Black Dog Software

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Appointments screen
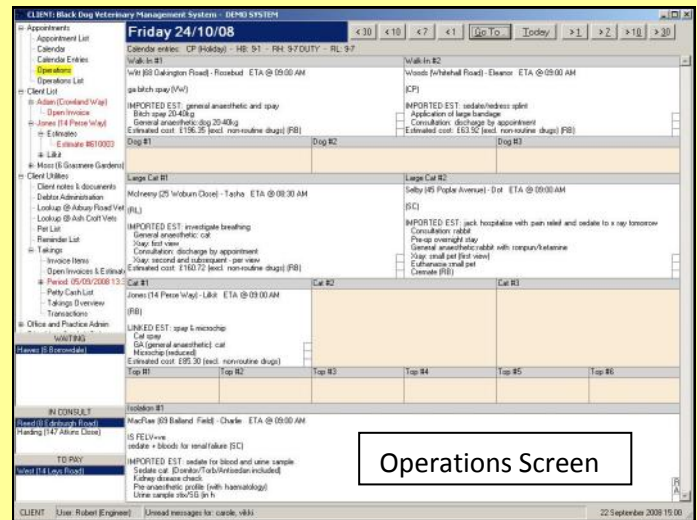
Innovative Practice Management Software

- Fast, cost-effective, and easy to use
- Integrates clinical and financial aspects of practice management
- Developed to meet the real needs of veterinary practice owners

Why choose Black Dog?

The Black Dog System has been designed to meet the complex needs of a busy veterinary practice. It will make your life easier!

Using Black Dog, all business aspects of a veterinary practice can be run within one framework, without the need for any additional specialist software.

By uniquely understanding and supporting the flow of work in a veterinary practice, Black Dog saves valuable time and effort during a normal days work. The speed and efficiency of invoicing, stock control, client accounts, financial management (and many other features besides) reduces time spent on practice administration and enhances practice profitability.

Operations Screen

Company History

In 1999 we purchased Arbury Road Veterinary Surgery, a small animal practice in Cambridge. The practice was only partially computerised. We were frustrated with the complications and unsuitability of "off-the-shelf" veterinary management systems and so decided to develop a bespoke system. The combination of Carole's veterinary experience, including using many other systems during several years of locum work, plus Robert's computer programming expertise, resulted in the **Black Dog Veterinary Management System**

The Black Dog System has been in use since 2004. Over the last 4 years it has evolved into a fully featured system. It was installed in 2005 to another Cambridgeshire 4-vet practice and in 2008 to a (non-veterinary) cleaning supplies business with an annual turnover of £1M+. The response to the installation of Black Dog Software from the new users was extremely positive. This response, together with the significant contribution of the system to the financial success of Arbury Road, led to the decision to market the system more widely.

Arbury Road was sold in May 2008 and the new owners continue to use the Black Dog Veterinary Management System. We are now fully committed to establishing Black Dog Software as a significant vendor of business management systems, specialising in the veterinary market.

The Directors

Dr. Robert Baddeley gained commercial system development experience whilst a senior programmer in embedded real-time systems at Cambridge Technology Group. Prior to this he graduated from Cambridge University with a first class degree and a PhD in mathematics. This was followed by a Research Fellowship at Cambridge and a lectureship at Leicester University. From 2002 Robert has committed his full time attention to the management of Arbury Road Veterinary Surgery and the subsequent development of the Black Dog System.

Carole Page BSc MA VetMB MRCVS qualified from Cambridge University in 1989. She also has a first class degree in mathematics and physical education from Birmingham University. Carole has worked full time in both small and mixed practice for the last 19 years. From 1999 to May 2008 she ran Arbury Road Veterinary Surgery and, with Robert's support, transformed the practice from a single handed surgery into a very busy, profitable and clinically respected 4-vet 6-nurse Veterinary Nurse Training Practice with RCVS Tier 2 accreditation. The surgery was extended, modernised and re-equipped; the turnover, and more importantly, the profit quadrupled. The Black Dog System contributed significantly to this financial success within the highly competitive Cambridge veterinary market. Carole is now actively involved in promoting the Black Dog System and continues to locum in veterinary practice to keep in touch with veterinary life on the front line.

