



69th ROAD SAFETY CONGRESS
Protecting Vulnerable Road Users

1 - 3 March 2004

CONGRESS PROCEEDINGS

**VULNERABLE ROAD USERS :
GETTING THE MESSAGE ACROSS**

Andrew Richardson

Project Director

B&W

RoSPA in association with



VULNERABLE ROAD USERS – GETTING THE MESSAGE ACROSS

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WHY PANTS?

The Handle It or Lose It campaign was launched in April 2003 to try and combat an alarming number of deaths and serious injuries that were happening on the regions roads, specifically in North Yorkshire and involving sports bike riders.

The North of England Partnership was formed to try and make a difference to these statistics by engaging and re-educating this market on some of the possible dangers they can encounter whilst out riding the region's roads; and to consider specific training needs when handling such large machines.

The Partnership consisted of a unique blend of partners consisting of Community Safety Partnerships, Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, Government Office for Yorkshire and Humber, the Police, Road Safety Departments from around North Yorkshire, Interhealth (private sector sponsor- condoms) and Black and White Strategic Solutions (formerly UGP). Funding for the initial project which involved creating and managing the website, promotional material, merchandise and media advertising totalled approximately £60,000; this came from all the groups previously mentioned and in some cases amounted to as little as £500.

A campaign concept was devised that would attempt to engage the audience on their level. Despite the different backgrounds and ages of these riders, we needed to find an angle that would unite them all, something they were all familiar with and something that bonded them as a group, hence 'pants-filling moments'. We were aware from our research that at some point in many riders' biking career, they will have faced a hair-raising situation that could have easily turned into a life or death moment. It was on this basis that HIOLI was created and promoted; to persuade sports bike riders to share their most pants-filling moments with the world.

One of the big problems faced, and one that is apparent around the UK, is that motorcyclists are travelling from neighbouring counties and other parts of the UK to ride the best routes, routes that are openly promoted by bike magazines. As a consequence, the only way to reach these riders was to market a message directly to them via the same magazines. By working in partnership with all the counties around North Yorkshire HIOLI was marketed with consistency, minimal wastage and in a very targeted manner.

BIKE PRESS

These were the magazines that were initially used to promote the HIOLI brand; the long term goal is to encourage these bike magazines to write about and feature the HIOLI site as a place for riders to share their experiences, interact with sections providing feedback into the Highways Agency, pick up essential tips on how to handle their machines, and ultimately use it as a reference point to access all forms of skills enhancement or training.



RIDE MAGAZINE RESPONDS TO 2003 CRASHES

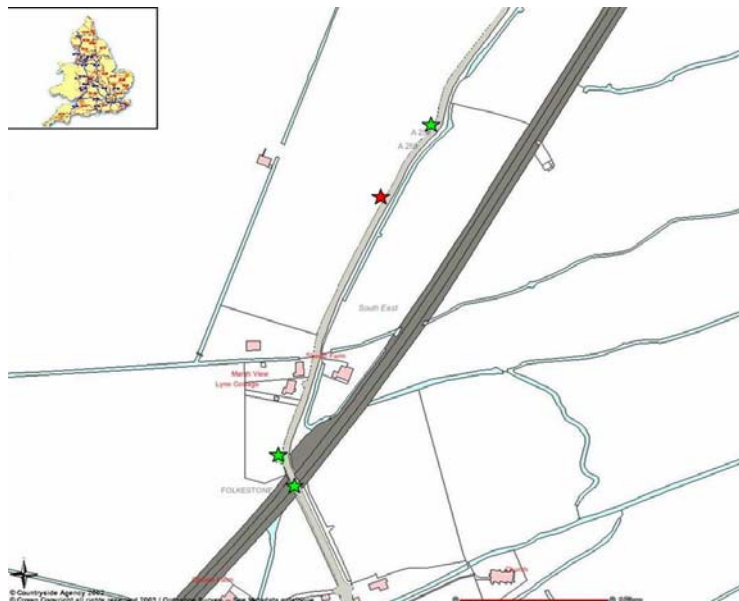
Ride produced a very balanced article in January 2004 which focused on the number of motorcyclists killed and what impact this may have on the future of motorcycling. The HIOLI website was featured in the R1 poster designed last year for the national safety camera partnership.



SUSTAINABILITY IS KEY

Sustainability is key to the growth and development of the HIOLI initiative. The purchasing of advertising space within core magazines coupled with press releases introducing features riders want to read will drive more motorcyclists to the website. This will provide the perfect opportunity to re-introduce a re-vamped website and help to build a partnership with the Highways Agency.

