

Guide to Online Dating (Part I)



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How Did Online Dating Become So Popular?

Five years ago, if you were to mention to a friend that you signed up with an online dating agency, you would have gotten an incredulous “Are you kidding me ?” stare from your friend. Dude, get real ! Don’t be caught up in the 90s mentality. Today the trend is such that signing up with an online dating agency is no longer frowned upon. The stigma associated with online dating is gone and now it is becoming the norm. More and more people are open to the idea of dating through the Internet. As a matter of fact, it’s the mainstream thing now... This translates to the fact that practically every available single will have signed up with an online dating agency at one point or another of their single life, especially the net savvy ones...

Ever pondered why online dating or internet dating is so popular now? For starters, it’s simply because majority of the singles population don’t have the time to go and actively search for a date. Who would have thought this possible but seriously, many singles are time deprived... And to make matters worse, dating is a very time consuming process, not to mention a nerve wrecking one too for many.

Dating is time consuming...

Hey, I’m not kidding when I say that finding a ‘suitable’ date is time consuming and nerve wrecking. Let’s face it, it takes a lot of time and effort to find someone that interests you and is interested in you in return. Half the time the object of your affection is already attached and unavailable. Take note that we have yet to account for those that have absolutely zero interest in you. Now let’s do some simple math, deduct the already attached, the unavailable and also the uninterested from your list of desirable women... Anyone left in the list?

For this discussion we’ll make the assumption that you have your pick and all the above is done in record time. The next thing you need to do is to pluck up your courage, approach her and ask her out. If you manage to get past the asking her out hurdle, you’d then be caught in the nerve wrecking wait for her answer moment. What transpires after that hinges on her answer, you either start the dating ball rolling or she just served you with a one way ticket out of her life. What I have just described is the best case scenario of success where you had everything going your way with no major glitches. However, in reality, that almost always does not happen. You’d be lucky if you only run through this entire process twice. So, tell me is this tedious or not?

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Career vs. dating...

So, given the technical and logistic difficulty of securing a date, most singles would rather spend their time building a hot shot career and climbing the corporate ladder as oppose to going out and trying to secure a hot date. Needless to say, in the pursuit of these dreams, we end up getting caught in the rat race... Life revolves around work, work and work and barely any time left for anything else.

Therefore, for most singles except a handful of die hard ones, love takes a back seat to career. To make things worse, a good number of us are now pursuing postgraduate degrees in our quest to climb the corporate ladder, effectively killing our social life in the process of juggling between work and studies. Sounds familiar?

No social life...

Well, let me ask you this, in the last six months, how many gatherings or parties had you attended? Or let's rephrase my question... In the last six months what are the places you have been to that gives you the opportunity to meet someone of the opposite sex. Is that a no? Bingo! Let's do a quick run up of the places you're most likely meet women then...

Besides workplace, where is the next most likely place that you'll meet eligible woman? Hey, if more than 50% of the ladies population in your office comprises of mummies with three teenage kids and unavailable women; married or otherwise, then office is not even an option. Although in general office romance is not encouraged, it is the place that we are most likely to meet our other half since we spend most of our waking hours in the office.

The next most likely place to meet your match is the place where you regularly hang out. However, if your idea of socializing is hanging out at the local pub or bar with a couple of buddies, choices are pretty much limited and you'd be competing with all the guys for the limited number of girls. The bar is not exactly the best place to get to know a girl. Here's some reason why... It doesn't take a genius to deduce that half of the bar patrons are usually roaring drunk. And it is also a known fact that the highest quality people don't frequent bars regularly. Even if you are not roaring drunk, you can hardly hear yourself let alone see clearly in a bar with the loud music and barely there lights.

The problem...

What is illustrated above is a very common scenario for the thirty-something who is still single and available. This group forms the biggest group in the single and available population. They are financially stable, with a career that is definitely going places. In fact, about the only thing lacking in their life is having that special someone to share their success with. Are you also part of this group? If so, where does that leave you?

