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## Insights from FOUR PAWS' Puppy Trade Reporting Tool on the Online Trade

FOUR PAWS manages a puppy trade reporting tool in four countries (Germany, Austria, Netherlands, UK) as well as on its [international website](#).

Persons who have witnessed anything suspicious around illegal puppy trade, or who fell victim to illegal puppy traders, are asked to share their observations and experiences.

Besides information on single cases, the tool also provides a statistical overview of where the trade takes place.

The form to be filled gives two options:

- being a victim of the illegal puppy trade
- having witnessed suspicious puppy trade

The form then asks for one of the following options to be selected as to where the persons bought their puppy or witnessed something: online, at a market, at a rescue center, from a puppy seller, from a dog breeder, a pet shop or other. They have to decide for one option.

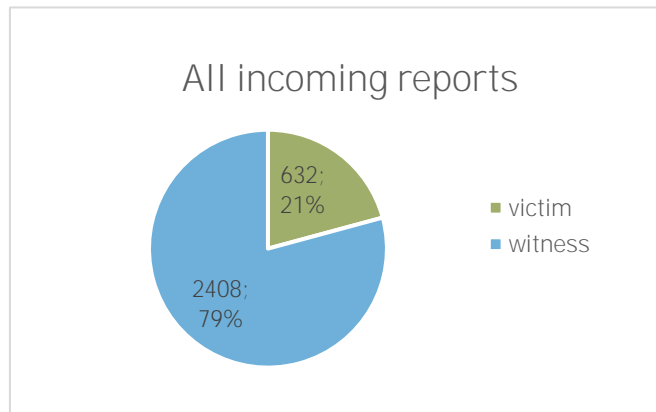
This paper specifically examines the option "online", but will also provide statistics on the other report categories as well.



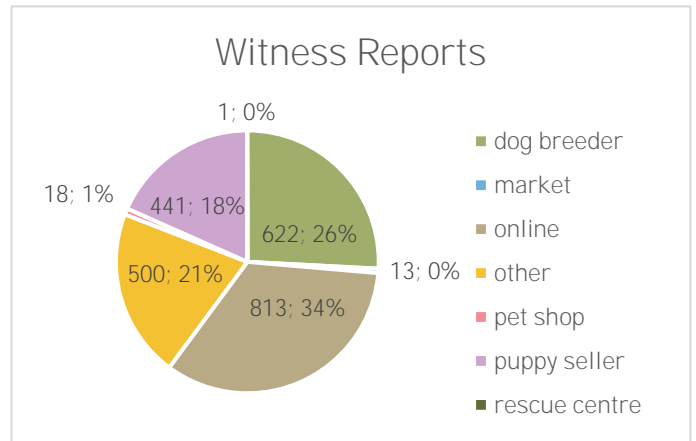
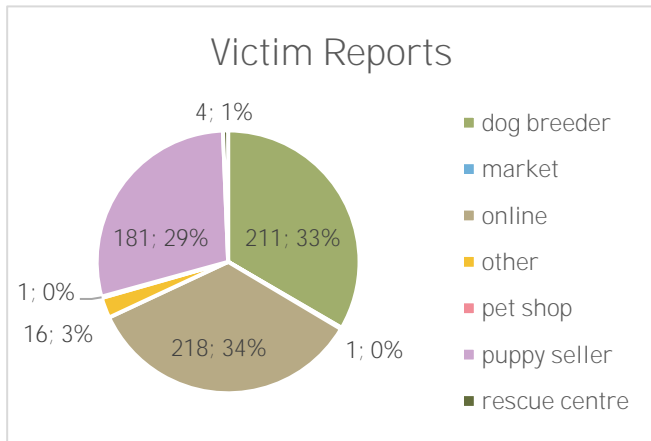
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Puppy trade reports from 11<sup>th</sup> April 2021 – 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023:

In this period 3040 reports were submitted, with 21% of these reports from people who reported being a victim of the puppy trade.



