

Car Talk poll results

Pets and Cars

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1 General information

The breakdown of pet owners was as follows.

Pet	Percentage of population
Dogs only	43.04%
Cats only	25.83%
Both cats and dogs	23.61%
Other	7.52%

Clearly *Car Talk* listeners are dog people! It's interesting to look at this data in a couple of ways. Like the previous poll on primary candidates, we can look at differences between cat people and dog people relative to the background population of all people in the survey. This will show us where significant differences between the two groups lie. We can also look at the subpopulations individually, and look at trends in the cat and dog populations in isolation from each other. I've dropped the car brands that received only a few votes, so that their small sizes don't skew things.

2 Comparisons to general population

Continuing in the same vein as the last poll, here are some interesting things we found when comparing dog and cat owners to the general population of pet owners.

- Subaru, Volvo, and Hyundai owners are statistically more likely to own a dog, relative to the general population.
- Toyota and Mazda owners are statistically more likely to own a cat, relative to the general population.
- Jeep, Ford, and Dodge owners are statistically more likely to own both a dog and a cat, relative to the general population.

3 Comparisons based on isolated data

We can also compare the pet owners by looking at the distributions of car ownership by pet species in isolation (that is, not relative to a background population). Comparing the data in this way reveals some interesting facts, and corroborates the results we found relative to the general population. Figure 1 shows the breakdown of pet ownership by car brand.

- Scion drivers are most likely to be cat lovers. (1.5x more likely than expected)
- Saturn (1.25x) and Mazda (1.2x) drivers also tended to prefer felines to dogs.
- Interestingly, some cars tended to be more "dog people" but relatively few were "cat people." That is, cat people tended to drive every car whereas there was more bias in dog people's preferences.
- Subaru (2x), Acura (1.78x), Lincoln (5x, but smaller sample size), Hyundai (2x), and Volvo (4x) drivers tended to prefer dogs.
- Kia, Dodge, and Lexus owners were most likely to have neither a dog nor a cat.
- Audi and Lincoln drivers were least likely to have neither a dog nor a cat (in fact, all of the Audi or Lincoln owners in the survey owned either a dog or a cat!) while Dodge, Jeep, and Ford owners were disproportionately likely to have a dog and a cat!

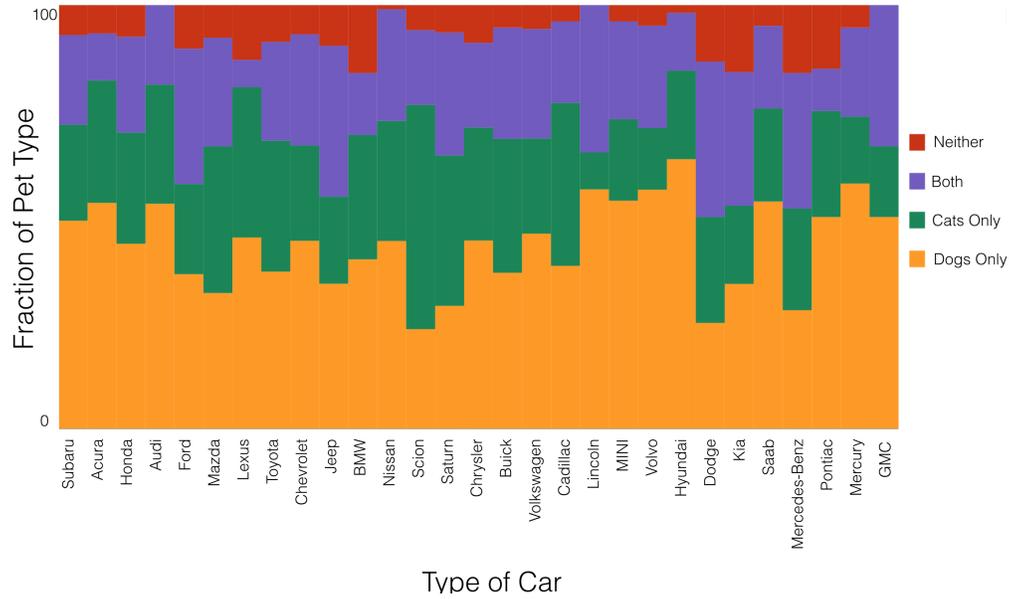


Figure 1: Pet ownership by car

- Lexus drivers tended to have either a dog or a cat—relatively few had both.
- The average age of cars was completely independent of whether you own a dog, a cat, both, or neither.
- Cadillac owners were perfectly split between the two.
- Chevrolet owners were more likely to have both a dog and a cat (26%) than just a cat (22.5%).

