PewResearchCenter

http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/02/29/5-facts-about-online-dating/

FEBRUARY 29, 2016

5 facts about online dating

BY AARON SMITH (HTTP://WWW.PEWRESEARCH.ORG/STAFF/AARON-SMITH/) AND MONICA ANDERSON (HTTP://WWW.PEWRESEARCH.ORG/AUTHOR/MANDERSON/)

Digital technology and smartphones in particular have transformed many aspects of our society, including how people seek out and establish romantic relationships. Few Americans had online dating experience when Pew Research Center first polled on the activity in 2005, but today 15% of U.S. adults (http://www.pewinternet.org/2016/02/11/15-percent-of-american-adults-have-used-online-dating-sites-or-mobile-dating-apps/) report they have used online dating sites or mobile dating apps.

Here are five facts about online dating:

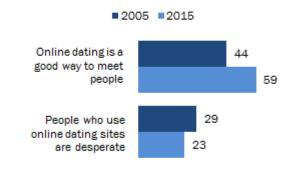
Online dating has lost much of its stigma, and a majority of Americans now say online dating is a good way to meet people.

When we first studied online dating habits in 2005, most Americans had little exposure to online dating or to the people who used it, and they tended to view it as a subpar way of meeting people. Today, nearly half of the public knows someone who uses online dating or who has met a spouse or partner via online dating — and attitudes toward online dating have grown progressively more positive.

To be sure, many people remain puzzled that someone would want to find a romantic partner online – 23% 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 a decade ago.

Attitudes toward online dating grow more positive

% of U.S. adults who agree with the following statements



Source: Survey conducted June 10-July 12, 2015. Trend data from previous Pew Research Center survey.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

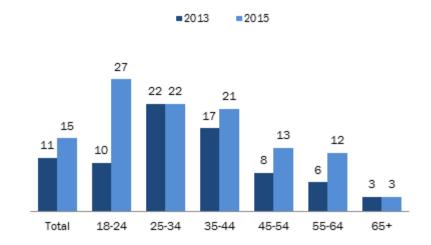
Online dating has jumped among adults under age 25 as well as those in their late 50s and early 60s.

(http://www.pewinternet.org /2016/02/11/15-percentof-american-adults-have-usedonline-dating-sites-or-mobiledating-apps/) The share of 18- to 24-year-olds who use online dating has roughly tripled from 10% in 2013 to 27% today. Online dating use among 55- to 64-year-olds has also risen substantially since the last Pew Research Center survey on the topic. Today, 12% of 55- to 64-year-olds report ever using an online dating site or mobile dating app versus only 6% in 2013.

One factor behind the substantial growth among younger adults is their use of

Use of online dating sites or mobile apps by young adults has nearly tripled since 2013

% in each age group who have ever used an online dating site and/or mobile dating app



Source: Survey conducted June 10-July 12, 2015.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

mobile dating apps. About one-in-five 18- to 24-year olds (22%) now report using mobile dating apps; in 2013, only 5% reported doing so.

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.

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% 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.