

Competitive Analysis: PetGoodies.com

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The competitive analysis was conducted to aid in the development of PetGoodies.com, an online pet supplies store. This analysis is focused on three main competitors: PETSMART.com, Drs. Foster & Smith, and JB Wholesale Pet Supplies.

The existence of these competitors indicates that there is a large market for selling pet supplies and products online. Two of the competitors offer not just pet supplies, but also books, magazines, videotapes as well as an extensive online database of pet resources, including information on pet education, training and health care. This suggests that PetGoodies.com might benefit from extending its product offering beyond main pet supplies. One of the competitors also offers a Pond category, a wide selection of water plants resources, which could be good content for PetGoodies.com.

There are some common labeling and organizational schemes for product browsing within three competitors. Further examination of these schemes will likely prove helpful in determining the content for PetGoodies.com.

Certain content and functionality appear to be common and should be included in the PetGoodies.com website:

- Grouping of products by pet category
- Selling books, magazines and videotapes with pet content
- Providing online articles on pet subjects
- Providing links to other valuable pet resources
- Providing a quick search by product number (for returning customers) and keyword
- Allowing users to comment on products
- Offering an affiliate program
- Supporting online tracking order status
- Offering various shipping options
- Offering specials and sale items

Competitor 1: PETSMART.com (<http://www.petsmart.com/>)

PETSMART.com - The smarter way to shop for your pet - Microsoft Internet Explorer

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Address <http://www.petsmart.com/>

Search Products for:

Start Shopping: [dog](#) [cat](#) [bird](#) [wild bird](#) [fish](#) [reptile](#) [small pet](#)

[Banner Ad](#) | [Email Newsletter](#) | [Register](#) | [Quick Re-Order](#) | [gifts](#) | [top sellers](#)

TODAY'S SPECIAL:
\$5 OFF
Your \$30 Pet Supply Purchase
[Click here.](#)
See site for details
Or add coupon code = GOODBOY at checkout. Expires 2/11/02.

Featured Sections

- [Cat Beds](#)
- [Cat Furniture](#)
- [Treats & Biscuits](#)
- [Grooming Essentials](#)

Featured Buys

- [Heated Window Sill Porch](#)
Only \$39.99
For the window watcher who wants to stay warm.
- [Bulk Bones](#)
was \$39.99 now \$49.99
Premium rawhide at a terrific price.

Answers

- [101 Ways to Be Kind to Animals](#)
- DOGS**
[Smart Pet Guide to Your New Dog](#)
- CAT**
[Smart Pet Guide to Your New Cat](#)
- BIRD**
[Choosing the Right Bird For You](#)
- WILD BIRD** *New!*
[Attracting Birds to Your Backyard](#)
- FISH**
[Smart Pet Guide to Your New Fish](#)
- REPTILE**
[Your First Lizard: Everything to Know](#)

Store Information

[Find a store near you.](#)

smart fact
Daily dental care can lengthen your pet's life.
[More Smart Facts](#)

- [Smart Saturday - Learn More!](#)
- [PETSMART Store Ad](#)
- [Corporate Information](#)
- [PETSMART Charities](#)
- [PETSMART Employment](#)
- [PETSMART Grooming](#)
- [PETSMART Training](#)
- [Veterinary Services](#)

Great Deals

Bundle up your four-legged Valentine in one of our many heartwarming sweaters!

Keep your pet warm and safe this winter. Visit our **Cold Weather Shops** for **CATS** and **DOGS**.

Start | Welcome to... | PETsMA... | Microsoft P... | PETsMAR... | INP 210 | Competitiv... | 12:48 AM

CONTENT/FUNCTIONALITY

The site offers a broad assortment of pet supplies and products. The site has a very extensive database of different product subcategories.

