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21ST CENTURY DATING: THE WAY IT IS

WHERE TO GET A DATE

Nielsen//NetRatings, the leading provider of Internet research, today releases the results of its Online Dating Survey which provide a revealing insight into how dating really works in the 21st Century.

- One in three Internet users would now use the web to meet a potential dating partner
- The Internet is the third most popular method for getting a date

Whilst traditional methods such as meeting people through friends or at pubs and clubs top the list of the most popular choices for meeting potential partners, Britons are now increasingly logging on to get a date.

Most popular ways to get a date

Rank	Method	% using this method
=1	Through friends	53%
=1	Pubs / clubs	53%
=3	At work	33%
=3	Online personals / dating site / chat rooms / discussion boards	33%
5	Dating agency	7%
6	Via classified ads	6%
7	Speed dating events	5%
8	Other	3%
9	Phone dating	2%

E.g. 53% of respondents would try meeting a potential dating partner through friends or in pubs and clubs.
Source: The Nielsen//NetRatings Online Dating Survey, UK MegaPanel®, July 2005

Alex Burmaster, European Internet Analyst at Nielsen//NetRatings says “Whilst there may appear to be a social stigma that prevents people admitting to using a third party to help get a date, our research shows the reality is very different. The results from our MegaPanel survey are backed up by our NetView consumer panel which show that Match.com and DatingDirect.com, two of the leading online dating services in the UK, have both attracted over half a million Unique Visitors in May and June 2005.

Regardless of what they might tell others, many people are harnessing the Internet to find anything from friendship to marriage. One of the advantages of the web is that it provides access to a large number of different types of people to meet in every geographical location - particularly appealing in our increasingly cluttered lives.

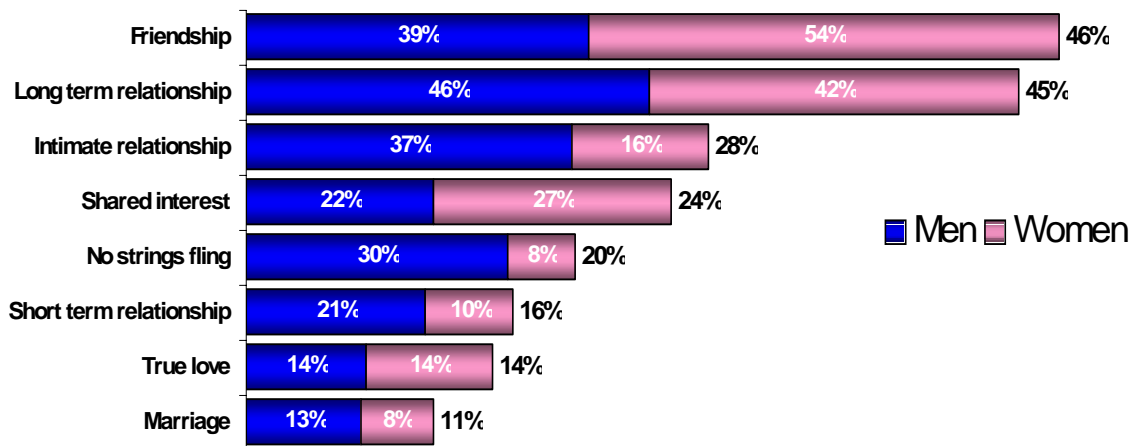
The Internet also provides another crucial advantage over the two most popular methods – you don’t need help from friends. You can access a dating site seven days a week but finding friends to go out with every night could be difficult and going out alone isn’t easy - especially for women. When you factor in the cost as well – one night out in the UK could easily cost more than one month’s subscription to a dating site – it’s easy to see why the web is such a popular option for finding a date.”



WHAT MEN & WOMEN REALLY WANT (OR WHAT THEY SAY THEY WANT!)

- Women are more likely to be looking for friendship or shared interests than men
- Men are more likely to be looking for a long-term relationship, intimate relationship, short term relationship or marriage than women
- The men in our survey were four times more likely to look for a no strings fling than women

Most popular relationship-types looked for through online dating services



E.g. 39% of men use online dating services to find friendship, as do 54% of women. The overall survey average is 46%.