Working closely with Stuart Lovatt, Road Safety Action Plan Coordinator for the HA, a reporting facility for the rider has been developed. This feature, once live, will enable the motorcyclist to feed in information about specific routes which, from a motorcyclists' perspective, could cause major problems or ultimately result in a crash. Currently the rider has no real means of accessing or reporting such information. Bike magazines will be interested in this development, riders want to get their thoughts across and have an impact on the way roads are engineered; HIOLI is potentially that very website which will provide a way of sharing thoughts and ideas.



WHAT WENT WRONG HERE, AND WHY DID IT HAPPEN?

'What went wrong' covers a mapping facility which asks the browser why so many riders are crashing on certain routes. The pages will show multi layered maps with the stats 19 data overlaid onto the routes to identify where and when the crashes happened; a red star indicating a fatal and the green a serious or slight. More data could detail conditions and times of crashes, types of casualties and how many vehicles were involved.

We now know from testing that crashes or information relating to these grabs the attention of the rider and forms part of the unique interaction of the site. Take a look at the evaluation over the page which details responses from riders about video footage of a bike braking on a damp white line. In future we can put links to sections of the site which refer to a training need if the full details of the crash are made available, i.e. rider bins it on a bend, see 'Bend it like Beckham' for tips on cornering.

As part of the organic growth and sustainability of HIOLI, it is envisaged that riders using the reporting facility could make the HA aware of their concerns relating to particular routes. For example, the local Highways managing agent may not be aware that water seeps onto a road following a heavy downpour. Responses or remedial action to be taken that best answers these concerns could then be posted on the site or directly to the rider. A suggested heading for this section is '**Where did you go down**'.

The Highways Agency is also keen to deliver advanced warnings of road works through the HIOLI website taking an even more proactive path to assisting these riders.

This brings the campaign full circle from engagement, interaction, education and improved rider knowledge to further training; HIOLI is there as a tool to assist in targeting riders who don't respond to Bikesafe, RoSPA or IAM organisations and promotes these within the website with web links.

RESULTS / EVALUATION

Website hits April 03 – Feb 04:- 8,602

Pants filling stories

- Male 82%
- Female 17%
- Other 1% (male/female, who cares)

Age Profile

- Male average age 39
- Female average age 29
- Youngest Male 19
- Oldest Male 65
- Youngest Female 19
- Oldest Female 50

Bikes owned by story submitters

- Over 500 CC 74%
- Under 500 CC 26%

Most popular models owned by story submitters (in order of popularity)

- Honda
- Suzuki
- Yamaha
- Kawasaki

When riders interact with the website:

Most popular days for submitting a story

- Friday
- Wednesday

Most popular time of day to submit a story

- 12pm – 3pm

Most popular days for responding to crashed bike movie

- Wednesday
- Thursday

Best Source of Awareness

- BMF
- MCN
- Other – magazine, friend.

We knew that these guys were very time poor, most of the week they are either running companies or stressed out dealing with the pressures of current working practices. They are big earners and can afford to pay huge insurance costs for 6 months worth of riding. Why? Because they can! Weekends from late March (before insurance kicks in) to late September the weekend consist of full wrist action, knee down total thrill seeking as part of an exclusive club. They know their bikes, they know their gear but in terms of skills tend to fall down or fall off!

The analysis of the data has shown that the most popular days and time for interaction is midweek and after lunch, this reaffirms that our strategy of using the internet for interaction has worked.

PANTS STORY AND REACTION WE WERE HOPING FOR!

I am 50 years old in less than a week and I have just got a new 1200 cc Suzuki Bandit. The last time I had a bike was in the early 80's and it was a smaller Kawasaki GPZ 750.

My brother had egged me on, although he is three years younger he has been a biker all his life, he can ride. We shot off at a roundabout, three bikes in front of us and I was the tail ender behind my brother. Less confident than the rest I found it difficult to keep up despite the extra power.

Suddenly I realised I was going too fast into a bend; the others hadn't even slowed down. The bend curved away and in front of me was a few meters of grass and then some oncoming traffic. I dropped the bike my knee pointing down, I couldn't believe the position I adopted. Thank God I didn't slam on the anchors! I have just enrolled for a training course, almost too late!!

Name:	Philip Warner
Address:	Pinner
Post Code:	HA....
Email address:	phil@.....
Age:	50
Pants size:	medium
Bike make:	Suzuki
Bike model:	Bandit 1200 cc K2
Favourite route:	Ace café to anywhere
Where did you hear about us:	BMF

WHAT DO PEOPLE THINK OF HIOLI?

Quotes from Local Government, Police, Road Safety Professionals and motorcyclists.

