

# 4chan founder to retire from site he started at age 15

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The founder of the popular, if at times notorious, online message board 4chan is retiring as the site's administrator.

Christopher Poole launched the site in 2003 when he was 15 years old. 4chan lets users post messages and photos anonymously. Poole, known on the site as "Moot," said in a post on 4chan's site news blog that a team of volunteers will take on his responsibilities. He said running the site on his own has been challenging and 4chan will continue without him and that he will take time away to decompress. In response to an email asking what he'll be doing next, Poole responded "No idea" followed by a smiley face.

Since its launch, 1.7 billion posts have been published on 4chan. It has more than 1.2 million daily visitors, Poole said.

The site's roots date back to the pre-Facebook era on the Internet, where anonymity ruled and rules were few. The site is where hackers deposited nude celebrity photos over the summer. It's also the birthplace of the hacker collective Anonymous, along with countless funny Internet memes and harmless pranks on celebrities. Over the years, 4chan has been called a home to cyber bullying as well as do-gooder vigilante justice.

Though 4chan was born in 2003, it wasn't until a 2008 article in The Wall Street Journal that Poole's identity as the founder became widely known. The story was titled "Modest Web Site Is Behind a Bevy of

Memes."

The site quickly expanded from its roots in Japanese comics and TV shows, thanks in large part to the fact that it allows users to be anonymous. It became a place for people to share images and discuss common interests, from TV shows to computer science to pornography. At a time when Facebook, Google and to some extent Twitter are pushing people to share their real identities, 4chan lets users post without giving a name or even an email address, adding to its appeal.

The site's "random," or "/b/" subsection gets the most notoriety. Besides the nude celebrity photos over the summer, photos of a dead woman's naked body were also posted there late last year.

But 4chan has also been the source of lighter Internet memes. In 2010 users tried to send Justin Bieber to North Korea by flooding an online poll asking fans where the singer should perform next. It did not work.

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