

VIDEOCHAT HAS GONE TO THE DOGS

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You can now “Skype” with your dog — in high-definition video.

The just-released PetChatz HD is a two-way video and audio terminal that even allows you to remotely dispense treats to your furry friends.

This app-enabled little white box mounts to your wall or a crate so

that you can video-conference with your pet, play music and even dispense a relaxing scent.

All that pet-loving piece of mind for the price of an iPad Mini, at \$379.

Setting up PetChatz HD was great: It featured enough steps to feel like this is a secure system, and it

connected to my Wi-Fi on the first try.

Whether you’re using the Web-based interface or you’ve downloaded the PetChatz mobile app, you’ll find interacting with your pet is as simple as pressing a button. The lag time was minimal and impres-

sive.

As a yuppie pet owner who considers my two dogs more like children, I’ve reviewed several doggie wearable fitness trackers, GPS pup locators and pet cams over the years. And I know there’s nothing more frustrating than powerlessly watching as your dog teeters on the brink of disaster or destruction.

Almost a decade ago, I installed a video monitor for my mischievous puppy Biscuit, capturing all manner of calamities in real time, from the time he nearly pried the television off the wall while playing tug of war with the power cord to the time he decided to run around the living room with the handle of an open umbrella in his mouth.

Each time I viewed these doomsday scenarios live, I would race home to my apartment in the South End, not knowing what level of disaster I was going to find.

With PetChatz, I mitigate the mess before it happens.

A PetChatz HD box is mounted in my kitchen right now, where Biz and his younger sister, Chloe, have been known to jump on the kitchen island and grab whatever’s in the fruit bowl — or much worse. Now a little voice coming from a box tells them



to stop and rewards their good behavior with a treat.

Besides using PetChatz to distract Biz and Chloe from destroying my home, I also like to check in after the dog walker has concluded their afternoon romp, or give them a treat for general cuteness.

Although my image appears on the PetChatz video screen, they don’t always seem to notice. Often they will listen to the sound of my voice, seemingly comforted that some form of mommy is inside a mysterious white box on the wall — and hoping



A REAL TREAT: PetChatz HD lets pet owners to chat with their animals, top and above, from a little white box, left.



to hear the little swoosh and plunk of a dispensed treat. This may be more comforting to me than it is to them.

Now that I’m regularly video-conferencing with a rat terrier and a

dachshund, why stop there? My next purchase should obviously be the \$100 PawCall, a little paw-sized button, compatible with PetChatz HD, that lets the dogs call you. The company says I’ll get a notification on my phone when the button has been pawed. Finally, I’ll be able to fulfill my wish of ducking out of a meeting after using the phrase, “Excuse me for a moment. The dogs are calling.”

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