Peter Coole, Project Manager, Bikesafe North Wales

Handle it or Lose it was always going to be contentious because it doesn't sugar coat the serious riding issues out there, or attempt to gloss over them. It deals with them head-on.

If you have been offended by HIOLI, then you should be reading something else! The key to HIOLI is the fact that it provides somewhere for thousands of riders to air their views and opinions (whatever they are) and gives them the freedom to do so on their own web site, geared to their needs/concerns.

HIOLI is more than a name, it's a way of life for a lot of riders – we need to recognise that fact and face it!

Neil Ellison. Team Leader (web group developer)

Road Safety Department, Stockton Borough Council



"I make no apologies for the website, if it offends someone, then they are not the type we are aiming at. The site includes a section where riders can send in their 'pants filling moments'. Why? Because, as you will see, most of them are from people who got it wrong and are prepared to admit it and who have learned a lesson that they can share with others. Good stuff I think."

This tends to be the sports bike rider's vision of a typical IAM instructor, I ride one of these and often get mistaken for this man; the main difference is that I don't smoke a pipe!"

Richard Olliffe. Government Relations Executive

British Motorcyclists Federation

"We were initially sceptical but the HIOLI presentation was impressive and brought some new and innovative ideas to motorcycle safety issues. Talking to riders who have been exposed to the HIOLI message appears to confirm that the HIOLI message is successfully transmitted using the upfront methodology employed."

Jeff Stone. Media and PR Manager

British Motorcyclists Federation

"This is a new, refreshing way of looking at bike casualty reduction. It's a new initiative, it's a new concept and the BMF wants it to succeed."

Richard Dredge

Top Gear website

"All these efforts have resulted in a database and website into which riders can have an input, all designed to understand the issues and locations thereby reducing the toll – so a healthy dose of common sense for once."

Mike Robinson. Head of Engineering & Transportation

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council



"As a sports bike rider for some 10 years I am very impressed by the methods adopted in the Handle it or Lose it campaign. They show a clear understanding of the target audience and use one of the best means of attracting attention, humour.

Already we have 500 plus motorcyclists registered in the Tees Valley which is testament to the success of the media campaign. The website includes innovative sections such as 'What a load of pants' which encourages fellow riders to post anecdotes from which others can learn. I consider that the campaign will, undoubtedly, continue to grow and attract attention from motorcycle riders like myself. Exchanging information through a humorous medium like this campaign will appeal to motorcyclists and has a great chance of further success as a result; ultimately reducing the risk of casualties. I am proud that Stockton Council is a part of the evolution of Handle it or Lose it; and yes I can get my knee all the way down!"

Paul Roeton. Retailer

Laguna Motorcycles, Kent

"I like the way the site promotes skills improvement, I think this is a good idea as it needs to be sold as a fun thing instead of just training because the average biker does not like being told he needs to improve. However, they will respond to a track day with advice and then recommend it to friends. I believe that training is the way forward because the manufacturers are going to keep making these machines faster and faster.

So until riders are taught how to control these bikes, there are going to be increases in accidents year after year. I personally think that this is the biggest step in the right direction that any road safety campaign I know has taken since I started biking some 12 years ago. I am proud to be part of the development of HIOLI and have committed my time to producing a fortnightly e-newsletter to the database of riders."

Chris Cole. Road Policing Strategic Manager

Cleveland Police

"Forces throughout the country have sadly acknowledged the rise in fatalities amongst motorbike riders and recognised that enforcement activities alone will do little to halt this destructive progression. We know that more can be achieved through education and improving rider skills but often officers, simply because they are recognised as authority figures, are unable to reach the known core target – the risk takers. The Handle it or Lose it initiative has won the support of forces and road safety professionals in the northern region since it has been designed simply to appeal to bikers – without any suggestion or threat of police involvement, but with great capacity for educating riders and offering opportunities to hone and improve skills.

Proven to be a hit with those riders who by their very nature can be termed 'edgeworkers' the campaign has enormous potential to benefit ALL road users."

Martin Hemenway

North Yorkshire Police Traffic Management

Over the years we have been able to document and study where the motorcycle problems are and who our riders are who get it wrong with so often fatal consequences.

But knowing is not the solution.

The sports bike rider and the ones who do it for the thrill are the most difficult people to make contact with and engage in any dialogue to enable a change to the way they ride and behave.

After seeing the ad campaign for safety cameras I voiced the opinion that a similar product designed especially for the sports rider could have a most dramatic effect on our casualty figures across the whole country by getting the message to the right people.

'Handle it or Lose it' is the result of the challenge issued. It needed an ad campaign as good as one used for selling high quality products to a niche audience. It had to be much focused and pull no punches.

