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Online Dating 2016: 5 Ways Technology Changed Romance; Plus Love Life Predictions For 2017

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This is how technology shaped dating and relationships in 2016; plus experts share their online dating predictions for 2017. (PHOTO: PHOTO COURTESY OF PEXELS, PUBLIC DOMAIN)

Technology and dating have evolved into a dynamic duo when it comes to finding love in the digital age. Online dating is a big part of our culture, with 15 percent of Americans using online dating sites or mobile dating apps.

The growing usage of technology to meet romantic partners has led scientists to explore the relationship that exists between technology and dating. Modern technology has given online daters an almost unlimited supply of fresh dates, so people have more choices, but aren't necessarily having better luck finding "the one."

Researchers have coined this "The Paradox of Choice," which suggests the more choices people have, the more likely they are to avoid decisions, or to be unhappy with the decisions they do make.

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In a study conducted by Eve Peters, co-founder of Whim, a new dating app, fewer than 10 percent of matches result in real-life dates. Moreover, it takes an average of two weeks of texting back and forth to eventually go out on a date. This means you have to engage in two weeks of back and forth texting with 10 people to just get one date. Naturally, some people get tired.

"It's overwhelming and everyone gets this 'I'm not going to settle' attitude and they keep looking for the bigger, better deal," Sherri Murphy CEO, VIP Matchmaker and dating expert for *Elite Connections International*, told *Medical Daily*. "People are jumping into and out of relationships very quickly. They simply start looking while they are dating someone."

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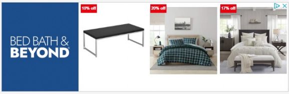

This mentality is linked to users' low levels of self-esteem in dating apps like Tinder.

Using Dating Apps Linked To Lower Self-Esteem

Researchers from the University of North Texas found Tinder users reported having lower levels of satisfaction with their faces and bodies, and having lower levels of self-worth than the men and women who did not use Tinder. Furthermore, men, not women, who used the app had the lowest levels of self-esteem. Women usually feel the worst about themselves, but in this case, men were more likely to suffer.

Dr. Jennifer B. Rhodes, a psychologist, dating coach, and the founder of relationship consultancy Rapport Relationships believes the added pressure from social media leads people to diversify their search for love by using online dating and learning new ways to connect with others in person.

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"The shift in the need to meet someone "on their own" is being driven by the perception that there is now a lack of quality on many sites," Rhodes told *Medical Daily.*

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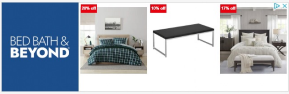
According to Rhodes, ten years ago, many people reported the quality of their matches were better.

"People who are early adopters of technology tend to be well educated and open," she said.

However, now that the stigma with online dating has virtually disappeared, the average user must use good screening skills to weed out the poor matches from the good ones.

Although online dating will not disappear, the level of frustration some users experience will continue to grow, hence why they may display lower self-esteem.



Bragging On Dating Profiles Is A Turn-Off For Long-Term Relationships

Online dating profiles are about showcasing your best features, qualities, and overall you. Online daters build their profiles to attract potential partners, and viewers' perceptions of the profile owner are based on the content of their page. Researchers at the University of Iowa found being "real," not boastful, can boost the likelihood of getting a date, and potentially forming a long-term relationship.

For example, the high selective self-presentation profile indicated the dater graduated with honors, whereas the low selective self-presentation profile mentioned having graduated, but didn't specify the standing. The high warranting profile displayed a specific university name and graduation year, while the low warranting profile mentioned having completed college a few years ago. Viewers judged people who were perceived as overly bragging about themselves, their looks, or accomplishments as less trustworthy and less socially attractive.

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Inevitably, this lessened the viewers' intentions to date or contact the profile owner. The researchers found we tend not to trust or like potential romantic partners if they seem to be overly boastful about themselves.

Men More Likely To Care About Personal Interests Than You

These dates don't go anywhere because some people are too self absorbed, according to one theory. When it comes to online dating, men are more focused on their own interests and are oblivious of their attractiveness to potential dates. Meanwhile, women are more conscious of their own attractiveness.

In a study earlier this year, women were more likely to evaluate the likelihood of getting a response from a user who they've messaged because they were self-conscious, or aware of differences in attractiveness. This led them to have a better chance of getting responses from users than the oblivious men.

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Murphy suggests this is because people are losing their social skills due to texting and emails. They become so enthralled in selling their online persona, they forget how to have a two-sided interaction with someone. So, "when they finally go on a good date they have no idea how to connect with the person," said Murphy.

Read More: Dating Site Matches Users By Their DNA; Says That Two Biomarkers Are Essential For Compatibility

So, what can improve your chances at finding online love? Body language.

Open Body Language Improves Physical Attraction

Psychologists at the University of California, Berkeley, have found open body language, such as uncrossed limbs or a stretched torso, can boost our appeal to potential romantic partners in speed dating and online dating profiles.

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"We do know from past research that having an open posture communicates a lot. Confidence, high self-esteem, being open, and being relaxed. Doing this over the course of a date can be beneficial," Tanya Vacharkulksemsuk, lead author of the study and a post-doctoral research fellow at UC Berkeley, previously told *Medical Daily.*

When daters adopt this body pose, they increase their date's comfort level and likelihood to respond positively toward them, which could potentially increase a date's comfort level.

Nice Guys Finish First In Online Dating

Nice guys finish first compared to more physically attractive "bad boys" who are emotionally unavailable when it comes to online dating, according to a study in March. Something as simple as the order in which online dating profiles are viewed could boost someone's odds of getting a date. Moreover, the researchers suggest "'nice guys' looking to finish first may want to avoid paying for options that offer to bump their profile for premium viewing." This is especially true if their profile is viewed and being contrasted with someone who comes across as emotionally unavailable.

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Online Dating Predictions For 2017

Online dating is going to continue to grow along with the technological advances taking place. Justin Lavelle, a communications director at BeenVerified.com has seen substantial growth in online daters between the ages of 18 to 24 and 55 to 64 this past year.

"Both demographics have doubled in size in the last 3 years," according to Lavelle. "In 2017, this is anticipated to show even more growth," he told *Medical Daily*.

Read More: Online Dating Advice For Men: Use The Pronoun 'Whom' To Drive Women Wild

So will improvements in online and mobile dating apps lead to more committed relationships and marriages?

Other experts, like life coach and speaker Izabela Khan, believe people will be moving away from dating sites. According to Khan, dating sites are there just to browse, exchange numbers and move to WhatsApp.

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"A huge difference was made by the videocalling and expansion of WhatsApp," she told *Medical Daily*.

People will exchange numbers, but they won't call; they move conversation to more comfortable platforms.

Khan believes the dating experience will be de-personalized, and kept more technologically advanced.

"I have already met people who are based in different countries and they had their first date on Skype (you order the same pizza at home, open a bottle of the same wine, put Skype on and get to chatting)," she told *Medical Daily*.

Whether your relationship began offline or online, technology inevitably influences communication in intimate relationships.

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