

A forensic approach to canine waste management

Today we use our global communications technology to share images of what we're eating for lunch with the world ... and we use forensic genetics to catch dogs who poop on sidewalks. According to the [New York Times](#), Naples, Italy is instituting a DNA-based fining program:

The idea is that every dog in the city will be given a blood test for DNA profiling in order to create a database of dogs and owners. When an offending pile is discovered, it will be scraped up and subjected to DNA testing. If a match is made in the database, the owner will face a fine of up to 500 euros, or about \$685.

Naples, Italy isn't the first or the only city to turn a powerful crime-solving tool from murders to canine misbehavior. The idea has been around for almost a decade, and Naples is simply one of the most recent cities to take up the [forensic approach to canine waste management](#).

Here in the U.S., for instance, a [condo complex in Braintree, Massachusetts implemented the system late last year](#), charging dog owners \$59.95 for the initial DNA testing to get their dog added to the database and \$150 in fine and testing fee to offenders.

The efforts have been largely successful. A resident of the condo complex told NBC News "You can walk where you want, the grass is now ours again, we don't have to worry about it, and that's just a great thing."

You can get a sense of how deeply a technology has penetrated society by looking at the most seemingly trivial problem it's being used to solve. It's hard to imagine better evidence of how pervasive modern genetics-based forensics has become.