

Garbage In, Garbage Out

From [Nathan Winograd](#)

July 2024

Posted on All-Creatures.or: July 17, 2024

NEWS

NYC animal shelters are overcrowded with dogs, and few people are adopting them



[Garbage in, garbage out](#): flawed, biased, or poor quality (“garbage”) information or input produces a result or output of similar (“garbage”) quality.

When we were in our 20s and 30s, my wife and I had a Sunday morning ritual. We would go to a local bagel place and order a soy latte and a toasted cinnamon raisin bagel topped with hummus and a tomato

slice. We would buy *The New York Times* and spend the next two hours reading it from cover to cover. I looked forward to it every week, and every week, it did not disappoint.

Now in my 50s, I still occasionally get bagels but no longer read *The New York Times*. Not because of the internet, because the pace of news has quickened, because of alternative sources for news, or for any other reason often given for the newspaper industry's decline. I stopped reading it because of its content — the articles are one-sided, increasingly superficial, and frequently inaccurate. To say that its editorial standards have slipped would be an understatement. In truth, they have cratered.

Based on its writers' political views, it republishes ideology as fact and no longer seeks to report on both or multiple sides of an issue. This is true across various topics, including those involving dogs and cats.



Every spring, for example, the *Times* [amplifies the misguided, hypocritical, and sadistic voices of “native species” ideologues](#) by calling cats “catastrophic,” embracing trapping, shooting, a poisoned gel that causes immense suffering and prolonged death, and even cutting their heads off while still alive.

Reading the paper, one would think there was no debate on the issue, as there is almost no mention of [the growing number of biologists, ecologists, and ethicists](#) who condemn the unscientific approach of “Invasion Biology,” the moral panic it creates, and the subsequent violent response it espouses.

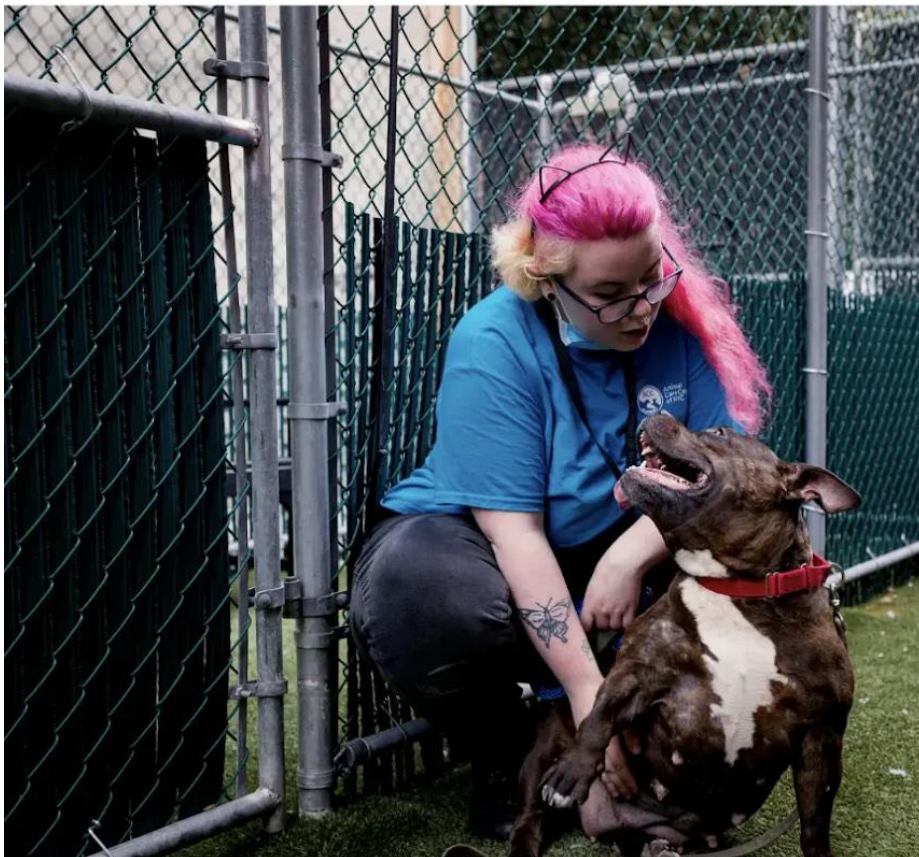


Too Many Cats, Too Few Vets: New York City Animal Shelters Are Bursting

Adoptions are not keeping pace with the number of pets being surrendered and abandoned, causing many animals to wait weeks or months to find homes.



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Similarly, its reporting on dogs and cats in “shelters,” especially those in the New York City pound, replaces investigative reporting with public relations. Based on the pronouncements of all the usual suspects — city spokespersons and the kill-enabling ASPCA — it blames the fact that New York City Animal Care & Control (ACC) is “overcrowded” and is killing more animals on people surrendering their pandemic-adopted pets in large numbers and others for not adopting them in sufficient numbers.

