

Pew Research Center

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Key findings about online dating in the U.S.

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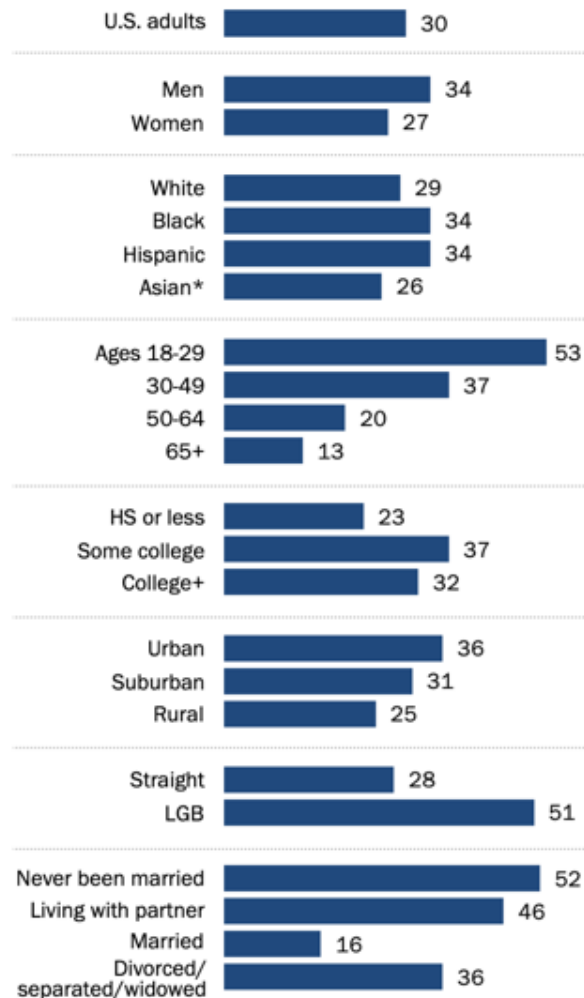
<https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/02/02/key-findings-about-online-dating-in-the-u-s/>

(Jessica Keaveny via Getty Images)

Online dating in the United States has evolved [over the past several decades](#) into a [booming industry](#), transforming the way some people [meet matches](#). A [new report](#) from Pew Research Center explores the [upsides and downsides](#) of online dating by highlighting Americans' experiences and views about it. Here are 12 key takeaways.

Younger or LGB adults more likely than their counterparts to have ever used a dating site or app

% of U.S. adults who say they have ever used a dating site or app



* Estimates for Asian adults are representative of English speakers only.

Note: White, Black and Asian adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanic adults are of any race. LGB refers to those who are lesbian, gay or bisexual; these groups are combined because of small sample sizes.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted July 5-17, 2022.

*From Looking for Love to Swiping the Field: Online Dating in the U.S."

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1 Three-in-ten U.S. adults say they have ever used a dating site or app, identical to the share who said this in 2019. That includes 9% who report doing so in the past year, according to the Center's survey of 6,034 adults conducted July 5-17, 2022.

Online dating is more common among younger adults than among older people. About

half of those under 30 (53%) report having ever used a dating site or app, compared with 37% of those ages 30 to 49, 20% of those 50 to 64 and 13% of those 65 and older.

When looking at sexual orientation, lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB) adults are more likely than their straight counterparts to say they have ever used a dating site or app (51% vs. 28%).

Men are somewhat more likely than women to have tried online dating (34% vs. 27%), as are those with at least some college education when compared with those with a high school education or less.