The present package of the 'Handle it or Lose it' marketing material is quite clearly aimed at the rider who is causing the problems. If it can contribute in any way to influence the casualty figures then it needs to be supported along with the many other good safety initiatives aimed at the motoring public as well as the motorcyclist.

You may not like it, but are you a sports bike rider?

Gareth Tuffrey. Senior Road Safety Officer

Surrey County Council

"If you feel uncomfortable with this campaign, GOOD! The chances are it's not aimed at you."

Stephen Davidson. 33 years old from Marton, Middlesbrough

Owner of Honda VTR 1000

"The website delivers advice on riding techniques without being patronising. The use of humour encourages you to read on and see what else is in store. The section on cornering I feel is particularly useful to the inexperienced rider. I am an experienced rider and last year dropped my bike after riding across gravel that had been spread across a junction, even though I know that place so well. The pants stories are great and it's good to learn from other riders' mistakes or encounters you hope never to see. I'd like to see more movies of people getting it wrong as a lot can be learned from this."

Darren Chapman, 39 years old from Eaglescliffe, Stockton-on-Tees

Owner of a Yamaha R1

"I heard about the Handle It or Lose It website from one of my mates, he had seen this huge inflatable biker in Helmsley and was curious to know more. I was somewhat taken aback by the style and colours that first greeted me, I couldn't believe that riders could actually register their pants filling moments, we've all had a few of them. Going through the top stories submitted each month I found that a lot of them were similar to incidents I know that me and my mates have encountered, good reading and very funny".

"The big thing for me was the content; a lot of the information, particularly on cornering was really useful and most of it I hadn't come across before. I did adapt my riding using the tips and movies through this section and have to say that when I applied this out on my bike I did experience a far more comfortable and confident ride through the corners."

"My only criticism is the route information; I have found it very limited with only a couple of maps there. I think this is a good idea and if expanded I would find it very useful."

**Stuart Lovatt. Road Safety Action Plan Coordinator
Highways Agency**

"We have been looking for a way of tackling a particular group of riders that are bucking the trend for casualty reduction. Handle it or Lose it is a new and innovative method of targeting this group which is not using the traditional methods we have seen so often. I believe we need to be using new approaches and technology to target and interact with this group of users on our network. The planned reporting system for riders and the maps showing the casualty hot spots will utilise internet technology to open up a dialogue between the Highways Agency and the rider. I believe this will enable the Highways Agency to tackle this group of users where traditional methods have failed."

Mick Bennett, PR Manager, Cleveland Safety Camera Partnership

It is clear from a recent conference of all safety camera partnerships, that the problem of crashes and casualties involving motor cycles and particularly sports bikes is not unique to any one area of the country. It was also clear that no one partnership has found a solution. Enforcement will not stop these riders; some have been recorded at speeds of over 150mph, travelling to the more attractive areas of the UK to test themselves and their bikes against the road system.

Unfortunately many riders believe that their skills are greater than they actually are, and fail to take into account the effect on other road users as they propel themselves along at more than twice the national speed limit. 'Handle it or lose it' reaches out to these riders, firstly through a medium they use regularly, i.e. the internet, and secondly it speaks to the riders in a language they understand.

It is my opinion that uniforms, blue lights, fixed penalty tickets, vehicle defect rectification forms and 'finger wagging' will not bring about a change in rider behaviour. It will slow them up in the short term and make them feel the pain through their pockets but this should not be the long term strategy. By providing information to the riders, allowing them to exchange anecdotes regarding 'near misses' and offering avenues to obtain further training, 'Handle it or lose it' is truly an educational package that all agencies can buy into. It appears to offer the best opportunity to get the message over to the bikers, that we want them to enjoy their riding and that we want them alive at the end of a day. Showing them that they can still get enjoyment from a powerful bike yet still remaining within the law might just prevent them from ending the day in a mortuary"

EVIDENCE OF INTERACTION

Feedback from riders through the website

Ade Thomas. Lincolnshire

"Pickering I fear, is a pratt, did he say he could ride a bike?? And I bet he has no mates."

Maria

"Hi I think your site is brill, I love the bright colours (it's a girl thing) I would love a poster of the soap box to display our training school. Please print me one!"

Paul Dickinson. North Somerset

"I think it's an excellent site and my guess is that it may have a wider appeal than your original target group. I agree with the BMF view about the site. I'm only an associate member of NAAMI at the moment but should qualify for full membership by mid-January 2004. I already run a training school and have a website so I'd be more than happy to put a link to your site from mine, so long as I don't lose business to others! For me this is the only setback about linking to sites that advertise such a wide range of training services - particularly sites like yours that advertise the IAM. But I am prepared to give it a go on the basis that more people will take up training if you see what I mean."

