



## One in Four On-line

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Following the “Suing the Pope” documentary and the resulting level of demand for support, One in Four launched a website on the 3rd April 2002. This site was a simple moveable type web blog. It was launched with news content and a relatively simple message board called the “Support Space.”

The intention of the website was simple; to provide a point of first contact with One in Four and to develop a space that could offer safe and meaningful support to those who have experienced sexual abuse and/or sexual violence and their allies, i.e. those family, friends and others in relationship with and supporting people who have experienced abuse. It was hoped that the site would offer hope, and encourage those accessing it to reach out for help and appropriate support. The site was also intended to be a point of reference for resources that would empower people to set out on their personal journey through and beyond their experience of sexual violence as children or as adults. It provided links to professional support, both local and national, statutory and non-statutory, on-line support, and links to other relevant websites.

If the website were to serve only one single purpose, our intention was to tell women and men reaching out in their hundreds, even thousands, “You are not alone.”

The website was managed by a volunteer and a part time member of staff in the London Office. The news content was regularly updated and comments and requests for support were responded to. The message board was provided free to One in Four and hosted on a separate server by a US Company, messageboards.net.

The website and the message boards became hugely popular mainly due to their interactivity, and also because there were no other websites providing such resources to women and men in Ireland at that time. This accessible approach proved hugely successful in that it allowed many people to remain anonymous and seek support and information without feeling embarrassed, exposed or judged. It also had an appeal to those who for either geographical reasons or reasons of disability could not access other support services.

In the first 24 hours following the launch of the site at a Dublin News Conference, the message board on the site recorded over 6,000 hits.

After this first astonishing 24 hours, the site settled into a less frantic, but nevertheless very busy existence. The Support Space message board recorded 875 posts between 1st April and 14th November 2002. Many of these posts were support requests; seeking advice, information and an opportunity to be heard. The message board, although relatively new and not directly promoted, had at this stage an unusually high number of hits; amounting to an average of 834.7 hits per day. This amounts to over 190,000 hits over the period<sup>1</sup>.

Over the months the website quickly evolved and included artwork, news, poetry, press releases and more links to other agencies that provided professional support. The website was a means by which One in Four could detail and report progress towards the establishment of offices in Dublin.

The site had a large number of regular visitors many of whom waited until February 2003 to access direct support from the organisation. This indicated to One in Four that there was a level of trust established as a result of communication with the organisation through the website. It was on 3rd February 2003, in conjunction with opening our offices in Dublin that we decided to add two further message boards; Discussion and Chat. These were very popular, as many of the users sought clear and safe spaces to seek support, while also wanting spaces that facilitated discussion or even good, simple, friendly chat.

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1. Based on a query conducted on the 14th November 2002.

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One in Four understood the significance of the website and the meaning it had to many, but at the early stages of establishing the service in Dublin we also recognised that we were limited in time and resources to develop at the pace that users might have wished. This was largely due to the volume of both internal and external administration required in setting up new offices in Dublin, together with the IT infrastructure and resources needed.

In May 2003, the website crashed due to difficulties with the server space in the US which hosted it. One in Four took this opportunity to redesign and redevelop the website, taking into account the suggestions and comments made by users of the site. The main website closed with 317 posts and 692 comments to its main page. This was distinct and separate to the number of hits and posts on the message boards. The message boards remained, ensuring that people continued to connect and seek support until the new website was launched. During this time we continued to see significant growth in the number of hits on the message boards.

In August 2003, One in Four launched its new website which allowed easier navigation and access to substantially re-developed and improved resources, information and support.

In September 2003, One in Four sought statistics from messageboards.net detailing the total number of hits on the message boards between January 1st and September 30th 2003. The resulting statistics showed that the cumulative number of hits the website received on the message boards was 429,921 for the period. This level of access was despite the main website being down and in redevelopment. Based on these statistics the annual total hits for the message boards would be 573,000.

The development of the website is ongoing; to the end of 2003 the following had been implemented:

- Further expansion of useful links and resources, both in Ireland and internationally.
- The creation of a dedicated press section.
- The expansion of on-line news archives.
- An "About us" section, detailing information about the organisation, its ethos and FAQs.
- An events page (covering the arts, community events of interest etc).
- A campaigning section, detailing the national and international work undertaken.
- A facility for the visually impaired that allowed for the text size to be easily increased.
- More detailed information about client support services at One in Four, including psychotherapy, advocacy, open evenings, group psychotherapy etc.
- Further opportunities for site users to communicate their ideas/suggestion for the space.
- The addition of more detailed contact information including a map showing where our offices are.
- Ongoing contact and support through the message boards.
- The expansion of the guidelines for use of the site. This worked to ensure the space was safe and appropriate and attempted to ensure that each user could make the most of the on-line community space.
- An on-line donation section.
- An enhanced site search facility.



One in Four sees its online presence as an important component of the work of the charity. It sees it as an innovative opportunity to raise and respond to the many complex issues surrounding sexual violence.

One in Four believes the website is one of the many ways in which the organisation can inform public awareness and create public discourse that works towards greater appreciation of the challenges our society faces with regard to sexual violence in all its forms.

# Website Statistics

Figure 3.0 shows the average number of hits per day received on the support space. This is based on two sample queries carried out in 2002 and 2003<sup>1</sup>.

Figure 3.1 shows the average number of posts per month on the Support Space based on two sample queries carried out in 2002 and 2003<sup>1</sup>.

1. The sample query in 2002 relates to the period between 1st April 2002 and 14th November 2002. The second sample query in 2003 relates to the period between 15th November 2002 and 17th April 2003.

Figure 3.0 Average Number of hits per day.

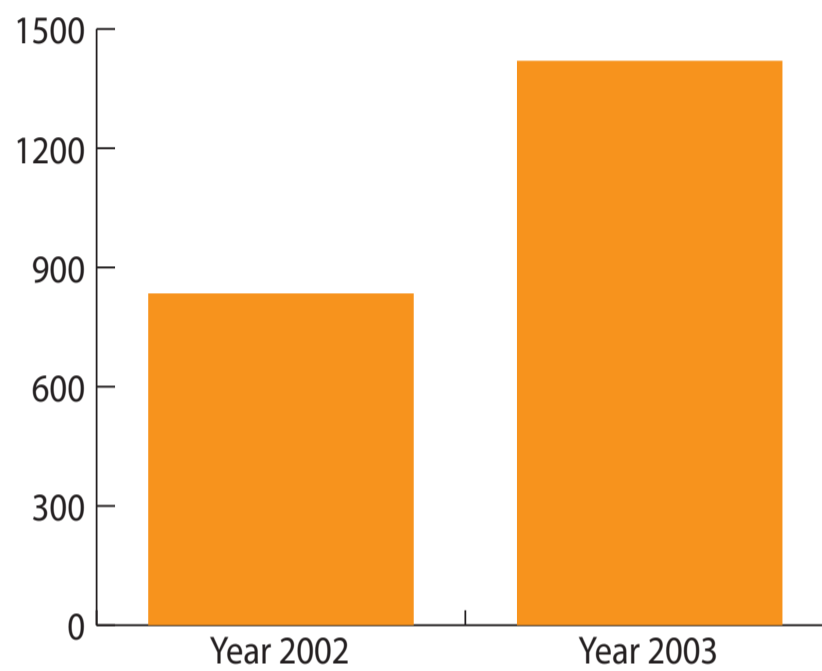


Figure 3.1 Average number of posts per month.