The Black Dog System – summary of main features and benefits

General features
- Client records, both clinical and financial
- Clear display of reminders, regular treatments, outstanding balance and colour coded account status
- Appointments, with flexible times, display of consulting vet and vet rota, and an easy flow of client records from arrival to consulting room to payment desk
- Operations list with kennel availability, description of the procedure, estimated cost and invoiced status
- Searching, for example for a client or drug price, is instant and completely flexible
- Clients can have multiple names & addresses – they can still be found even with old address or partner's surname

Speed and ease of use
- Ability to jump between screens without closing them enables multi-tasking: e.g. booking an appointment for a client on the phone, taking payment from another client in reception, and accessing records for the emergency RTA all at the same time and all on the same PC
- Highly structured, flexible price lists allowing automatic additions of other items. Vets are prompted for all quantities used (e.g. the number of suture packs) and do not have to remember each item individually. This saves veterinary time, ensures accurate pricing and stock control, and increases profitability. The additions can be set as charged or not allowing all-inclusive fees to be quoted. A 24 item invoice for a gastric torsion can be generated in seconds.
- An innovative write-once multiple-use estimate system which enables an estimate generated once only to be used for producing a client estimate, booking an operation, printing a consent form and invoicing post-operatively. This ensures consistency across estimated costs, procedures discussed, consent forms produced and pricing even if several different staff members are involved, as well as saving time

Accurate stock control and dispensing
- Computerised stock control and electronic ordering with facilities for precise reconciliation of daily drug deliveries and monthly wholesaler statements
- Any item on the practice drug list can be invoiced to the client whether it is in stock or not. The invoiced item is colour-coded to indicate availability. An item invoiced to a client but not in stock is automatically added to the drug order without any further action needed. The client always has the option of paying on ordering the item!
- The default quantity and dosage instructions for drug labels can be set for each individual item (e.g. Fortekor 5mg has a default invoice quantity of 28 with one tablet given once daily). Editing is easy using abbreviations or plain text
- Multiple labels can be printed with the number of tablets evenly split between the labels
- Dispensing and dosage notes for 'vet information only' can be displayed
- Changes to the quantity invoiced can be made mid-label production without having to start over
- Wholesaler catalogues can be loaded onto the system and new drugs added to the practice drug list as required
- Easy monitoring and review of drugs stocked, minimum stock levels, and pricing

Enhanced client care
- Regular treatments are displayed when invoicing, writing clinical notes and reviewing pet details and clinical history – this enables repeat prescription requests and food orders to be handled promptly and accurately
- Customisable client letters using Microsoft Word – this covers all manner of documents including referral letters, debtor letters, consent forms, written prescriptions, instalment agreements, unlicensed medicine consent, Pet Passport letters, transfer of ownership – all automatically saved on the client record and all produced in seconds
- Automated reminder system for vaccinations, chronic disease check-ups, sympathy cards etc.
- Integration with the telephone exchange to provide client recognition from incoming telephone number

Robust design
- A "standalone" laptop facility for use at branch surgeries or on visits
- A multiple-site implementation which copes with a failed internet connection
- Automated backup systems, both overnight and in real-time. In the event of complete "server" hardware failure the system can be reconfigured to use an alternative "server" in less than 10 minutes (using a simple set of instructions printed on a single side of A4!)

Staff and financial management
- Calendar with the facility to track staff holiday entitlement/CPD/sick leave
- Message facility for daily use by all members of staff with ability to link to documents and websites
- Filing of staff contracts/letters/appraisals etc. with restricted access
- Debtor management with total debt at any time, an aged debtor breakdown, categorisation of different debts (e.g. charities/staff/direct insurance claims) and debt letter management
- Fast, easy to use cashing-up facility
- Accounts facilities including basic PAYE, bank account reconciliation, P&L accounts & analysis, and VAT returns

In short the Black Dog System follows the flow of work for you as it happens in real life and is designed to make your life easier. The system is:

