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## Jack the Cat the airport story of the year

A story that had everything – hope, fear, grief, and a furry animal – has been voted the airport story of the year on popular airport blog, LateDeparture.com.

The story about [Jack the Cat](#), lost at New York's JFK airport enroute to San Francisco captured the hearts of LateDeparture readers, who followed his story right up to the sad ending, when Jack had to be euthanized due to his condition.

Counting in the vote went down to the wire, with Jack's tale winning by just one vote over the snippet about a [plane landing at the wrong airport](#).

They both easily beat the final entry – a story about the rivalry between London's two major airports – [Gatwick and Heathrow](#).

LateDeparture.com began as a blog to give travellers hints and tips on what to do at airports around the world if their flight is delayed. But it has evolved into a source for all news related to airport travel.

To celebrate the success of the blog, founder Tom Merkli, wanted to give something back to his loyal followers. With the help of JetBlue, he secured some top-flight prizes, including two return JetBlue flights between any of the airline's North American, Caribbean or Latin American destinations.

To win this, and other prizes, all readers had to do was vote on their favourite LateDeparture news item.

"The Jack the Cat story was probably my favourite as well. It captured hearts worldwide – more than 25,000 people are fans of the *Jack the Cat is Lost in Baggage at JFK's* Facebook Page," Tom said.

"I mentioned Jack in three different news articles and it had everything from an emotional plea to find the cat, an apologetic airline when it was found and a very sad ending when the cat had to be put down due to its condition.

"It was a tale worthy of a soap opera script.

"And the fact that it only narrowly beat the story about the aircraft that landed eight miles away from its intended destination, shows that LateDeparture readers like a story that makes them think about what they would do in situations such as these."

The final story showcased the intense rivalry between Gatwick and Heathrow and Tom believes that although it was an interesting industry piece, it may not have spoken to the average reader as much as the others.

“LateDeparture is all about airport travel, so this was an important piece in terms of the competition between London’s major airports, but it obviously had less “human interest” than the others.

Tom, a seasoned traveller, had chosen these three posts as finalists because of all the posts he has written last year, these are the ones that he remembers most fondly.

“I sifted through all the news stories I wrote in 2011 but these three stories stood out for me,” he said.

LateDeparture was launched in 2008 while Tom was enduring a lengthy delay at Copenhagen’s Kastrup Airport,

“I love flying around the world – be it for business or leisure – but I hate at airports when my flight that is delayed.

“After extensive (and often delayed) travels around Europe, I had an idea during a particularly drawn-out delay in June 2008 at Copenhagen airport: why not play a little game to pass the time and look closer at what this particular airport has to offer besides the obvious (boring) things?

“This was the light bulb moment when LateDeparture was born.”

Since then, LateDeparture has become the go-to website for airport news. So much so that respected international business news website Thomson Reuters has integrated Tom’s blog posts into its business traveller section in the US and UK.

To see the winning post, and more airport travel news, go to [www.latedeparture.com](http://www.latedeparture.com).

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