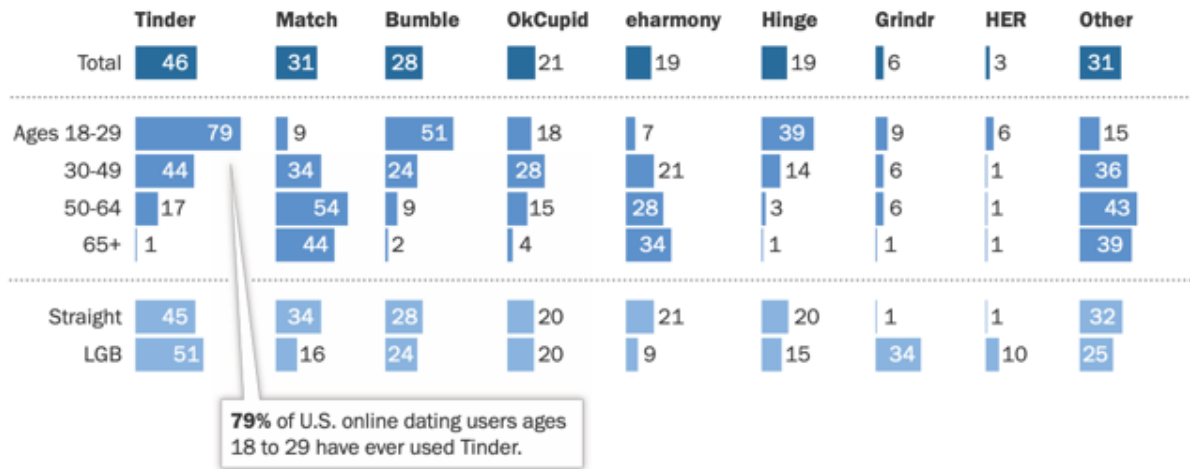
Adults who have *never* been married are much more likely than married adults to report having used online dating sites or apps (52% vs. 16%). Adults who are currently living with a partner (46%) or who are divorced, separated or widowed (36%) are also more likely to have tried online dating than married adults.

There are no statistically significant differences in the shares of adults who report ever using an online dating platform by race or ethnicity: Similar shares of White, Black, Hispanic and Asian adults report ever having done so.

2 **Tinder tops the list of dating sites or apps the survey studied and is particularly popular among adults under 30.** Some 46% of online dating users say they have ever used Tinder, followed by about three-in-ten who have used Match (31%) or Bumble (28%). OkCupid, eharmony and Hinge are each used by about a fifth of online dating users. Grindr and HER are used by very few online dating users overall (6% and 3%, respectively) but are more widely used by LGB adults than straight adults. Additionally, 31% of online dating users mention having tried some other online dating platform not asked about directly in this survey. (Read [the topline](#) for a list of the most common other dating sites and apps users mentioned.)

Nearly half of online dating users – and about eight-in-ten users under 30 – report ever using Tinder, making it the most widely used dating platform in the U.S.

% of U.S. online dating users who say they have ever used ...



Note: Online dating users refers to those who have ever used a dating site or app. LGB refers to those who are lesbian, gay or bisexual; these groups are combined because of small sample sizes. See topline for a list of the most common other dating sites or apps mentioned. Those who did not give an answer are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted July 5-17, 2022.

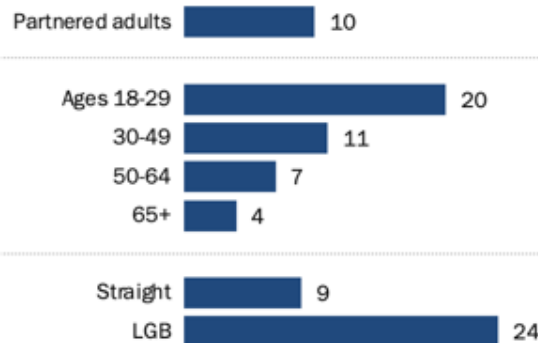
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Tinder use is far more common among younger adults than among older Americans: 79% of online dating users under 30 say they have used the platform, compared with 44% of users ages 30 to 49, 17% of users 50 to 64 and just 1% of those 65 and older. Tinder is the top online dating platform among users under 50. By contrast, users 50 and older are about five times more likely to use Match than Tinder (50% vs. 11%).

About a quarter of partnered LGB adults say they met their match online dating

Among partnered U.S. adults, % who say they met their current spouse or partner on a dating site or app



Note: Partnered adults refers to those who are married, living with a partner, or in a committed romantic relationship. LGB refers to those who are lesbian, gay or bisexual; these groups are combined because of small sample sizes. Those who did not give an answer are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted July 5-17, 2022.