4 Breed information

- Rottweiler owners were more likely to own a Ford than expected while poodle owners were more likely to own an Acura.
- Yorkshire terrier owners were more likely to be Honda drivers.
- Golden Retrievers are really everyone’s dog! They have nearly identical ownership to the background population of car owners. That is, no type of car owner is more or less likely to own a golden retriever than any other.
- Bulldog owners are 22% more likely than average to have a Dodge and 17% more likely to have a Cadillac.

Figure 2 shows an enrichment plot of car brands and dog breeds. A square is colored red if owners of that breed are more likely to own that car. A square is colored blue if owners of that breed are less likely to own that car. Squares are colored gray if there is not enough data available.

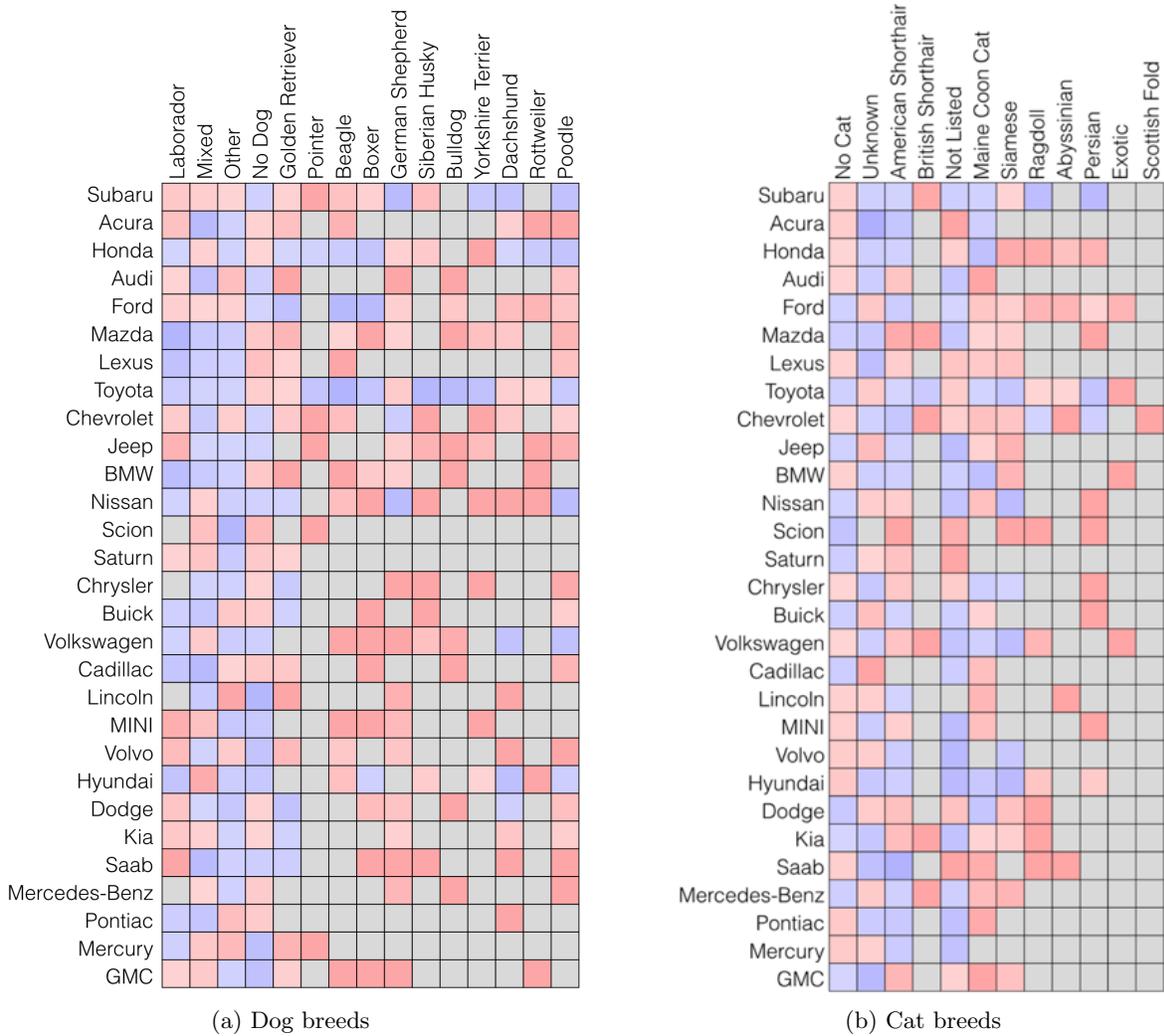


Figure 2: Enrichment of car brand by pet breed. Red is enriched, blue is depleted, gray is not enough data.

5 Quantity of pets

We can look at the breakdown of the poll in terms of quantity of pets owned.

Number of pets	Percentage of population
0	7.52%
1	37.85%
2	26.52%
3	14.67%
4	6.39%
5	4.25%
