

Ferret Fun On The Internet

Explore fascinating websites with ferrets and get search tips with this guided “tour.”

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With no arm twisting at all I'll readily admit to three addictions: my husband, Steve; ferrets; and surfing the Internet. You can't share my husband, but let's spend some time together on a Ferret Internet Magical Mystery Tour.

First decide what you want to do. Are you just playing for fun? Is there a topic you wish to focus on? Later I'll explain how to easily find your own answers, but let's look at what can be discovered online first. One warning: Always take information you find on the Internet with a grain of salt (or sometimes with a boulder of salt) unless the site is reputable or, preferably, you verify it elsewhere.

Whistle While You Work

Yes, a number of ferrets work and not all are used to scare away rabbits or rodents. Would it surprise you to know that ferrets served in the military? In Britain, some received honors as the mascots of the 1st Battalion Yorkshire Regiment and were commemorated in the Imperial War Museum.

Check out: Imperial War Museum Lambeth - The Animals' War exhibit or read this article on the exhibit.

Some ferrets in the United States also work, a practice that began back when ferrets helped keep wooden ships safe. This service led the domestic ferret to become the mascot of the Colonial Navy of Massachusetts in 1986.

A dedication speech noted, “This animal was one of man's best friends and totally fearless. They were in great demand aboard ships of the colonial navy, and fortunate indeed were the crews that had a ferret for a mascot and friend.”

Check out: Ferret History and Ferret Navy mascot.

Today ferrets still serve. Misty the ferret worked for strawberry Pop Tarts. Not the best of treats for ferrets, but she didn't demand much. Misty helped wire a federal security building. I wonder how she qualified for her clearance level.

Check out: Read about Misty Here, and Here.

Now there is a rocket scientist. Way to go, Misty! Running wires for the U.S. Space Command must call for fortitude and great personal gravity, not to mention Pop Tarts.

Former U.S. First Lady Caroline Harrison used “an army of ferrets” to help control the rodent problem in the White House. Since President and First Lady Harrison were allegedly afraid of turning their own electrical lights on and off, maybe they should have had a ferret lay the wiring. Check it out here.

Check out: Read about ferrets in the white house Here and Here.

One ferret qualified for wire work is on the other side of the globe. Freddie the Ferret is a New Zealand electrician that lays electrical lines. In one morning he can lay lines that would take a human counterpart a month of work.

Unfortunately, this led to some problems with the Auckland Local of the New Zealand Electrical Workers, which complained about “Employing a worker not in the presence of registered wiremen. Paying insufficient wages

Employing a worker not a union member (union card enclosed for completion and return). Employing a worker under 15 years of age.” After a union card was filled out and the explanation given that Freddie is a grandfather at the age of 5, the union issued him membership. Read about it out here.

Freddie follows a long tradition, but the earliest ferret electricians were more like herders. At www.itre.org/Quotes.htm the following description of laying telegraph wires dates from May of 1884:

"A large rat, with a fine steel wire, was put in the pipe. Behind there was thrust a ferret. The rat ran from the ferret a short distance and stopped. It was feared that he would show fright and be killed. But he started on again. He ran through the whole length of the pipe and brought out the wire in good style, though closely pushed by the ferret." — The Electrician, 17 May 1884.

Ferrets Also Help With Rescues

The website www.fuzzbutt.co.uk/stories.htm includes the story of a ferret sent into a rabbit warren to find a lost terrier. Fitted with a radio collar, the ferret led people to the pooch that had been stuck for eight hours. Good work!

And ferrets don't shy away from helping people in need. They provide therapy for ill children in England's West Midlands. In New York State, the ferrets are just as kind. Those from Sunshine Friends help a great many people who are not feeling well, according to News Station 6. The Uniquely CNY section on the News Station 6 website notes that, "Sunshine Friends Pet Therapy ... Volunteers bring therapy dogs in to visit patients at Crouse and Upstate hospitals ... they also have other animals (including cats, birds, and ferrets) that visit area nursing homes."

More commonly, ferrets are a teacher's aide, or they advance knowledge for those who already have a good deal of education.

Check out:

1. Ferret therapy for ill children
2. Classroom ferret
3. Tiny Ferrets

Felicia was the physicists' friend. In National Laboratories that investigate subatomic particles, rings of pipes are used to get the charged particles moving faster and faster until a collision occurs to study. Obviously, the pipes need to be spotless before they are used. That is where Felicia came in.

When some new pipes arrived, a harness and brush were attached to Felicia. She was placed in the tubes, which she clattered through, pulling the brush with her. At a cost of \$35 Felicia saved taxpayers the thousands of dollars a mechanical cleaner would have cost, and she had fun doing it!

The article confuses domestic ferrets with black-footed ferrets, and European ferrets with the African mongoose, but the sections about Felicia herself make for a fun read.

For more on Felicia, who retired and lived in the home of physicist Dr. Charles Crose, [Click Here](#).

Other Internet sites offer accurate information and videos about black-footed ferrets. This year marks the 26th anniversary of the rediscovery of black-footed ferrets, which were thought to be extinct.

Check out:

1. Black-footed ferret videos
2. Ferrets back from the brink
3. Black-footed ferret recovery program

Did you notice that we just deviated from the topic of working ferrets? It's a common occurrence to get sidetracked when surfing the Internet!