Time and **NOT money** is the biggest constraint for this group... How do you solve this problem? Money may be able to buy you many things but certainly not time. Does this mean that all is lost for the thirty-something singles? Destined to live their final days in solitary?

The solution...

Fortunately not! Thanks to some savvy business minded people, what was once a problem is now a commercially viable business. As a matter of fact, it is a booming business for some. It all started with a simple idea of pooling together all the singles people and match make them based on the information garnered from them or post their information and let other members who have interest look them up. Another way of looking at it is as an avenue for singles to advertise their availability and an avenue for them to response to the advertisements posted.

If you dwell on the nature of this business, it actually creates a win-win situation; the singles get a date for a fee and the business makes a profit from their fee. The best part of this solution is, you are not constraint by time. The service is there 24/7, 365 a year. All you have to do is signed up with an online dating agency, post some background information about yourself and also some basic qualities that you look for in a partner and bingo... you'll be served with a list of singles that match your wish list.

Piece of cake, huh? Think about it, you don't have the time... Here is a solution that has no time constraints. You do this at your own time and pace; whenever you are free and wherever you are as long as you have connection to the Internet and a notebook.

More reasons to go online...

Want more reasons for you to take that first step into the world of online dating? Read on...

How many times have you gone out for blind dates where the only thing that you have to show after the dinner date is your dinner bill? I know... it happens and I assure you that I'm not trying to rub it in but... If you are the

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financially conscious type, you'd probably be ecstatic to know that you can actually save money by going online. The whole idea of online dating is to get to know the other person before you meet for a date, so if you don't "click", there won't even be a date which means you don't have to waste money on dead-end dates.

Are you the type who loves to lounge around at home in your comfy 'home clothes' as opposed to going out? If you are, the online dating is your cup of tea! All you need is a computer or laptop, and internet connection and voila... you are in business. You can crawl out of bed, unkempt and start a hot conversation with a hottie and she wouldn't have the faintest idea of your unkempt state! Heck, you could even be in your underwear! Here's the challenge, try doing that in the real world and see if you'd still be having that hot conversation!

You could say that online dating is tailored made for SHY men and men who can't handle rejection. With online dating, you get to build up a rapport first before meeting face to face. So, it kind of helps a shy guy to comfortable transition into the "real" world. This really helps in overcoming the awkwardness of a first date and creates a more amiable atmosphere.

With the Internet, opportunities are vast and you have a chance to meet women that you'd never meet otherwise. The conventional dating method limits your choices to the women that you meet daily, at a social gathering or those who also happens to be your friend's acquaintance. But in the Internet, choices of both sexes are **limitless!** So, what are you waiting for???

Who else is online...

Well, if the above reasons are not enough to convince you to trod down this path, I'm sure this would! A good many attractive women out there are also turning to online dating now. Here's why...

For starters, attractive women are sick and tired of dating "losers", guys who date them to look good and show off. They are also tired of being ogled and leer at by half-drunk men who try to pick them up with cheesy pick-up lines whenever they walk into a bar. This can create a very unpleasant situation especially when you turn down a guy and by far it is the catalyst that is driving droves of attractive women to turn to the Internet to meet guys.

Picture this... you are in the comfort of your own home, in front of your PC and having a great conversation with this great guy you met from an online dating agency. No more unwanted leers and ogles! No more being caught in sticky uncomfortable situations! No more cheesy pick up lines! No more

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going through the embarrassment of turning people down! And *best* of all, you get to pick and choose who you want to meet!

Online dating is a great way to meet great looking women and on top of that you don't have to feel mighty embarrassed when they turn you down. What more can you ask for ?

The workings of an online dating agency

With all the hype surrounding online dating, you must be wondering how these agencies actually operate. It works pretty much the same way as when your well-meaning friends try to match make you. The difference between the two is where your friends are concern they try to match make you with someone they think would suit you best based on the you they know from the friendship you share. On the other hand, an online dating agency does pretty much the same thing but match making is done based on your input of the kind of partner you are looking for.