PRODUCTS OFFERED:

Pet supplies scoped by pet category:

- Dog
- Cat
- Bird
- Wild bird
- Fish
- Reptile
- Small pet

Each of these categories offers a wide selection of supplies. These supplies are organized into “department stores”. The main departments (subcategories) include:

- Clothing
- Beds
- Collars and leashes
- Clean up
- Feeding
- Grooming
- Health Care
- Containment
- Toys and treats
- Training
- New pet
- Specialty shops

Additionally the website offers the following accessories within some pet categories:

- Books, magazines and videos
- Decorations
- Lighting and Heating
- Cages

The other categories include:

- Gifts
- Top sellers
- Special treats
- Monthly hot deals

TECHNOLOGY USED

- Database-driven website
- Active Server Pages technology used to retrieve content from the database
- Secure shopping cart
- Registration for returning customers
- Use of cookies to track customer information and for personalization
- Quick Reorder form for returning customers
- Online order status checking and package tracking
- Sign-in for free eNewsletter
- Cat and dog food calculator

SEARCH FUNCTIONALITY

- Scoped search by pet category
- Search by product name or article
- Each subcategory within a pet category offers a browsable list of products (including a picture of each product)
- Keyword search is available
- Help for browsers with older versions of Netscape or Internet Explorer

ORDERING OPTIONS

- Online ordering
- Phone ordering
- Major credit cards are accepted
- Standard shipping options are offered
- Gift certificates are available
- Cancel or change order within three hours of placing the order

SUPPORTING CONTENT:

- Company information
- Terms and Conditions
- Privacy and Security Policy
- Return Policy
- Shipping Information
- Message boards and chats
- Helpdesk
- Affiliate Program
- Frequently asked questions
- Articles

- Job Listings
- PETsMART store locator
- Links to other PETsMART store services (training, grooming, veterinary centers)

STRENGTHS

The greatest strength of this website is the well-organized content linked to the large database of pet supplies. The site allows browsing a broad list of categories and provides additional information about related pet topics in Answers and Articles sections.

Specific strengths include:

- Shopping cart account information is available on every page
- The main pet categories are available from the navigation bar on every page
- Navigation bar with department categories is available on every page
- Excellent cross-linking:
 - Purchasing items are available from many pages
 - Each item is linked to an article related to this particular item. The article contains a valuable information on how to make a right product choice (in terms of size, for example) and installation of the product
 - Larger image of the purchasing item opens in a separate window
- Pages load fast
- Link to Home page is available from each page
- Tasteful graphics
- All products have thumbnails
- Product information is divided into logical sections

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Though the site has an excellent navigation system for product and category search, some other services are not easy to find. The layout might benefit from some changes.

Specific areas for improvement include the following:

- Links to forum boards and chat rooms are not available from navigation bar or menu
- Articles are only available when purchasing item is selected
- The fixed-width, left-aligned layout leaves a significant amount of white space to the right of the page content at higher resolutions
- The amount of links could be overwhelming for the user

Competitor 2: Drs. Foster & Smith (<http://www.drsfostersmith.com/>)

The screenshot shows the website for Drs. Foster & Smith, viewed in Microsoft Internet Explorer. The browser's address bar displays <http://www.drsfostersmith.com/>. The website's header features the company logo and navigation links: HOME, SHOPPING CART, CHECKOUT, MY ACCOUNT, and CUSTOMER SERVICE. Below the header, there are tabs for product categories: Dogs, Cats, Fish, Birds, Ponds, Reptiles, Small Pets, and PetEducation. A welcome message reads "Welcome to DrsFosterSmith.com!" and the date is "Tuesday February 5, 2002".

The main content area is divided into several sections:

- Search:** A search box with a "go" button.
- Ordering From Your Catalog?:** A section for entering an item number and selecting a pet warehouse.
- Helpful Links:** Links to Contact Us, Help, FREE Catalog, Visit our PetEducation site, and the phone number 1-800-381-7179.
- Features & News:** A section titled "Winter Weather Pet Care" with a sub-header "Winter Weather Pet Care". The text discusses winterizing pets and includes a link to an article titled "Cold Weather - Traveling & Outdoor Safety". A small image of a dog is shown next to the text.
- Shop Online:** A section with a "Shop Online" button.
- Promotional Offers:** Two offers are highlighted: "ON SALE! Pig's Ears" and "Safe Paw Ice Melter".
- Welcome PET WAREHOUSE Customers:** A yellow box with the text "Welcome PET WAREHOUSE Customers" and a "Click Here" link.
- Customer Service:** A section titled "Customer Service" with a "100% Satisfaction Guaranteed!" guarantee and the phone number "Call 1-800-381-7179". It also lists "All major items IN STOCK" and "Orders processed in 12 hours".