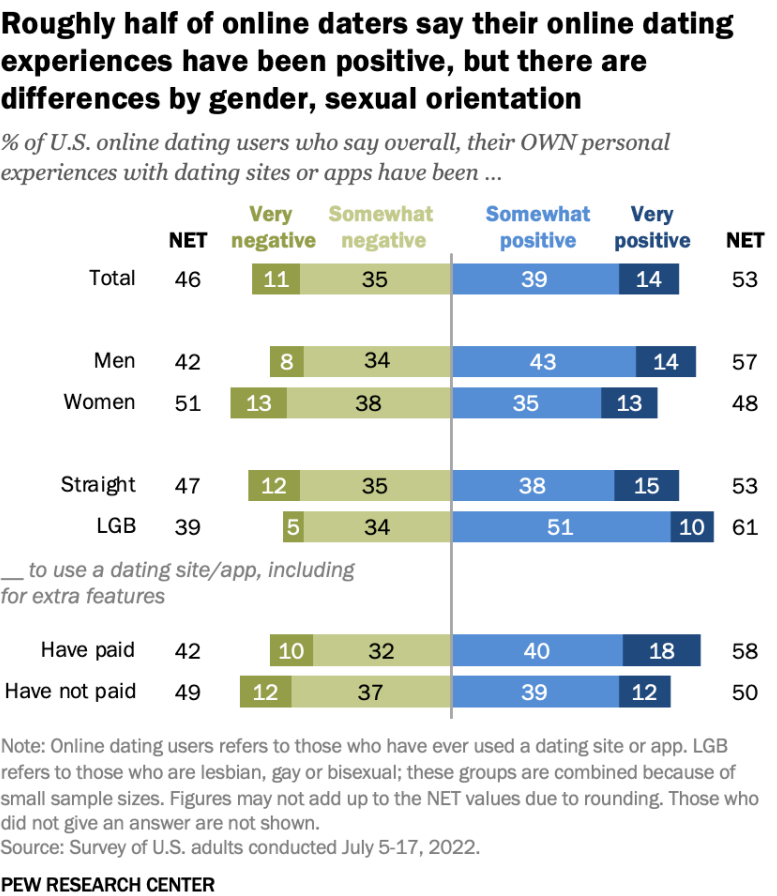
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3 One-in-ten partnered adults – meaning those who are married, living with a partner or in a committed romantic relationship – met their current significant other through a dating site or app. Partnered adults who are under 30 or who are LGB stand out from other groups when looking at this measure of online dating “success”: One-in-five partnered adults under 30 say they met their current spouse or partner on a dating site or app, as do about a quarter of partnered LGB adults (24%).

4 Online dating users are somewhat divided over whether their experiences on these platforms have been positive or negative. Among those who have ever used a dating site or app, slightly more say their personal experiences have been very or somewhat positive than say they have been very or somewhat negative (53% vs. 46%).

Some demographic groups are more likely to report positive experiences. For example, 57% of men who have dated online say their experiences have been positive, while women users are roughly split down the middle (48% positive, 51% negative). In addition, LGB users of these platforms are more likely than straight users to report positive experiences (61% vs. 53%).

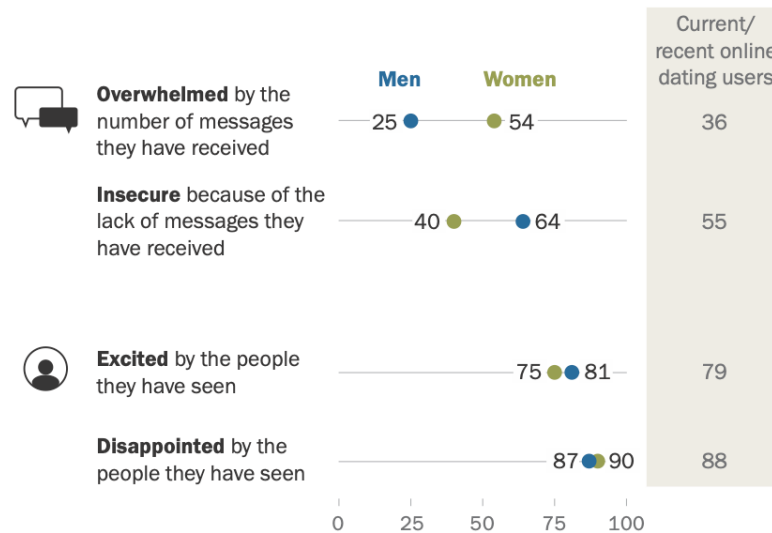


5 Roughly a third of online dating users (35%) say they have ever paid to use one of these platforms – including for extra features – but this varies by income, age and gender. Some 45% of online dating users with upper incomes report having paid to use a dating site or app, compared with 36% of users with middle incomes and 28% of those with lower incomes. Similarly, 41% of users 30 and older say they have paid to use these platforms, compared with 22% of those under 30. Men who have dated online are more likely than women to report having paid for these sites and apps (41% vs. 29%).

Those who have ever paid to use dating sites or apps report more positive experiences than those who have never paid. Around six-in-ten paid users (58%) say their personal experiences with dating sites or apps have been positive; half of users who have never paid say this.