Just Plain Fun

Did Your Wrap Just Twitch? Ferrets in Art History a website by scientist, lawyer, mead brewer, embroiderer and ferret fanatic Joyce Miller Hersh, includes early examples of ferrets in paintings and manuscripts. Can't find the ferret? Click on the button in the text and you'll find that what you thought was a scarf was actually the critter!

How do you like the spots on the little female ferret of Queen Elizabeth I, which the painter added to make the little ferret appear more regal? As if ferrets were not already royal enough.

Muse Without Blues

Plenty of ferret song lyrics, ferret poems, sketches and stories appear in The Ferret Poem Book. Click on "Stories" and then on "Ferret Poem Book" to download the book. If you have any difficulties, use the "Contact Us" link at the bottom of the menu on your left.



This 184-page compilation by members of the Ferret Mailing List was edited by Bryan Coffey, a computer and martial arts expert. Sales benefit ferret charities.

I confess that I bear the shame for the 1992 rewrite of “Deck the Halls” that includes “Deck the Halls with misplaced feces ... scent-marking is in our species.” My apologies.

Chuckles

Ferrets increasingly appear in cartoons from the highly popular “Get Fuzzy” — within which a ferret challenges other species to games of Twister — to lesser-known Internet comics. Here are three:

1. Ferret Cartoons
2. Flex Ferret
3. Ferretoons

Ferrets & Technological Support

Now you can own a strapping ferret, or rather, a cell phone strap with a toy ferret attached. See it here.

Digging Up Buried Treasure

I enjoy finding new websites to see what they offer. For me, all-about-ferrets is a new discovery. I was actually looking up the ancient Greek writer, Strabo, when this link appeared among my search results. Nona Langley of Australia created this beautiful website at her husband’s urging. Langley’s cartoons, photos, content and desire to verify material are among the website’s strengths.

Read about her hunt to find out if Queen Victoria had ferrets (apparently not). [Click Here.](#)

Laugh at her cartoon of a rafting ferret when she writes about Scully deciding to swim in the toilet. [Click Here.](#)

Langley writes, “I really get a buzz when I get e-mails from young kids who tell me that they really wanted a ferret and it was only when their parents read my site that they were allowed to get their ferret. And, conversely, I feel relieved when I know that my site has put people off from having ferrets because they never knew how high maintenance they could be.”

You won’t agree with everything on any website you find, no one does. As long as most of the website’s content pleases you, then your search was a success.

Got Blog?

The Internet provides access to more than just e-mail and websites. Blogs now abound. “Blog” is short for “Web-log,” which are often personal newsletters with degrees of outside participation. A quick and dirty Google search finds more than 70,000 web-logs that mention the word ferrets.

To search for blogs in Google, click on the “More” button at the top of the page and choose “blog search” from the drop-down menu. Once the blog search is open, type the word ferret into the search bar and prepare for the results. Happy hunting!

People Dook, Too

Through the years online chats about ferrets have come and gone. Now, according to announcements in the Ferret Mailing List, www.pethobbyist.com hosts a regularly scheduled Ferret Chat in its Exotic Pet Chat Room.

How to surf

We all have favorite things we look for in websites. Mine include a tendency to verify information, an inclination to provide veterinary care, easy navigation, friendliness to aging eyes, and certainly gentleness toward ferrets. Your criteria could be different. Few websites will meet all of your preferences, but a number will meet many of them. Hold out hope about the rest, or create your own website to fill the void.

Navigating well takes nothing more than practice and figuring out the right words to search with, the ways to write those words, and the best places to search. That’s it. Anyone can do it! What you learn at one website may help you improve your search terms for a later quest.

I tend to use www.google.com for most of my searches because I’m used to its quirks, but no single search engine is perfect. Besides, we all vary in the ways we feel comfortable searching. You might like a search engine that benefits charities, such as goodsearch.com. Read about search engines you might like to use at

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web_search_sites.

Ferrets provide a little bit of challenge in searches because the search engines can't tell the animal apart from the verb "to ferret." Still, a few tries will bring up helpful results. For this article I went to Google and put in the terms: "Ferret +electrician," "Ferret +wiring," "First Lady" +ferrets –Bush."

That third one may seem strange, but here is what it means. The quotation marks mean that I am seeking that specific phrase, so all of the "First Bank of..." results get skipped. The "+" indicates that I also need the sites to include the word "ferrets." The "-" indicates excluding any articles about the Bushes.

Sometimes it is better to use single quote marks such as 'First Lady,' so try both. Other search engines prefer words like "and," "or" and "not." It really is that simple! Make your search even more effective by figuring out less common phrases that might be in the results you seek.

The Internet goes beyond the written word. On Google alone you can search for images, videos, places on maps, news stories, groups, books, patents and scholarly articles. Just click open the search subset on the mail page, or click open "more" to find advanced categories to search.

More to explore

More than websites, blogs, songs, maps and videos are available on the Internet. Go to Google.com and click on "more." When you see the word "Books," click on that. This takes you to the Google book search feature. Now, enter the title "Biology and Diseases of the Ferret."

That text, and others that quote the book, will appear. Click on the book title. The page that comes up has several page numbers listed to the right. Click open "Biology and Husbandry," which begins on page 12.

Remember the working ferrets mentioned earlier in this article? On page 12 is a photograph of Pokey the Ferret, the Massachusetts Colonial Navy Mascot, and Frank Nobel, both in full colonial navy regalia.

Anyone can surf the Internet. Just remember that it can become addictive, especially when you find out things about our wonderful ferret family members!