Source: The Nielsen//NetRatings Online Dating Survey, UK MegaPanel®, July 2005

Alex Burmaster comments “Women seem to be a little less specific about the kind of relationships they are looking for - favouring friendship and true love - whilst men’s relationship goals are more definable and concrete – whether this is marriage or a no strings fling.

The different reasons why men and women use Internet dating sites highlight an interesting contradiction; whilst men are more likely to be looking for marriage they are also, as the stereotype traditionally suggests, more likely to be looking for something more ‘temporary’ – “short term relationships”, “intimate relationships” and “no strings flings”.

The fact that true love and marriage score poorly compared to the other categories might seem surprising at first but when you consider that dating sites attract a huge variety of people - from divorcees, to silver surfers, to gays and lesbians - then it is easier to understand why marriage becomes a less relevant goal. Internet dating sites are not all about Bridget Jones looking for Mark Darcy.”



HOW TO GET A DATE

- Men are most likely to contact someone because they liked their photo
- Women are most likely to contact someone based on their description
- Every factor, except someone's photo, was more important to women than men – the difference in importance particularly accentuated for job (twice as likely to be important to women than men) and income (2.5 times as likely)
- For men the most appealing feature about Internet dating is the ability to email people they like the look of on a one-to-one basis
- For women the most appealing feature about Internet dating is the pre-screening that provides a list of potential matches based on personal characteristics, interests etc

Top 10 factors for deciding to contact someone from a dating site

Rank	Factor	% citing this factor
1	Liked the way they looked in photo	74%
2	Way they described themselves	70%
3	Their hobbies and interests	60%
4	Their age	54%
5	Where they lived	46%
6	Education Level	24%
7	Profession	15%
8	Their job	14%
9	Their income	5%
10	Their star sign	4%

E.g. 74% of respondents said they liked the way someone looked in the photo as a factor in deciding to contact them
 Source: The Nielsen//NetRatings Online Dating Survey, UK MegaPanel®, July 2005

Alex Burmaster comments "Our research does seem to reinforce the stereotypical differences between the genders. In particular, men choose their dates based on looks but women, on the other hand, put far more emphasis on personal characteristics and descriptions.

Interestingly, even though 33% of our respondents admitted to lying to some degree on their profile, men are more likely to use a photograph taken in the last 12 months and to tell the 100% truth. Women, shall we say, are more likely to be creative with the truth."

Burmaster concludes, "Internet dating and personals websites are already attracting over three and a half million people per month in the UK, and our research shows it's growing at an enormous rate - both DatingDirect.com and Match.com have almost doubled their audience in 12 months.

Our research shows that the Internet has already started to revolutionise dating in the 21st century - providing such a practical but enjoyable solution to finding anything from friendship to love despite the complexities and requirements of modern life. As more people start dating online there is clearly a huge opportunity - both for the dating sites themselves - and for those logged on Britons looking to find a more fulfilling life online."



EDITOR'S NOTES

Please source all information to Nielsen//NetRatings.

Please note that ACNielsen and Nielsen are both separate, unrelated companies and should NOT be quoted when sourcing the attached data. If an abbreviated name is required then please use NetRatings

The release contains a selection of top-line results of the survey but there are other statistics available to editors relating to the other aspects of online dating covered in the survey.

Fieldwork Information:

Fieldwork dates:	17 th June – 4 th July 2005
Methodology:	The Nielsen//NetRatings UK Online MegaPanel®
Survey Respondents:	3,400+
Gender participation split:	58% male, 42% female

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About Nielsen//NetRatings

Nielsen//NetRatings is the global standard for Internet audience measurement and analysis, providing companies with valuable insight into their businesses. Nielsen//NetRatings offers the industry's premier source of actionable Internet data and digital media research on Website usage, online advertising, consumer attitudes and competitive analysis. For more information, please visit www.nielsen-netratings.com