Women, men using dating platforms in past year feel differently about the number of messages they get – women more likely to be overwhelmed; men, insecure

Among those who have used dating sites or apps in the past year, % who say they have **often** or **sometimes** felt ___ while using these sites or apps in that time frame



Note: Current/recent online dating users refers to those who have used a dating site or app in the past year. Not all differences shown are statistically significant. Those who did not give an answer or who gave other responses are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted July 5-17, 2022.

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6 Women who have used online dating platforms in the past year are more likely to feel overwhelmed by the number of messages they get, while men are more likely to feel insecure about a lack of messages.

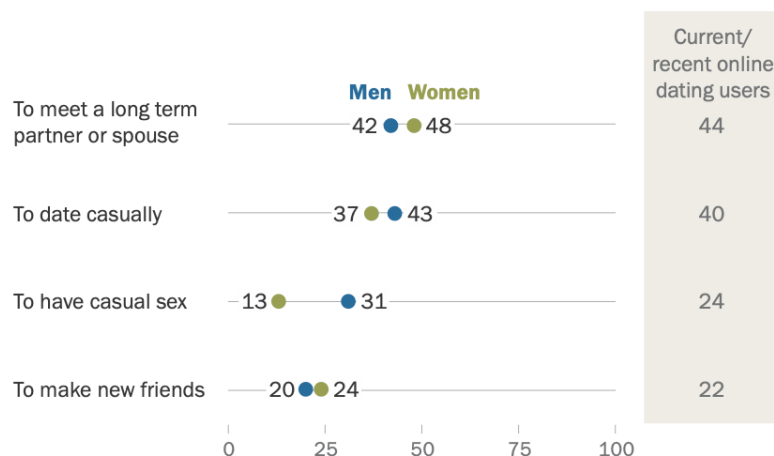
Among current or recent online dating users, 54% of women say they have felt overwhelmed by the number of messages they received on dating sites or apps in the past year, while just a quarter of men say the same. By contrast, 64% of men say they have felt insecure because of the lack of messages they received, while four-in-ten women say the same.

Overall, 55% of adults who have used a dating app or site in the past year say they often or sometimes felt insecure about the number of messages they received, while 36% say they often or sometimes felt overwhelmed.

Among recent online daters, large majorities of men and women say they have often or sometimes felt excited by the people they have seen while using these platforms, though large majorities also say they have often or sometimes felt disappointed.

Similar shares of men versus women who have online dated recently say a major reason is to find a partner, dates, friends; differences emerge for casual sex

Among those who have used a dating site or app in the past year, % who say a **major reason** they have used a dating site or app in that time frame is ...



Note: Current/recent online dating users refers to those who have used a dating site or app in the past year. Not all differences shown are statistically significant. Those who did not give an answer or who gave other responses are not shown.

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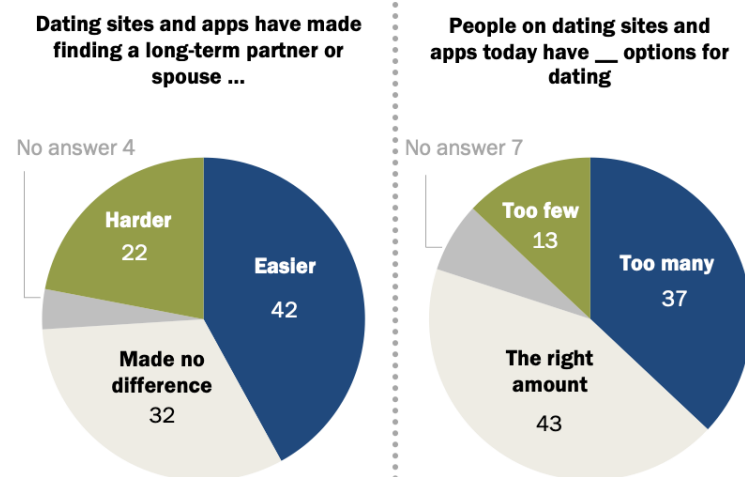
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7 When asked why they've turned to dating sites or apps in the past year, 44% of users say a major reason was to meet a long-term partner and 40% say a major reason was to date casually. Smaller shares say a major reason was to have casual sex (24%) or make new friends (22%).

Men who have used a dating platform in the past year are much more likely than women to say casual sex was a major reason (31% vs. 13%). There are no statistically significant gender differences on the other three reasons asked about in the survey.

Americans lean toward thinking dating sites and apps make finding a partner easier versus harder, but some say the number of choices they present isn't ideal

% of U.S. adults who say the following



Note: A lot/a little harder and a lot/a little easier are combined above. Figures may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted July 5-17, 2022.