- **Flexible** — it has to be to cope with the complexity of the day to day running of a veterinary practice
- **Fast** — instantaneous searching, rapid invoicing, and many time-saving features
- **Intuitive** — no-one has time to dig out and read a manual: you must be able to find your way around without one
- **Tolerant** — busy people make mistakes so (within a user's permission level) almost any action can be undone quickly and easily; experimentation is allowed but more importantly recovery from mistakes is straightforward
- **Multi-tasking** — different tasks can be undertaken simultaneously on the same machine without getting lost or forgetting what you were in the middle of before being interrupted
- **Comprehensive** — it has been developed by people who have successfully managed a veterinary practice

Technical Information

- Microsoft Windows 2000, XP or Vista operating systems
- The "server" computer has no special requirements placed on it and can be actively used throughout the day as a standard PC
- Black Dog is coded exclusively using Microsoft Visual Studio .NET, and runs on the Microsoft .NET Framework, combining the latest technology with robustness and reliability
- Minimal performance demands placed upon the underlying database in terms of speed and conflict management
- Uses Microsoft Access, a free, lightweight copy-to-deploy database solution – the database management application is inexpensive and user-friendly allowing the practice complete control over, what is after all, its own database

Testimonials

Black Dog is easy to use, logical and intuitive. I could navigate it after a 5-minute introduction and found that it worked for me rather than me working for it! I only visited the practice every 6 weeks or so but felt relaxed about using the program without any special training or day-to-day familiarity **Jane Coatesworth MA VetMB Cert SAD MRCVS (referral dermatologist)**

The practice workflow is very logically laid out in the software, from creating clients through booking an appointment in the diary to bringing them into the consulting room. To schedule a procedure or operation there is a clear path from the client details screen to building an estimate, booking the kennel space, printing the client an estimate, pre-op instructions and consent form. When I've priced up one click sends the invoice to the reception desk to be settled. Writing referral letters is a breeze: a few clicks merge the animal and referral centre details into a practice letterhead opened in Word ready to type. Prescriptions take seconds to produce as the system pulls together data from the drug database to merge with the client and animal details into a form ready to print and sign **Robert Loxley MA VetMB MRCVS (assistant veterinary surgeon)**

I especially appreciate the high level of personal support – always immediate, in stark contrast to our previous experience where a response came in 2-3 days if we were lucky. This outstanding support extends to system development: rather than have to adapt our working practices to the IT system, the Black Dog System has been adapted to meet our needs **Simon Shore MA VetMB MRCVS (practice partner)**

The Black Dog System has saved me 2-3 hours per day and much more time across the business as a whole — the service I provide to customers has improved and I have complete control on what is happening in my business on a day to day basis — I am 100% happy with the system and the support provided **Owen Moon ACCA (managing director and certified accountant)**

Keeping records and accounts in the veterinary business can feel like being pursued by Churchill's black cloud of depression, which he euphemistically called his "black dog". But this Black Dog doesn't bring you the blues; it pants joyfully for attention, and it's always willing to do its masters bidding. Rather than being a black companion, it really is a white horse riding to the rescue. Perhaps you should rename it. From a satisfied customer. **Yvonne Done (practice manager & partner)**

We have been successfully using Black Dog for 3 years, both in our main surgery and at our branch. All our staff, even those without any prior computing experience, have found it very easy to use. Client files can be easily found, reviewed and edited. Stock control and ordering is streamlined, simpler and more accurate than previously. **Jacquie Bland (practice manager)**

Black Dog has some fundamental differences to previous PMS systems I've used. The concept is of a totally integrated program for both the front & back office systems, a major advantage over more mainstream PMS. The powerful stock control is impressive with drugs prompted at all stages of invoicing. The manual stock list for consumables is easy for the support staff to check. The integrated ordering system works extremely well and stock is ordered and adjusted automatically. An out of stock item can be invoiced and no further action is required – the item is delivered the following working day – impressive and avoids mistakes & omissions in the order. Invoicing is straightforward. PAYE works well within the system. Payments to suppliers, general accounts and P&L are all integrated. In short this system is all that is required. **Robert Done BVSc MRCVS (practice principal)**

To find out more or to arrange a demonstration please contact us – we look forward to helping you