Some online dating sites provide free membership. For such membership, you are restricted to only the basic tools and services. However for most sites charge a small fee and with that a host of tools and services are made available to it's members.

Given the nature of how online dating agencies work, it is therefore customary for them to maintain a huge database of all its members, keeping all their details and also the member's criteria in the kind of partner they are looking for. You can liken this to sending in your resume to an online job-advertising agency where for a small fee, you relieve yourself from having to scan through the job postings in the newspaper everyday and you also need not worry that you have missed out any important posting. Filtering is done by the agency and after searching the database for the closest match, you will be notified.

Similarly, the online dating agency works the same way. They will search their database based on the criteria you provide and try to find a suitable match for you. If there is no 100% match, they will send you the next closest and will regularly do the matching for you especially when there are new members or updates by current members. So, you never have to be bogged down with the initial searching for a date phase.

This virtually cuts down your work by half since the online dating agency will be sending you a list of matches and all you have to do is sift through and write to the ones who interests you or the ones that expressed an interest in you and the feeling is mutual.

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For starters, you'd have to sign yourself up. Upon signing up, you are usually required to choose a login ID; this can be a pseudonym or your real name. A pseudonym is commonly used as it creates an aura of mystery and if you can coin an exotic pseudonym, it adds to the sexiness and attraction. For most sites, you are also required to do a short write up about yourself besides the usual run of the mill thing where you fill your basic bio data.

The trick here is to post something interesting in order to catch the eyes of potential dates after all, if you receive tones of possible matches from the online dating agency's match making machine, you can be sure your bio data is also being sent to countless others and when it is being sent out, you are competing with other members too for that particular someone's interest. So, how do you go about differentiating yourself from the masses?

Your **write up!** Make it short and simple and **WITTY**. Humour never fails to arouse interest in a person. It would be great if you could come up with a catchy headline to kick off your write up. Something original, unique and yet catchy! Bear in mind that your write up should not be too lengthy. It'll make your reader lose interest if he or she has to scroll pages after pages of text.

Last but not least, it is a good practice to post a photo of you on the site. I know, photos are optional but then again ask yourself, if you were browsing on a dating site, would you be more inclined to respond to someone who has a photo posted or one without a photo? It is also proven by way of monitoring responses to members ads that those with photos posted receive better response than those without. So, get out there, invest in a couple of good shots of yourself and have them posted.

Most online dating sites have email facility too which allows members to correspond to each other directly from the site itself. However this facility is usually only available for paying members. Some sites like UDate.com require you to enter a comprehensive list of information about yourself and qualities you are looking for in a partner. The intention of this comprehensive profiling is to find someone who matches what you are looking for or is a very close match.

Sites like CoupleMe.com do it a little bit differently, besides making your ad posting available to members, they rate the members whose characteristics that match your requirement by percentage, whether it is a 100% match or 70% match. You'll be alerted too if a member expresses an interest in your profile and you can choose to indicate if the interest is mutual by clicking on the corresponding box.

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How is Internet dating different?

Is internet dating different from the conventional way? What if you compared it with blind dates? Answer to both questions is a resounding YES! As opposed to blind dates or the conventional dates, there is no face to face meeting when you start communication with your Internet date. In fact, for most, communication is through IM or emails till such a time where both parties are comfortable to meet each other. There is no hard and fast rule as when is a good time to meet, you should let your instinct guide you.

With Internet dating, you are not limited by geographical boundary; this is the beauty of the Internet. However, in the good old days, you are limited to choices in your social circle, or your friend's social circle, so choices are kind of limited to people within the same vicinity and who know each other. This isn't to say that there has not been cross border marriages but then it is few and rare. Now, with Internet dating, it is becoming the norm, you could be staying in Asia and fall in love with someone who is residing in Europe. Distance is no longer a barrier to love. Well, due credit have to be given to email and IM technology too as they help speed up the communication process. If we are still dependent on snail mail, Internet dating would not be possible... Imagine having to wait for weeks for your mail to be delivered!

