Reputation Enhancement for Felis Domesticus

Rachel Pottinger   Steve Wolfman   Fauna NMI Xerxon

May 14, 2003

Abstract

Fauna NMI Xerxon (NMI) (Figure 1) is a ravishingly elegant member of Felis Domesticus who deigns to dally in the domicile of the authors. That she is the Platonic ideal of cat is self-evident (compare, e.g., to Figure 2). That her likeness is the information-retrieval ideal of "cat" is the story of this paper. That these three sentences all begin with "that" is utterly irrelevant. This paper details NMI's meteoric rise to fame and the shenanigans that occured on the way.

Keywords Nude, female, photograph, furry, spayed.

1 Introduction

It is empirically well-established that Fauna NMI Xerxon (*NMI*) (Figure 1) is the world's most adored and beautiful representative of Felis Domesticus[1]. Aside from being the recipient of global adulation, NMI is also currently ranked somewhere between #4 and #7 on Google's image search.

This paper details NMI's meteoric rise to fame and a set of shenanigans that occured on the way. Section 1 precedes Section 2 which is followed in rapid succession by Section 3. Other Sections come after those first three Sections.

---

[1]We established this fact using J. Nailson's guerilla survey technique, the *statistical spot-check*. A statistical spot-check involves surveying whoever happens to be easily available on a point of interest and then generalizing the results of that survey to the widest possible context, i.e., everyone in the entire world. Nailson recommends including at least one person in every spot-check for validity and to avoid crashing his SPOT+ statistical spot-check software. We included twice that number.

2 Background

The housecat, Felis Domesticus, is believed to have been domesticated around 2000 B.C. in Egypt [4]. Housecats are four-legged creatures with a tail, covered in fur and possessed of retractable claws. When faced with new, complex, or expected situations, housecats do precisely what they want to do. Physically, a housecat weighs between about 5 and 20 pounds but would rather weigh 30 or 40. Mentioning that the housecat's brain weighs on the order of an ounce while the human brain weighs around three pounds is a good way to fieldtest your kevlar body armor. Housecats are experience level 4 with a speed of 15, armor class of 5, attack at 1d6, and can be tamed using tripe, a scroll of taming, or similar means. They look a lot like an "f" [2].

3 Humble Beginnings

NMI's web-presence began as a link off of Steve's web page. Rachel, chastised by her husband and under threat of vicious disembowelment from NMI, added a link to her web page as well. Both links used approximately the following HTML:

```
<a href="cat.jpg">cat<\a>
```

Neither link used the following HTML:

```
<a href="cat.jpg"><blink>
  <font color="red" size="+18">
  CAT</font></blink></a>
```

The authors assumed, with loss of generality, that this page was accessed only by people admiring the crispness of Rachel's webpage[2]. However, a

---

[2]We assumed that no one actually visited Steve's web page.

witness-refutation of this theory was provided by an e-mail from a *suitably random person (Random)* which began:

```
Hi Rachel,

Does this ring a bell? [cat.jpg]

So how does a guy in Manitoba,
Canada, get to see your cat on the
Internet??

The quick version: I have a business
friend in Ohio, with whom I converse
daily in my Internet conference
room. He was complaining about his
cat whining to be let out. To show
me what his cat looked like, he
included a picture. I happened to
click on the picture, and "voila"
there was NMI and her owner.
```

This situation (not to mention the message!) made no more sense to the authors than it does to you unless you're a reviewer in which case you are *so* attractive and intelligent! Despite the assurances from Random that his e-mail had clarified the issue, there was still no explanation for how his alleged "business friend" stumbled across NMI's picture.

Turning to the source of all information, Google [3], the authors endeavored to discover who was linking to the page. No new pages were linked to NMI's picture.

Temporarily stymied, we decided to apply the standard web page quality analysis metric "How long can I avoid work on this site?" This led us to the "Images" search tab. Clicking on that tab and then searching for "cat" generated a picture of NMI at rank #23.

Having resolved the mystery, we acknowledged the e-mail from Random and applied for a restraining order. Lesser researchers might at this point have ceased their investigations and published. Our keen research sense led us to a deeper question: how could NMI's reputation be enhanced to reflect her stature[3]?

---

[3]Nine inches.

Figure 1: Fauna NMI Xerxon. Picture from Seattle Animal Control

Figure 2: Bill the Cat. Much less attactive than Fauna NMI Xerxon

4 Increasing NMI's Fame

To improve NMI's ranking, the authors contacted mad scientist Dr. Corin Anderson who worked at Google as of submission of this paper and, we hope, will continue to do so after its publication. Dr. Anderson suggested three possible, non-mutually-exclusive avenues to improving NMI's ranking:

- Embed NMI's picture in the page rather than linking to it.

- Have more people link to her picture.

- Kill everyone else in the world and delete all their web pages.

Temporarily sidetracked by "real work" [1, 5], the authors ignored the NMI ranking improvement

project. (Just a side note here: if *you* were a more ambitious researcher, you would have leapt in at this opportunity and scooped our results, now wouldn't you have? Grow some ambition!)

Anyway, as the PoCSci deadline loomed closer, passed, was extended, loomed, passed, was extended, and loomed again, and as we faced the daunting non-zero rejection rate, NMI's ranking plummeted to #67. Something had to be done. The authors took action, modifying the original source to be:

```
<a href="cat.jpg">our cat NMI</a>
  <img src="cat.jpg" height="1"
  width="1" alt="cat">
```

Note that while the image now appears on the web page, the image covers only one pixel[2], and thus is not actually visible. Within a week, her ranking jumped dramatically to #7.

5 Further Experiments

As a further experiment, the authors promised a broad audience of researchers desperate to publish in the sink-or-swim environment of modern academia the opportunity to scratch NMI's back in exchange for her claws on their backs. In response to this inducement, all but one of the following individuals and organizations linked to NMI's picture:

- Corin Anderson
- Krzysztof Gajos
- Zachary G. Ives
- Jayant Madhavan
- Samantha Michel
- Donald J. Patterson
- Paul Erdös
- Andrew Petersen
- PoCSci '03
- Sarah Schwarm
- Andrew Schwerin
- Neil Spring
- Tammy VanDeGrift

- Deepak Verma

NMI's ranking now fluctuates between a high of #4 and a low of #7.

6 Future Work

The same week that NMI's image first appeared in its one by one pixel form, Corin Anderson and another Googlite changed the ranking function. These events pose a potential "alternative explanation threat" to our results. The authors pretend in this paragraph that they intend to investigate how much this impacted NMI's quick rise to fame.

7 Acknowledgments

References

[1] Richard J. Anderson, Ruth Anderson, Tammy VanDeGrift, Steven A. Wolfman, and Ken Yasuhara. Interaction patterns with a classroom feedback system: Making time for feedback. In *CHI*, 2003.

[2] Kevin Hugo. Nethack 3.4 spoilers. http://www.spod-central.org/ psmith/nh/.

[3] Google Inc. Google. http://www.google.com.

[4] Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County. Natural history museum: Cats! wild to mild: Domestication. http://www.lam.mus.ca.us/cats/P24/more.htm.

[5] Rachel A. Pottinger and Philip A. Bernstein. Merging models based on given correspondences. In *VLDB*, 2003.