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INTRODUCTION

There are an estimated 4 million dogs relinquished to shelters each year, of the shelter dogs that are adopted, 18.8% are returned. 40.7 % these returns occur in the first week.

We present the results of an 8-week pilot study with 42 dogs aimed at using wearable activity monitors and a companion smartphone application to reduce returns and increase the strength of bonds between newly adopted dogs from Humane Society of Silicon Valley (HSSV) and their adopters.

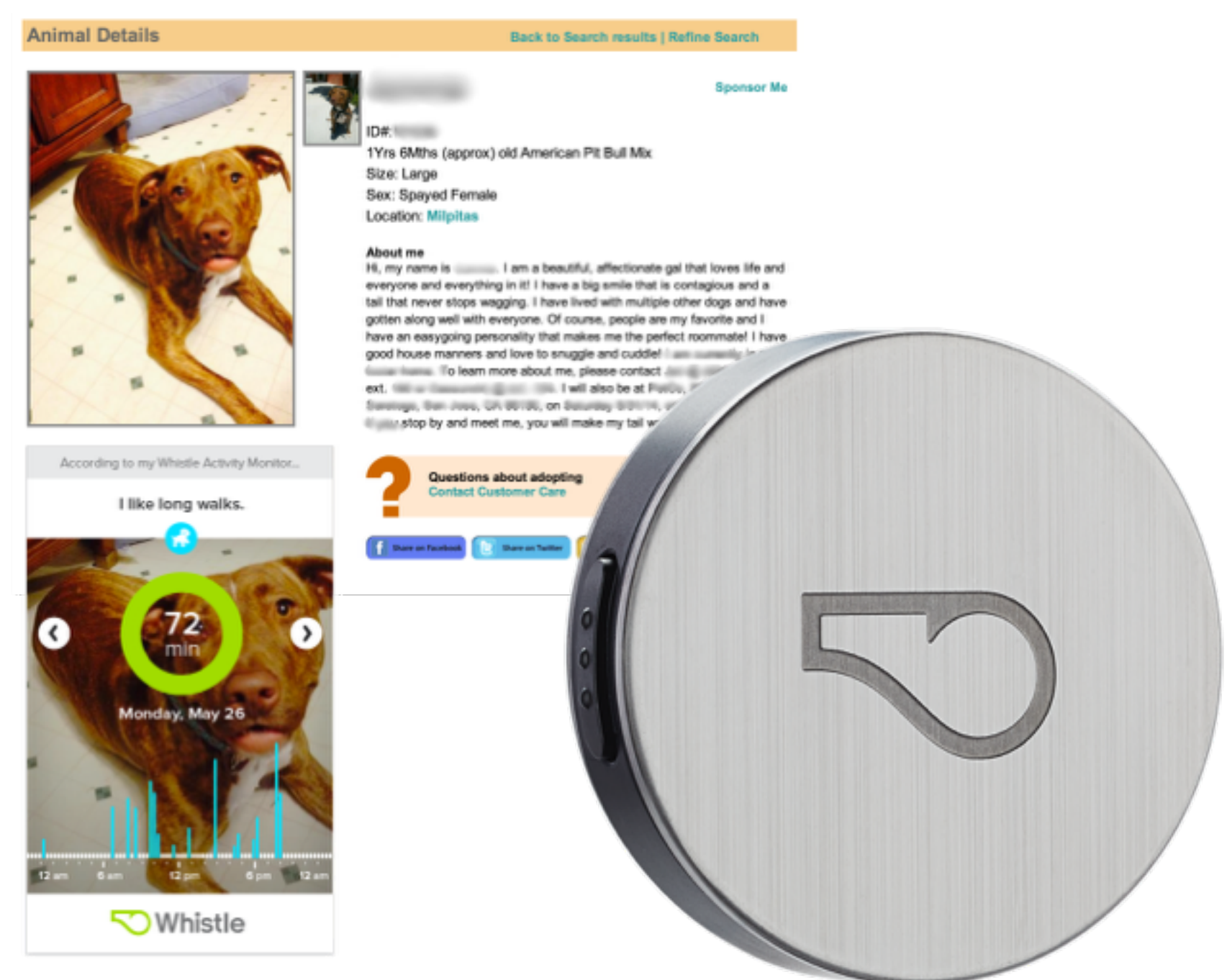


HSSV dog wearing the Whistle Activity Monitor while in their shelter room

METHODOLOGY

Adoptable HSSV dogs over 9 lbs were divided into two groups (control and experiment). All dogs in the experiment group wore a Whistle Activity Monitor on their collar. Information from this monitor about the dog's activity was displayed in a custom built HTML widget on the HSSV website.