As most of the communication is carried out through the net, time is of no consequence. You can live in different time zone and yet leave love notes on each other's PC. Once the receiver is logged on, he or she will receive all your messages and will be able to reply instantaneously. For couples where arranging for a meeting is tough logistically, you can always opt to chat over the Net or have a web cam set up to see each other when you chat. Many sites (e.g. Yahoo, Messenger) which provides IM supports audio and video too.

Another factor which sets Internet dating apart from its predecessor is the fact that you can be comfortable in your own environment when you are communicating with your date. No need to dress to the nines to impress your date. With online dating, you use words and let your personality impress your date. This is a great way to meet people especially if you are painfully shy or feel very self conscious.

It is also a cheap way to get to know people. All you need is a PC and an internet connection. The expensive dinners can come after you've sort of establish a relationship and not before. Imagine, every blind date cost you but you can meet as many girls or guys through the Net without forking out

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a single cent (if you don't take the electricity that is used by your PC into account! J).

All this leads to one conclusion:-
Online dating is CHEAP, FAST and GOOD!

Receptiveness to online dating...

As with every new thing, initial resistance is to be expected. It is the same with online dating too. When it was first introduced, people were very skeptical over the whole concept and many felt that putting up your personal profile over the Net is not safe. You could be targeted by unscrupulous men since there is no way to verify the authenticity of the information posted. That is a valid argument but on the other hand if you have no way of verifying anything that a man tells you too if you date by way of the conventional method.

While many would argue that meeting face to face would give you a better insight on your date, I beg to differ since what we see is also at face value. Only time will tell if what you see is what you get. On the other hand, the same applies to online dating, if the guy you are corresponding with is lying, sooner or later you will realize that his story don't quite add up. Bottom line is we should always rely on our instincts and be street smart!

Initially most people who tried out online dating are full of skepticism and did it half heartedly. The early group is made out of those that have had no luck in the 'real' world, so it's like, what the heck... it's worth a try... Many gave up too quickly but for those who were patient, they were rewarded with fulfilling relationships! This is not different from 'real' world dating... you don't always get the right MAN / WOMAN on your first attempt!

The good news is, now online dating is the IN thing. It took a while to catch on but it's definitely THE thing now! It has been proven that despite the odds, love conquers! It is indeed possible to fall in love with someone half way around the world despite the language and cultural barriers. Online dating is the bridge to reach out to people all over the world and find love.

Over the years, millions of couples have met online, dated and end up marrying each other. These are the couples who would not have discovered each other if not for the Internet and online dating. Let's face it, if you both are living in different states, what are the chances that you'll run into each other? Even if you do drive past each other on the highways, you would not so much as glance at the person driving past, right?

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In short, online dating WORKS and all you got to do if you have not found the right mate is to HANG IN THERE!!!

Popular Dating Sites

If I have piqued your interest, and you have no idea where to start, check out some of the sites listed below:

- **[Sexy Ads](#)**
The outstanding features of this site were the instance messaging, and the express interest features. Of course no website would be complete without members and we found thousands of singles in our city. Try it out it's free to sign up!
- **[Friend Finder](#)**
Friend finder boasts of having over 1 million registered members, so this is a good place to start. This website is different from other online dating websites; to sign up you must fill out an extensive profile (this can take some time) and when you are done they weed out 97% of their users and point you to the 3% that you are truly compatible with. Then if you like your matches you contact one or more of your matches and get to know each other. There are a lot of people on the net who are saying great things about this new style of online dating. Worth trying out!
- **[Adult Friend Finder](#)**
This is an adult site which contains sexual content which not only serves the dating niche.

There are more than 1 million dating sites that are available therefore it's definitely not possible to list all of them down. Some sites cater for certain ethnic or religious groups, so if you are looking for something along that line, you should probably look up such sites.

No one is too old to date, so go out there and find yourself a soul mate. The choices are endless, so take your time and happy hunting !

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