The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows the Start button, several open applications (Welcome to M..., Shopping: Gift..., Competitive An..., Drs. Foster ...), and the system tray with the time 2:57 AM.

CONTENT/FUNCTIONALITY

Drs. Foster & Smith website offers additionally to the basic pet categories (cats, dogs, birds, reptiles, fish and small pets) the Pond category, which includes a broad selection of products, accessories and plants. The site also provides a link to the Pet Education website which contains extensive resources on pet health, training, care and behavior.

PRODUCTS OFFERED:

Pet supplies scoped by pet category:

- Dogs
- Cats
- Birds
- Fish
- Reptiles
- Small pets

Two other categories include:

- Ponds
- Pet Education

Each pet category contains the groups of products that are specific for this category. Some of the products are grouped in the following categories:

- Grooming and Coat care
- Healthcare
- Dishes and Feeders
- Furniture and Beds
- Toys
- Litter boxes and accessories
- Flea and tick products
- Travel items
- Vaccines, medications
- Vitamins and nutrition
- Books
- Gifts and memorials

Each category contains subcategories with a listing of products. Each product is accompanied by a picture and a detailed description.

TECHNOLOGY USED:

- Database-driven website
- Active Server Pages technology used to retrieve content from the database

- Secure shopping cart
- Users can bookmark the page
- Users can e-mail a friend the URL of a specific page
- Ability to comment on the product
- Live Help allows to ask a question about particular product or order
- Use of cookies to identify returning customers and track items placed in their shopping cards

SEARCH FUNCTIONALITY:

- Quick search by pet category name
- Ability to search by item number
- Search in each pet category scoped by subcategory (Grooming, Healthcare, Cleaning, etc.)
- General search

ORDERING OPTIONS:

- Three ordering options are available: Express Checkout, Remember Me, and Shop Anonymously
- Various shipping options such as Standard Ground (within 7 business days), Expedited Priority Postal (2-4 business days), FedEx® 2 Day Air, and FedEx® Overnight Air (next business day)
- Order a free catalog
- No minimum order
- No additional freight on heavy or oversized items
- Customer service support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- Major credit cards accepted

SUPPORTING CONTENT:

- Contact Us
- Company Information
- Help
- Customer Service phone number and e-mail address
- Privacy and Security Policy
- Service and Guarantee Policy
- Ordering and Shipping Information
- Permission for other companies to link to this website
- Features and News
- Doctors' Specials featuring sale items
- Customer Favorites
- Link to Pet Education site with an extensive pool of resources

STRENGTHS

The strength of this website is in its good navigation system and simplicity. Global navigation bar is easily discernible and is available from every page. The users are faced with several options available for search:

- search by item number which is very convenient for returning customers
- search by keyword provides the closest results. If the particular item is not found, tips for search are offered.
- Search by pet category

The simplicity stems from the horizontal global navigation bar at the top of the page and clear division of content within categories.

Other strengths include:

- Detailed description of each product
- Shopping cart and unit information is available on every page
- Help information is available on every page
- Pages are not overloaded with information
- Availability of different shipping options, including express shipping
- Link to Pet Education website (by the same company) with an extensive information on diseases, nutrition, care and training for each pet category

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The areas for improvement center mainly around design issues such as layout, colors and quality of graphics. The low resolution images are used that takes away from the quality of overall design . The best way would be to provide thumbnails of each item with the ability to see the larger and clearer image by clicking it.

Specific areas for improvement include:

- The categories in the global navigation bar require more consistency and should be limited to the types of pets only. Pet Education link can be a stand alone category
- Page layout should be improved. Too much space is wasted on left and right margins of the page
- Different selection of colors would be easier on the eyes (especially background). Some of the important links at the top of the page such as Home, Shopping Cart, etc. are almost the same color as the background, which makes it hard to distinguish them
- No order tracking feature

Competitor 3: JB Wholesale Pet Supplies (<http://www.jbpet.com>)

Welcome to JB Wholesale Pet Supplies Inc. - Microsoft Internet Explorer

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Address http://www.jbpet.com/new_frames.html

Shipping Info Security Privacy How To Order Guarantee Returns About J-B Home

J-B Wholesale Pet Supplies, Inc.