Andrew W. Queensland, Australia

"Great site! Nice clean graphics, good info in a humorous format. If Malcolm Pickering actually rode a motorbike he probably wouldn't have criticised the site on the basis of what he calls the 'downmarket yobbo image' of motorcyclists. Bike-riders come from all walks of life – from elderly statesman on ancient BMWs, to corporate guns on expensive Italian exotica. The 'downmarket yobbo image' exists only in the mind of journalists with little experience of motorcycling or the motorcycling media. Most people know better. But I would like to ask – who are you guys? Mr Pickering describes you as a 'partnership of public bodies' – but where's the 'about us' bit of your site? Anyway, keep up the good work. By the way the crash you ask about seems due to the rather sudden application of front brake while crossing a freshly painted white line."

Lorraine Wall-Jones. Ripon

"I read your advertisement in the 'On Your Doorstep' local freebie. On looking, I being a keen cyclist (pedal powered) and in the process of learning to teach cycling awareness to children, decided to have a look at your site! I should have realised that it was for motorcyclists, but believe me there are a few hair-raising moments for those of us who are submitted to both impatient motorists – car and bike alike! How about a pollution free equivalent encouraging the younger generation to be road aware from an early age?"

Angie Brisse. Texas, US

"Well, being a WOMAN, I'm not having trouble with my dipstick. Most of this site is hilarious, and I look forward to the rest of the implementation. But...um...just an aesthetic point...well...um...could you please turn down the visual volume on that yellow opening page? I don't have seatbelts on my desk chair..."

RESPONSES FROM BROWSERS TO THE RIDER WHO BINS IT ON THE WHITE LINE.

(We reply to all participants with the correct version of events)

Fred

Either the front wheel locked up due to hard braking on a white line. (Is a bright day, so may not be slippery). Or, simply excessive braking combined with leaning (to avoid other rider) causing the front to go.

Keith

Lost front wheel by braking on white line.

Danny

Idiot slammed his front brake on and watched his front end slide away, the fool!

Len

Derv/oil on white lines?

Becky

He went on wrong side of the road and had to quickly get back.

Jack

Driving too close to the vehicle in front, then panic braking (locked front wheel)

John

Too much back brake.

Kevin

Vehicle (unidentified) on left side of road pulls out and strikes side of bike.

Malcolm

It looks like he/she changes lanes without looking and was hit from behind.

Mark

Slid front wheel on the white line under heavy braking.

Peter

Braking too sharply while crossing a white line which may be more slippery than the normal road surface. Possibly in too high a gear as well.

Anthony

As the rider brakes he crosses a white line. He needs to avoid the bike in front so he tries to go left. Unfortunately he loses the rear wheel to the right and the bike slides down the road.

Peter

Heavy front braking on white line, front wheel washes out.

Jon

Brakes lock due to poor braking technique and road observation and positioning...He braked with too much rear, locked the back wheel, (watch his tacho stop early) and crossed a white line at the same time while leaning over slightly....D'oh!

Doug (Pair of pants as a prize for being most accurate)

The rider firstly didn't ride at a speed that allowed him to stop safely within the distance visible (bad judgement). The rider was also riding too close to the bike in front, so it was obscuring his view (poor positioning). Finally, the rider didn't appreciate that less grip is available on the white line and didn't ease braking pressure accordingly.

SUMMARY

'Handle it or Lose it' certainly isn't a traditional way to deliver a number of tailored road safety messages - but then we are not targeting the 'traditional' market. Sports bike riders no matter what profession or background they come from have one thing in common, something that was recognised from day one, they are all bombarded with sophisticated marketing and marketing material on a daily basis (think of manufacturers).

To withstand this and to have share of voice, it is essential to study the language and rationale of these riders. Geoff Crowther (Huddersfield University) taught us a great deal about edgework and for this we applaud him.

Handle it or Lose it was designed to be organic, a moveable feast that would develop as more ideas were put forward and as the campaign evolved. HIOLI is proud to have the Cleveland Casualty Reduction Partnership now at the helm, consisting of a specialist team of developers working extensively to re-vamp the site and push new and innovative concepts. There is a genuine belief that this will be warmly welcomed by both the riders and the bike press alike.

If you're still not sure about Handle it or Lose it, check out the 'pants filling stories' at www.handleitorloseit.com They're not big, and they're not clever - but there is a lot to be gained from their insight!

Thanks for listening.

Andrew Richardson, Zoe Farrington & a cast of many behind the scenes!