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Dognition Q&A for Media

What is Dognition?

Dognition is devoted to enriching the understanding of dogs and our relationships with them. The service is all about how your dog faces the world and tackles problems – that is, your dog’s cognition. By playing eye-opening, science-based games and completing an individualized personality questionnaire, you gain access to your dog’s Dognition Profile – **a personalized assessment of what makes your dog unique**, based on leading-edge research in the field of canine cognition. With a Dognition subscription, you get activities and recommendations tuned to your dog’s unique outlook, a new science-based game each month that reveal something new about what makes your dog tick, and ongoing findings that shed new light on your dog through comparisons to how all dogs think.

While discovering what is extraordinary about your dog, you are also contributing to the greater good of all canines. Dognition provides owners the opportunity to contribute to research that furthers the understanding of dogs throughout the world. And Dognition has piloted an adoption program to help place more rescue and shelter dogs in loving homes, in concert with Petfinder.

How did Dognition come to be?

After 15 years of studying canine intelligence, Dr. Brian Hare was considering the idea of helping dog owners apply this same science to discover the unique genius in their dogs. Brian is not only a canine cognition expert, but also a dog lover. He intuitively understands the value in helping individual dog owners understand their own dogs. An entrepreneurial law student told Brian, “You’ve got to meet Kip Frey.” Besides being a professor at the Duke Law School, Kip is also a successful entrepreneur and venture capitalist. Brian and Kip had coffee one day, and the rest is history.

The real business idea stemmed from an unmet consumer need intersecting with a credible, science-based solution that is designed to delight owners and dogs alike. Whether you’re a long-time dog owner or just recently united with your fur-friend, Dognition has something to show you. Brian himself learned very surprising insights about his dog, Tasmania, through Dognition.

On top of all this, each Dognition dog owner is also contributing to the greater good of dogs through discoveries that could not otherwise be pursued – there are simply too many different kinds of dogs out in the world for traditional studies to do this job!

What makes dogs so unique?

Dogs have an ability to read human social cues. We take it for granted that dogs can effortlessly use our gestures to find a hidden toy or morsel of food, but this ability is unique in the animal kingdom. **No other species can read our communicative gestures as well as dogs can.** It allows them to be incredible social partners with us, whether playing ball, hunting, engaging in agility trials, or just navigating everyday life. Their ability to interpret our gestures also helps them solve problems they can’t solve on their own.

What kind of owner is Dognition best suited for?

Dognition is for anyone who has looked into a dog's eyes and wondered, "What are you thinking?"

Dognition provides a fun way for you to uncover the answer, while at the same time bonding with your dog in a way that even the most devoted owners will find new and rewarding. One of our subscribers puts it nicely: Dognition helps you figure out how your dog thinks about things and sees the world, and it strengthens the bond you have as a result.

Uncovering this deeper understanding of how your dog thinks is just the start. Dogs love spending time with you, and playing with you – even more than spending time with other dogs. On an ongoing basis, Dognition provides new activities and advice for you and your dog. These are customized to your dog's particular way of thinking, making them even more enjoyable for both of you.

Will this help train my dog?

Dognition is not a training system — but **understanding your dog's cognitive style will help you in whichever training methodology you choose**. At the end of the day, though, it is fun. **These are science-based games you can play in the comfort of your own home, using common objects like plastic cups and dog treats. You then get a detailed view into how your dog sees the world through an easy-to-read report on your dog's unique cognitive style. Combined with tips, activities, and expert advice based on how your dog thinks and interacts with you**, this information you can connect even better with your dog. Trainers agree that knowing a dog's Dognition Profile can help them train a dog more successfully.

Are some dogs better or worse at this? I don't think my dog is the brightest bulb. What if I don't like what I learn?

Different animals are better at different things. It's like asking whether a hammer is a better tool than a screwdriver; it depends what you need it for. **Dogs themselves are variable -- each one has a particular approach to navigating the world.**

Dognition focuses on identifying the specific cognitive strategies your dog uses, as opposed to a "better or worse" evaluation. For instance, you may find your dog relies heavily on memory or is especially cunning. Or, that your dog really doesn't know how to read your point well. Knowing these things helps you connect better and enjoy each other even more than you do now.

What do you hope to achieve with Dognition?

At the individual level, Dognition gives owners a window into their dogs' minds, creating greater understanding and deeper, more rewarding connections. **Because each dog has a unique way of solving life's everyday challenges, Dognition helps you discover exactly how your dog thinks and engage on a new level.**

On a larger scale, Dognition aims to contribute to the greater good of all canines.

Individual assessment results are collected anonymously through [Dognition.com](https://dognition.com), allowing the company and researchers to make further explorations. For example: whether correlations exist between certain breeds and their ability to reason, or whether certain breeds have better memory retention than others. In turn, Dognition subscribers will have access to these real-time discoveries and research results—giving them heightened perspective on their own dogs and what makes them special.

Additionally, Dognition is collaborating with Petfinder on an adoption program that is dedicated to placing more dogs in loving homes and building great relationships with new families. Dognition pledges to donate 1000 free Dognition Profile reports to participating shelter and rescue organizations.

[In what ways are Dognition subscribers also "citizen scientists"?](#)

Today citizen science is a well-established means for everyday people to contribute to scientific discoveries that would not be possible without broad-based participation. In the case of Dognition, individual owners have the opportunity to learn about how their dog thinks, while contributing to the world's knowledge of how all dogs think. Individual Dognition results are aggregated anonymously through Dognition.com, allowing the company and researchers to explore, for example, potential correlations between certain breeds and their ability to reason, or whether certain breeds have better memory retention than others. **In turn, each Dognition customer receives a detailed Dognition Profile Report about his or her own dog, and subscribers has ongoing access to real-time discoveries and findings about dogs—right along with canine scientists.**

[How much does Dognition cost?](#)

For a one-time assessment of how your dog thinks, you can purchase our "Dognition Assessment Toolkit" for \$39. That includes an online questionnaire, a set of science-based games you can play at home, and an in-depth report detailing your dog's cognitive profile.

An ongoing monthly membership, which provides you with new personalized activities, games and advice as well as special offers (Dognition Deals), is \$9 per month. If you purchase the Dognition Assessment Toolkit and 12 months of membership as a bundle, it's only \$99. It's an especially great value for dogs and owners who love spending a bit of quality time together. Thousands of owners from around the world have enjoyed Dognition Toolkits and memberships to date.

[What pages would you like me to promote?](#)

We'd love for you to help promote Dognition.com with a link to the site (www.dognition.com), our **Facebook page** (<http://www.facebook.com/dognition>) and **Twitter account** (<https://twitter.com/dognition>).

[What compelled Dr. Hare to write *The Genius of Dogs*?](#)

Never has there been a more exciting time for dog lovers. Research over the last decade has been so exciting that we want to share it with everyone. Before now, there wasn't a single place where people could find out the latest in dog research — they would have to rely on media reports or read scientific papers. We wanted to synthesize the research and organize it in a way that people could get the most benefit from it.

Also, although there are a lot of dog lovers, most people don't realize how important dogs have been for studying our own evolution — how we became humans. We wanted people to know that their best friends are not just cute pets. They are part of a much bigger picture; dogs may help us understand ourselves.

Most of all, we wanted to give dogs credit. They have developed their own unique and unparalleled genius. Finding out how dogs got their smarts has been a fascinating journey, one that we want to share. We hope both ends of the leash will benefit from what we've discovered.