5 Raritan Rd. · Oakland, NJ 07436
(800) 526-0388 - Fax (800) 788-5005

[Quick Order Form](#) [Order a Catalog](#) [Customer Service](#) [Affiliate Program](#)

Product Search

Go!

- Cat Supplies
- For Dogs
- New Items
- Toys
- Bones & Treats
- Beds
- Dog Clothing
- Crates, Carriers & Expens
- Home, Travel & Outdoors
- Collars & Leads
- Training
- Sanitation & Housebreaking
- Bowls & Feeders
- Vitamin Supplements
- Flea & Tick
- Gifts
- Whelping Supplies



Have a Catalog -
Our easy interactive catalog shopper is here! Use your current catalog to quickly fill up your shopping cart. No browsing necessary! Complete details [click here.](#)

NEW ITEMS

Our [New Item Showcase](#) has been updated! We have added hundreds of new items! Be sure to take a look at our latest selection. **Updated January 1st.**

CLOSEOUT ITEMS

The Winter Closeout sale is here! We are offering incredible discounts on merchandise that has appeared in some of our recent catalogs. [Click here for our Closeout Items.](#)

VALENTINES ITEMS

Love is in the air! Check out our selection of St. Valentines Day collars, toys, treats and clothing. [Click Here for the Valentines Items.](#)

WINTER ITEMS

Winter can be a rough time of year for both you and your dog. We offer a variety of items specifically designed to keep your dog safe and warm. [Click here for our Winter Items.](#)

DOG CLOTHING

It seems that each year, more and more people are buying apparel for their dogs. [Click Here for our Fall 2001 Collection.](#)

J-B STORES

Are you in the Northern New Jersey/ New York Metro area? Stop by and visit our stores. [Click Here for more.](#)

FREE ITEMS

For every order over \$65 you will qualify for a free item. When your order reaches \$65 you will be prompted to visit the free item page. [Click here](#) to get a sneak preview.

SPECIALS

Everyone loves a great deal! We have gotten together with a few of our suppliers to offer you some incredible savings on everyday items. [Click here.](#)

February 1st

Start | Pet Suppl... | Welcome t... | Competitiv... | Cat: Shop... | Welcom... | Internet | 3:10 PM

CONTENT/FUNCTIONALITY

JB Wholesale Pet Supplies was chosen as the third competitor because it focuses exclusively on selling pet products. It does not offer additional information on pet topics such as education, training health.

PRODUCTS OFFERED

The products are grouped into categories such as:

- Toys
- Beds
- Dog's clothing
- Health Care
- Training
- Home, Travel, Outdoors
- Dental Care
- Bowls and Feeders
- Grooming Supplies
- Shampoo
- Bones and Treats
- Carriers

The supplies are limited to mostly cats and dogs.

Some other categories include:

- New Items
- Closeout Items
- Specials
- Valentines Items
- Specials
- Information Library (contains a very limited information on some pet topics)

TECHNOLOGY USED

- Database-driven website
- Secure Shopping Card
- Order a free catalog

SEARCH FUNCTIONALITY

- Quick search by product name
- Search by product category

ORDERING OPTIONS

- Some items are shipped directly from the manufacturer
- Expedited as well as air shipments are available

SUPPORTING CONTENT

- Contact information
- Security and Privacy Policy
- Return Policy
- Customer Service
- How to Order information
- Affiliate Program
- Satisfaction Guarantee

STRENGTHS

The site provides a large selection of products for cats and dogs at lower prices. The site is not overloaded with additional information on pets or links to other sites. Most products have thumbnails. The images are clear.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The site lacks consistency within product categories. The categories are not logically grouped. Two separate categories for cats and dogs are not necessary since all products are assumed to be for cats and dogs. The site will benefit from clear labeling.

Specific areas for improvement include:

- There are errors in coding where coding is visible on the page
- Couple of links are not working
- The navigation bar on the left is too long. The main search categories should be available without scrolling
- Products are only limited to cats and dogs. Other pet product categories are not represented

