

Online Tool Helps Reunite Lost Dogs and Owners

The American Animal Hospital Association launches a pet microchip lookup tool.

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The American Animal Hospital Association has created the AAHA Universal Pet Microchip Lookup Tool. The free Internet-based resource is designed to help veterinary hospitals, animal control facilities and shelter staff members reunite lost pets with their owners by checking participating pet recovery services' registries to determine which registry should be contacted.

The tool works by checking the databases of participating pet recovery services to determine which has registration information available for a dog's microchip. For instance, when a microchip identification number is entered into the tool, a list of all the registries with microchip registration information available along with the registries' contact information will appear in chronological order. The registry with the most recent update appears first. To avoid proprietary, privacy and other concerns, pet owner information is not included.

If the microchip has not been registered with any participating pet recovery service, the result returned will default to the microchip's manufacturer or distributor.

"The goal is to streamline the complex issue [of identifying the correct pet recovery registry] for the people on the frontlines," said Jason Merrihew, communications coordinator at AAHA. "When a pet is lost, time is of the essence."

"We've had amazing collaboration with the participating companies, but the tool is still a work in progress," Merrihew said.

This means that AAHA will seek continued collaboration from microchip companies as well as implement feedback from veterinary hospitals, animal control facilities and shelter staff members.

Participating companies include the American Kennel Club Companion Animal Recovery, HomeAgain by Intervet/Schering-Plough Animal Health, Petlink by Datamars and resQ by Bayer Animal Health. Although Merrihew said that he can't comment on individual companies that have not yet agreed to participate, he did say that more companies are anticipated to come on board soon.