6	1.34%
7	0.581%
8	0.436%
9	0.363%
10+	0.073%

What's interesting is that your preference for car can change depending on how many pets you own. For instance, the more cats you own, the more likely you are to own a Subaru. Also interestingly, Hyundai owners were slightly more likely to have more than 1 dog than expected, though this is not surprising when you look at Figure 1.

We thought that perhaps there is a correlation between the the total weight of your pets, and the size of your car (that is, someone who owns 5 German Sheperds probably needs a bigger car than someone who owns 1 Dachsund). As a substitute for car size, we found data on the average weights of the car models in the survey. We compared this against the average weight for each dog breed, multiplied by the quantity of dogs you own. (We neglected cats here, since all cats can pretty much fit into any car.) The results are shown in Figure 3 (the axes scales are in pounds), and surprisingly don't show a trend. There is a cluster around the average dog weight, which is about 70 lb.

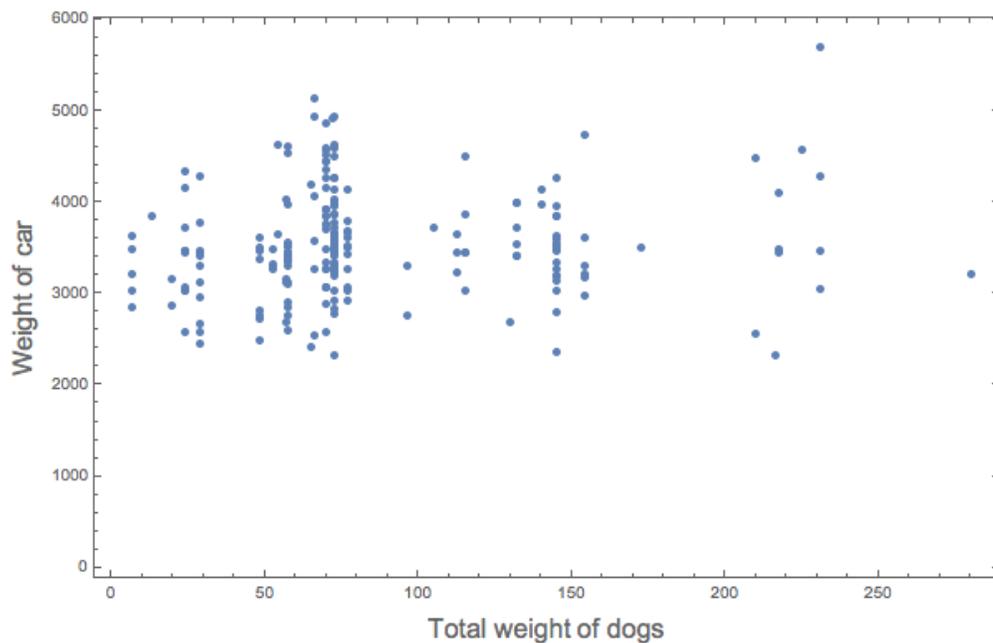


Figure 3: Weight of car owned vs. total weight of dogs owned