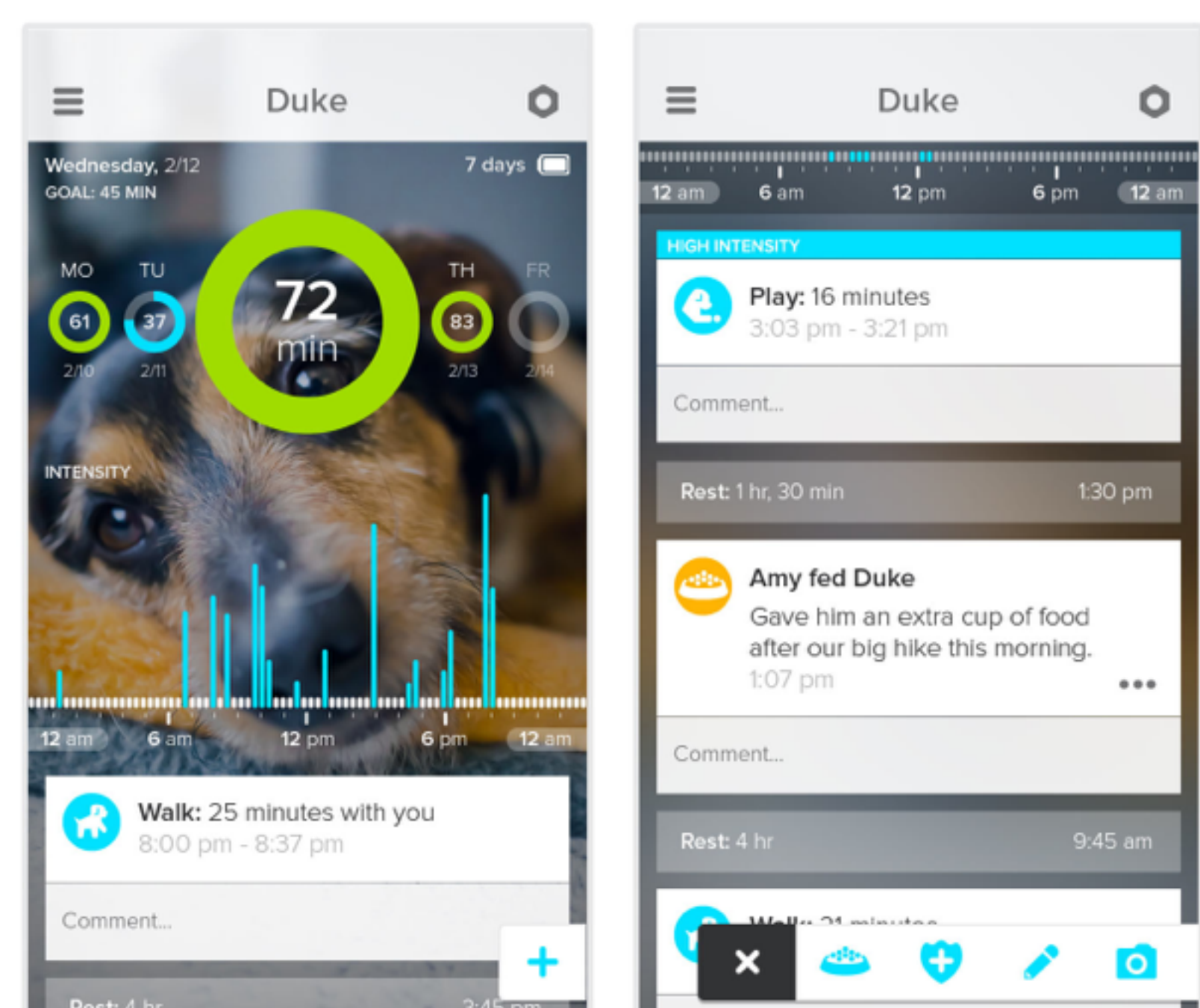
When a dog in the experiment group was adopted, the Whistle went with them and the adopters had the opportunity to participate in the bonding study. Participation in the study entailed answering two 10-question surveys. One sent at least one week after the adoption, another sent at least one month after the adoption.



The Whistle HSSV widget and Whistle Activity Monitor by Whistle Labs

RESULTS

- Of the adopted dogs whose owners consented to be surveyed, there was a re-relinquishment rate of 8.3 %
- Adopters reported increasing the activity time together with their dog based on information the system provided
- 67 % reported the application was helpful with the bonding process during the first week.



The Whistle application on iOS

