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5 facts about online dating

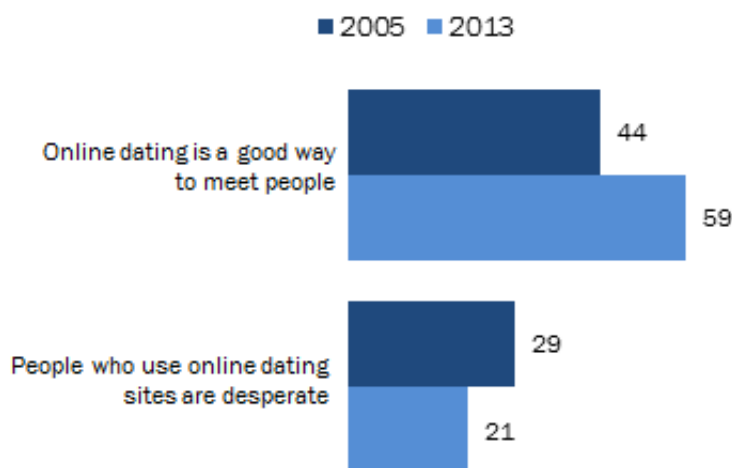
BY AARON SMITH ([HTTP://WWW.PEWRESEARCH.ORG/AUTHOR/ASMITH/](http://www.pewresearch.org/author/asmith/))

This Valentine's Day, many American singles will be looking for love on one of the multitude of online dating sites and mobile dating apps on the market today. The Pew Research Center released a study (<http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2013/Online-Dating.aspx>) about the world of online dating in late 2013, which found that 11% of American adults have used an online dating site or a mobile dating app. Here are five facts from our research about the world of dating in the digital age.

1 Online dating has lost much of its stigma. A majority of Americans now say online dating is a good way to meet people, when that hasn't always been the case.

Attitudes Toward Online Dating

% of Americans who agree with the following statements



Pew Research Center Survey, April 17-May 19, 2013

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(<http://www.pewinternet.org/2013/10/21/online-dating-relationships/>) When we first studied online dating habits in 2005 (<http://www.pewinternet.org/2006/02/13/romance-in-america/>), most Americans had little exposure to online dating or to the people who use it, and they tended to view it as a subpar way of meeting people. Today, almost half of the public knows someone who uses online dating or who has met a spouse or partner via online dating—and their attitudes towards online dating have grown progressively more positive.

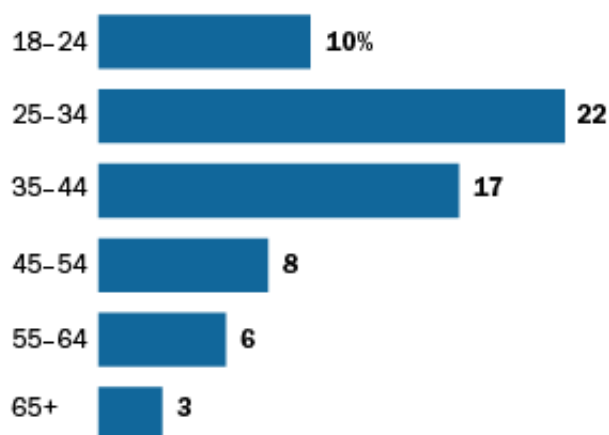
To be sure, there are still lots of people today who don't really understand why someone would want to find a romantic partner online—21% of Americans agree with the statement that “people who use online dating sites are desperate”—but in general it is much more culturally acceptable than it was just eight years ago.

2 One-in-five adults ages 25-34 years old have used online dating, but it's also popular with older singles, too.

(<http://www.pewinternet.org/2013/10/21/part-2-dating-apps-and-online-dating-sites/>) Online dating peaks among people in their mid-20s through mid-40s. Some 22% of 25-34 year olds and 17% of 35-44 year olds have used an online dating site or mobile dating app. Indeed, 45-54 year olds are just as likely to date online as are 18-24 year olds (8% of 45-54 year olds and 10% of 18-24 year olds are online daters). This might seem counterintuitive—aren't most of those 18-24 year olds single? But middle-aged adults are often described as a "thin dating market," meaning that they have a relatively limited number of available partners within their immediate social circles. Other researchers have argued (<http://intl-asr.sagepub.com/content/77/4/523>) that online dating is most useful to people in these thin dating markets, and our own findings seem to bear this out in the case of age.

Online Daters, by Age Group

% of American adults in each age group who have used online dating sites or apps



Source: Pew Internet Spring Tracking Survey, April-May 2013.

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3 One-third of people who have used online dating have never actually gone on a date with someone they met on these sites.

If you haven't found quite what you're looking for on an online dating site, you aren't alone. Two thirds of online daters—66%—tell us that they have gone on a date with someone they met through a dating site or dating app. That is a substantial increase from the 43% of online daters who had actually progressed to the date stage when we first asked this question in 2005. But it still means that one-third of online daters have not yet met up in real life with someone they initially found on an online dating site.

4 One-in-five online daters have asked someone else to help them with their profile.

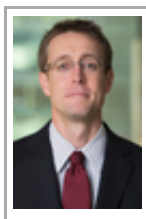
Many online daters enlist their friends in an effort to put their best digital foot forward. Some 22% of online daters have asked someone to help them create or review their profile. Women are especially likely to enlist a friend in helping them craft the perfect profile—30% of female online daters have done this, compared with 16% of men.

5 5% of Americans who are in a marriage or committed relationship say they met their significant other online.

Despite the wealth of digital tools that allow people to search for potential partners, and even as one-in-ten Americans are now using one of the many online dating platforms, the vast majority of relationships still begin offline. Even among Americans who have been with their spouse or partner for five years or less, fully 88% say that they met their partner offline—without the help of a dating site.

Quiz: Online Dating: What's Your View? (<http://www.pewresearch.org/quiz/online-dating/>)

Report: How American Couples Use Technology (<http://www.pewinternet.org/2014/02/11/couples-the-internet-and-social-media/>)



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3 Comments



slk • 4 hours ago (#comment-245368)

i was always amused, by that commercial, where the woman says she doesn't have the time to look for a relationship, but wondered how she would find the time to "keep" the relationship!!! call me old fashion, but you "feel" love, not google it!!!

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Erika Gayle Ettin • 1 day ago (#comment-244120)

As someone in the industry, I love these results, especially #4. And I can tell you that 60% of my clients are female.

😊 [alittlenudge.com](http://www.alittlenudge.com) (<http://www.alittlenudge.com>)

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Smooth Edward • 5 hours ago (#comment-245332)

Only 5% currently in a marriage or committed relationship met online? Those are not exactly stellar results. I thought it was interesting how many people use the service but have never gone on dates with someone else on the same service. As an industry professional, do those numbers seem right? Why would so many be there but not date?

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