



## The new way to meet your soulmate

by Michelle Yurovsky



According to eHarmony, about 50% of the adult population in the United States is single. With over 90 million singles in the U.S. the demand for these online dating services is staggering.

Forbes reports there are more than 2,500 online dating sites with 1,000 new services opening each year.

According to eHarmony's online dating statistics, 20% of current and committed relationships began online, and 7% of marriages in 2015 were between couples that met on a dating website.

The first online dating service, Match.com, was created in 1995. Online dating has been a part of our culture for over 20 years, but only now are we seeing the rise of these relatively new apps such as Tinder and Bumble.

Meeting a partner through the online world is more common than some may think. There are always commercials about how Johnny met Annie on a dating site and how they're living happily ever after.

These commercials are reality for some. It is possible to use an app or service for its intended purpose: to find a soul mate.

"My best friend met her husband online. It is a great way to meet and connect," said English teacher Leslie Skizas.



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However, one flaw of these on the assumption that people are looking for others who are highly similar to themselves, or that they are looking for partners solely based on appearances.

Catfishing is another obstacle that many online dating users face. Urban dictionary defines it as, "Hiding who you really are to lure someone into a romantic relationship online."

According to eHarmony's

statistics, 53% of people lie on their dating profiles. The most common lies are about age, height/weight, and job occupation or income. It can be difficult to trust who you are talking to.

"The dangers of online dating are that people get to misrepresent themselves. Rather than getting to know someone you're immediately suspicious.

Especially now with background checks, the aspect of trust is being lost," said English teacher Jay Rosenberg.

Many seem to view the dating app Tinder as an app for the sole purpose of "hooking up" and not for actually establishing a relationship with someone.

The New York Times recently published an article, "Tinder, the Fastest-Growing Dating app, Taps an Age-Old Truth," with some statistics on the app and its users.

Although there are more than 1 billion profile swipes a day, there are only 12 million matches.

Rejection could be happening 988 million times per day! Now that's a lot of rejection. This goes to show that just like in real world dating, the odds are not in our favor.

Minors are interested in using some of these apps as well.

When Tinder launched in 2012, minors over the age of 13 were initially able to use the app. After receiving backlash

for allowing children under the age of consent to use the dating service, the app changed the age policy to 18 and over.

"At 18 you shouldn't be looking for a partner through dating apps because it's not safe. People say they're 18 and an adult, but they're really not," said senior Emma Olson.

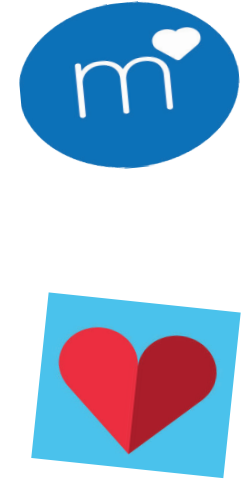
Dating apps also blur the lines between fidelity and cheating.

"When you're talking to multiple people online, it's normally not associated with cheating because you're just talking to them. The reality is that you are trying to make relationships with multiple people that you're interested in. If this were to happen in person it would be considered cheating, but online it's normal," said senior Hunter Weil.

There seems to be a general consensus that people should only be using these apps after they have had experience in having these conversations in person.

As Rosenberg puts it, "Adolescents haven't even finished learning how to get to know each other."

Instead of hiding behind our phones and attempting to use awkward pick up lines, get out there and have a face to face conversation with someone.



## Social media breeds a new generation of stars

by Rebecca Lee

According to a study conducted by a non-profit family technology education group, Common Sense Media, teenagers spend an average of nine hours a day consuming media. The same study found on average, teenagers spend approximately two of those nine hours on social media.

New Trier students estimate that they spend one to four hours on social media everyday.

The widespread use of social media by teenagers across the country has made way for the rise of so-called internet celebrities.

Also known as influencers or content creators, they begin their careers on social media platforms—posting outfit photos on Instagram, crafting relatable Tweets, filming pranks for YouTube. Those who are successful attract millions of followers, score brand deals, write books, and star in television shows.

"Fame on social media brings great [career] opportunities and gives people the ability to influence and inspire others," said senior Melanie Salgado.

"You can use [social media] to start big changes," added senior Rachel Rhee. She pointed to Casey Neistat as an example; the YouTuber recently raised \$1 million for those facing starvation in Somalia.

Even those who attain such a level of success, however, seem to be confined to YouTube and other social media platforms dominated by teenagers.

The teens and tweens who make up the base of social media stars' audience feel that they deserve the same attention and respect that traditional celebrities receive.

"Each social media celebrity has



Famous American Youtuber Logan Paul at the 2017 Jingle Ball | AP Images

to work extra hard to stay relevant. I think that social media celebrities put forth a great deal of effort and time, so they do deserve the same attention and respect [that traditional celebrities get]," said senior Esther Lee.

Many teenage social media users have opinions on which stars deserve attention and respect, and which do not.

"Social media celebrities who produce videos that are high quality and work hard to entertain viewers deserve fame," said Rhee.

Users also point out that fame on social media can be superficial.

"People post the best or fake versions of themselves. With editing apps and photoshop so easily accessible, people can erase blemishes and shed pounds with the swipe of a finger," said Lee.

"If they have talent or are funny, then they deserve the same attention [that traditional celebrities get]. The people who just look good, not so much," said senior Julia Yang.

"Some social media celebrities gain fame by [pulling] pranks or making jokes of especially foreign cultures. These social media celebrities don't deserve

respect," added Salgado.

On Dec. 31, 2017, Logan Paul posted a vlog of himself touring Aokigahara, a beautiful but infamous forest in Japan that has become widely known as a suicide site.

In the video, Paul encounters the body of a man who has apparently committed suicide. He films himself shouting at the body, "Yo, are you alive? Are you [expletive] with us?" The exaggerated reaction shots and brash laughter are characteristic of Paul's usual content.

The video, which amassed 6.3 million views within the first 24 hours

it was posted on YouTube, sparked a public outrage. It also sparked a conversation about the ways in which YouTubers more and more must create sensational and even graphic content to get views and outcompete others.

"I think social media enables people to 'make it' in the entertainment industry more easily now than before. But since more people are moving into the industry, the bar for what is considered to be 'entertaining' has dropped," said Rhee.

The best social media stars, according to teenage users, are the ones who use their platforms creatively and authentically. "[My favorite] social media stars, like boysrule, Nathan Zed, and filmquaker, use social media as an outlet to express their own senses of humor and perspectives, which some people may or may not find funny or agree with. Instead of shaping their personality to cater to an audience, they are simply themselves," said Lee.

Millennials and Generation Z-ers believe in the future of social media in entertainment.

"Social media is a whole new way of helping and finding young talent. I believe that social media is a great way for anyone to get out there and show what they are made of," said senior Grace Meyer, who has her own YouTube channel, glambygrace2.

Rhee expressed hope for the growth of social media as a positive platform of communication and creativity.

"I hope the entertainment industry invests in [social media celebrities] who have a good work ethic, are positive role models, and have talent."