section follows the same principle, allowing dog owners to share information and recommendations. "Finding good and reliable dog groomers, walkers, sitters and the like relies so much on word-of-mouth, so I thought it would be great if dog lovers had a way of sharing this kind of information as well," explains Jenny.

Other site features include information on deaf dogs (Berkeley cannot hear, and Jenny was keen to share what she has learnt in the year since getting him), food and treats (Jenny was horrified that a close friend of hers was not aware of the debates about canine nutrition), lost and found pages, events and news and products.

D for Dog hasn't lost touch with its roots. Its real strength is its interaction with ordinary doggie folk. As well as the K9 shrine, photo gallery and links and services, other visitor pages include a discussion board for people to chat about issues or to ask questions, reader pages (where people can share articles, funnies, quotes and poems), and even a wanted page, for those searching for difficult-to-find items or wanting to buy or sell something canine-related.

There are hundreds of doggie websites on the net, but D for Dog is something else: although it's small, it has a simple, classy design and layout. It's easy to manoeuvre around, and it doesn't blast you with flash gimmicks

that take forever to download!

Since the site went live in October, D for Dog has taken over Jenny's life. She spends every waking hour, outside of her day job, working on the site, and she dreams of being able to dedicate herself to it full-time.

"I work in the oil industry, but I'd love to work in the dog world - dog people are just so much nicer!" says Jenny. "And who wouldn't want to do their hobby as a job? As it is, as soon as I get home from work, until the moment I go to bed, I am working on D for Dog. I'd love to dedicate myself full-time to the site."

D for Dog is still very much in its infancy, but despite only being a few months old, it already has a devoted following - with anything up to 95,000 hits a month. This is despite receiving no publicity - word spreads fast in dog circles!

So will Jenny achieve her ambition of turning her back on the world of JR Ewings and embracing the cosy canine world where flea talk and chats about anal sacs dominate? Her only outgoing is £11 per month on web space (she gives her time freely), but how can such a site ever make money and pay her a salary?

Two options: firstly, by selling ad space or finding sponsors, which could compromise the editorial independence of the site, or secondly, to sell things through D for Dog. This Jenny has started to do, and, in her own inimitable style, she's managed to find a way of selling things without selling out, so to speak. All the items are handpicked by Jenny as unusual, particularly useful, or recommended to her by other dog lovers. If it's not good enough for Boycie or Berkeley, it doesn't go on the site shop!

While Jenny can't give up her day job just yet, hopefully sales will pick up as more people get to hear about D for Dog and pay it a visit. Whatever your interest in dogs, it's certainly worth adding to your 'favourites' list - and maybe you'll manage to help someone achieve a burning ambition, too!



From oil to toil

Name:	Jenny Prevel
Business:	D for Dog
Field:	Website
Inspiration:	Boycie (a Bedlington Terrier) and Berkeley (a Whippet-Jack Russell cross)
Contact:	www.dfordog.com, info@dfordog.com

A committed dog lover, Jenny Prevel, from Sydenham, London, is a frequent browser of the internet and visitor to doggie discussion forums. Exchanging doggie tips and stories with others, she wanted to show her virtual friends photos of her two special boys - rescue dogs Boycie (aged nine years) and Berkeley (aged five) - but the chatroom