The data and other evidence do not bear out either claim — intakes remain below pre-pandemic levels, and adoptions would be higher but for ACC’s own practices: reduced days open for adoption, reduced adoption hours, turning away potential adopters without appointments, cumbersome procedures prohibiting families from visiting, requiring multiple visits before adoption, and refusing to return phone calls from people interested in adopting. None of this is reported. *Garbage in, garbage out.*

NYC animal shelters overwhelmed as owners give up pets in record numbers



Zakiyyah Woods/Gothamist

So it was immensely disappointing when *Gothamist*, a local newspaper, decided to likewise tackle the issue of “overcrowding” at the pound with an article [that reads like the *Times* piece run through ChatGPT](#). Rather than reviewing the data and adoption policies, it interviewed the same corrupt, large organizations and accepted the same ACC public relations soundbites without question.

Seeking Justice for Saint



NATHAN WINOGRAD
NOV 04, 2022

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ACCT Philly, the Philadelphia shelter, and Aurora Velazquez, the disgraced former director, argue in court that a dog they abused, killed, and threw in the trash despite promising his family he was safe was virtually worthless property: legally no different than a lamp or toaster. The court overruled them.

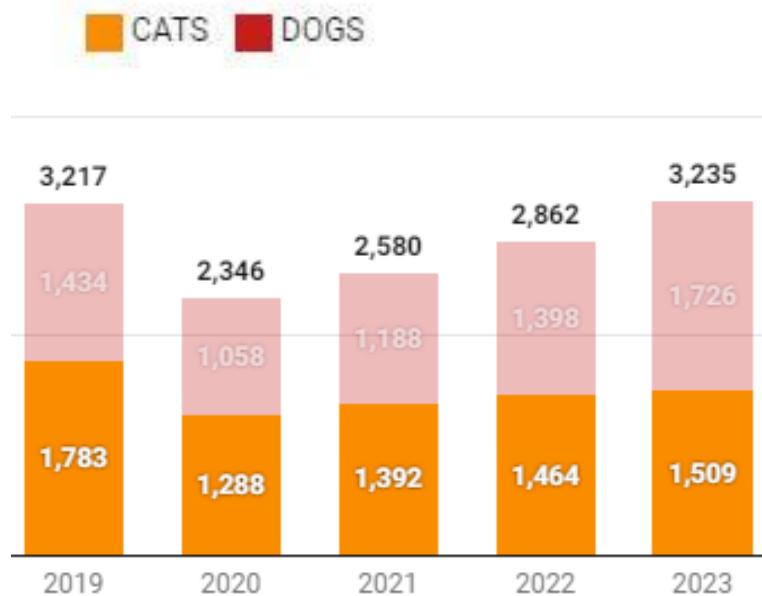


It even interviewed and relied on Aurora Velazquez, who Best Friends Animal Society hired after being chased out of Philadelphia when, as director of the pound, she allowed one of her staff to escape punishment for breaking a dog’s jaw. Instead of holding the abuser accountable and providing the dog medical care, Velazquez illegally killed Saint — knowing the dog’s family was coming to get him — and then ordered his remains destroyed — despite the family begging for his body — to hide the evidence and thus cover up the crime.

Following Saint’s killing, the state of Pennsylvania inspected the animal “shelter” and uncovered other neglect and abuse, including extensive filth and feces in kennels, as well as sick and injured dogs not being examined or treated. In a rare action reserved only for the most extreme cases, the Pennsylvania dog warden ordered Velazquez and her staff to provide immediate care for dogs and “made a referral to law enforcement authorities for animal cruelty charges,” the second criminal referral against the Philadelphia pound in as many months — the first one was for abusing Saint. It was a devastating indictment of Velazquez’s incompetence, uncaring, and failure to protect and properly care for the animals in her custody. Velazquez is not fit to offer “expert” advice to news organizations.

Not surprisingly, *Gothamist* came to the same conclusions as the *Times* did. *Garbage in, garbage out.*

Dogs and Cats Killed by NYC ACC



Source: [Brad Aaron, The Scoop New York](#).

So, what is really happening in the New York City pound system? Why is cat killing rising, and why is [ACC killing more dogs despite taking in roughly 8,000 fewer animals than it did pre-pandemic](#)?

Instead of taking [my original response to The New York Times and running it through ChatGPT](#), I’ll post the original verbatim. After all, both the *Times* and *Gothamist* published the same article. Why waste time repackaging the response?

In addition to reduced days and times when it is open for adoption,

ACC requires a multi-step process that discourages people from visiting the shelter until they have an approved online application, even though unscheduled visits have a documented track record of increasing adoption. Worse, many potential adopters have complained that they don’t hear back about their applications. ACC also limits the number of people who can visit — a maximum of two per family — and how long they can stay — a maximum of 30 minutes. This prevents families with children from

visiting and reduces the chance of adoption for those who do. The longer a family spends in the shelter, the more likely they are to adopt.

That's not all. ACC has a waitlist system at the shelters, sometimes requires multiple visits before people can finalize their adoption, and tells people that once they go through the bureaucratic process, which could take days, to expect the actual adoption process to take several additional hours.

ACC can't have it both ways. It cannot discourage adoptions post-pandemic while lamenting fewer adoptions compared to prior years when those procedures were not in place.

But as long as ACC can blame others for its own failures — and newspapers like the *New York Times* [and *Gothamist*] amplify those excuses — New York City's elected and appointed officials will fail to hold the agency accountable.

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