All incoming victim and witness reports divided into the subcategories as follows:



Explored samples of both victim and witness reports in other categories, such as “dog breeders” in many cases mentioned websites in the subsequent free text field.

Therefore, the numbers explored further solely from the online category must be considered as too low, as people report websites also in the other categories.



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### Exploring the “ONLINE” category

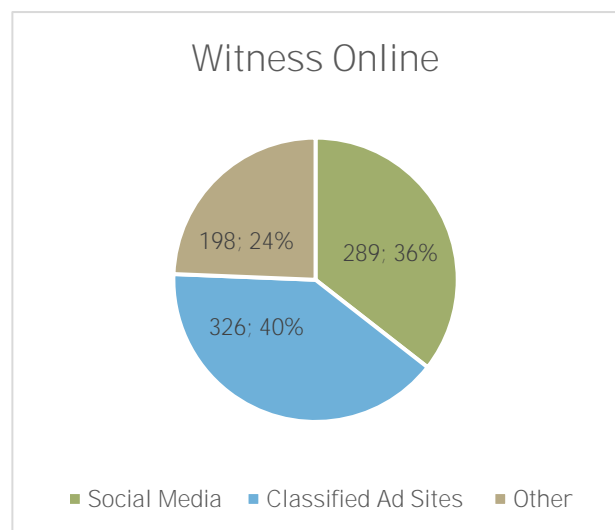
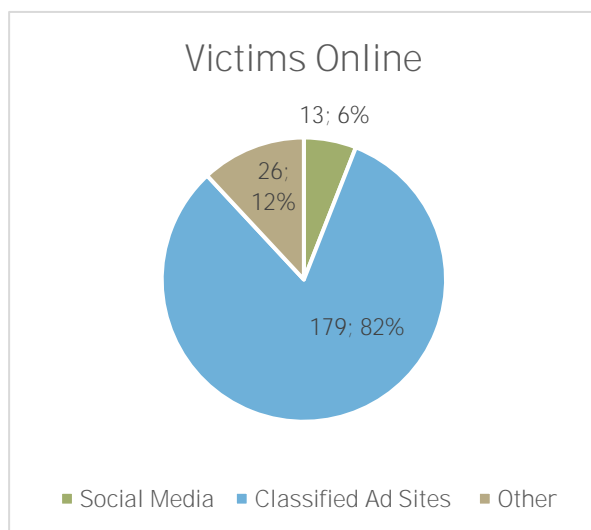
When users chose “online”, they are asked to report the specific website.

Users can either chose from a selection of websites, including “Other”, in the country reporting tools, or use a free text field.

For this analysis FOUR PAWS has grouped the reports into:

- Classified Ad Sites (such as Pets4Homes, eBay Kleinanzeigen, Gumtree, etc.)
- Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, etc.)
- Other (Includes the “Other” selection option, websites which cannot be attributed to the above ones, or which do not exist anymore, or where the text field was left blank)

A comparison of the results indicates that the victims primarily report classified ad sites:



**“I am a victim of the illegal puppy trade” – ONLINE:** FOUR PAWS received 218 reports under the option “I am a victim of the illegal puppy trade”, and “Online”. The majority with 82 % reported classified ad sites, 6% reported social media, and 12% “Other”.

**“I have witnessed something” – ONLINE:** FOUR PAWS received 813 reports in the category “I have witnessed something” and “Online”, indicating in 40% classified ad sites, in 36% social media, and in 24% the “Other” category.



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#### Conclusion:

The charts in the online area showcase a clear need to better regulate the dog trade on classified ad sites, but indicate also that social media needs tighter controls.

FOUR PAWS recommends to regulate the online dog trade by only allowing verified microchipped and registered dogs to be advertised by their registered keepers, in order to ensure transparency and traceability. VeriPet is an implemented technical solution to provide for this regulation.

Read more at <https://www.four-paws.org/campaigns-topics/topics/companion-animals/tracing-the-trade>

Disclaimer: The presented data is based on data of received 3040 reports, from 11<sup>th</sup> April 2021 until 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023. These reports include a few reports that apparently were sent double