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8 About four-in-ten U.S. adults overall (42%) say online dating has made the search for a long-term partner easier. Far fewer (22%) say it has made the search for a long-term partner or spouse harder. About a third (32%) say it has made no difference.

Adults under 30 are less convinced than their older counterparts that online dating has made the search for a partner easier. These younger adults are about evenly divided in their views, with 35% of those ages 18 to 29 saying it has made the search easier and 33% saying it has made the search harder.

When it comes to the choices people have on dating sites and apps, 43% of adults overall say people have the right amount of options for dating on these platforms, while 37% think choices are *too* plentiful. Fewer (13%) say there are not enough options.

About one-in-five U.S. adults think dating algorithms can predict love

% of U.S. adults who think computer programs, or algorithms, like those that dating sites and apps use to decide which profiles to show to someone, ___ determine whether two people will eventually fall in love



Note: Those who did not give an answer are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted July 5-17, 2022.

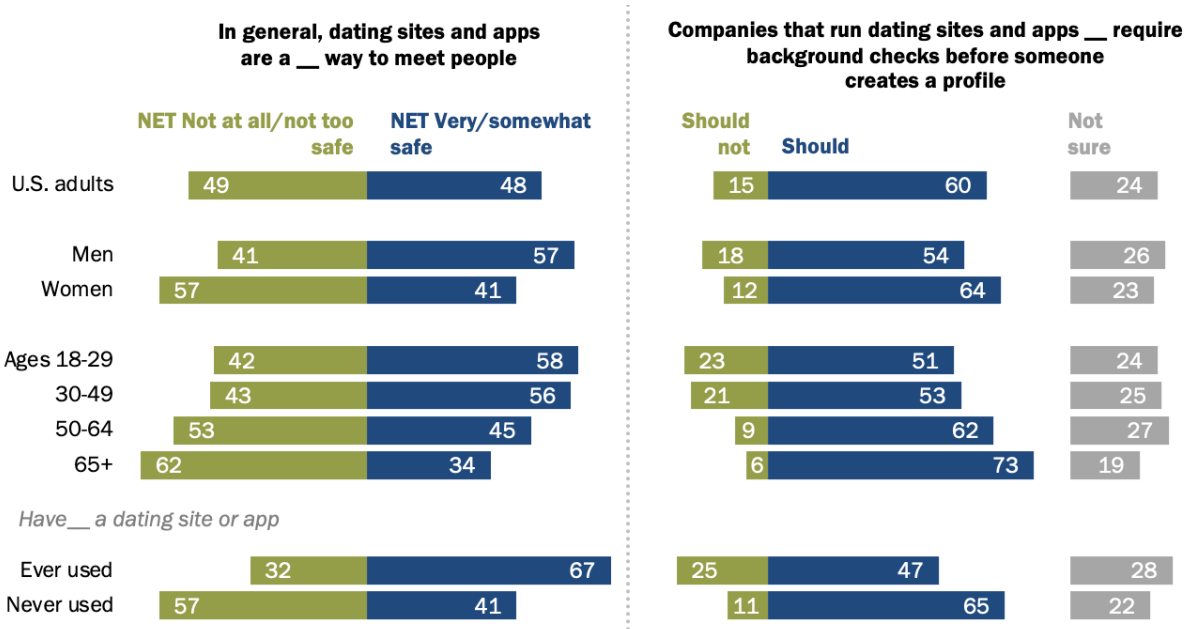
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9 Most U.S. adults are skeptical or unsure that dating algorithms can predict love. About one-in-five adults (21%) think that the types of computer programs that dating sites and apps use could determine whether two people will eventually fall in love. But greater shares of Americans either say these programs could *not* do this (35%) or are unsure (43%).

10 Americans are split on whether online dating is a safe way to meet people, and a majority support requiring background checks before someone can create a profile. The share of U.S. adults who say online dating is generally a very or somewhat safe way to meet people has dipped slightly since 2019, from 53% to 48%. Women are more likely than men to say online dating is not too or not at all safe.

Americans are divided on online dating’s safety, but a majority support requiring background checks for online dating profiles

% of U.S. adults who say the following



Note: Those who did not give an answer are not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted July 5-17, 2022.
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There are also differences by age: 62% of Americans ages 65 and older say online dating is not safe, compared with 53% of those 50 to 64 and 42% of adults younger than 50. Those who have never used a dating site or app are particularly likely to think it is unsafe: 57% say this, compared with 32% of those who *have* used an online dating site or app.

At the same time, six-in-ten Americans say companies should require background checks before someone creates a dating profile, while 15% say they should not and 24% are not sure. Women are more likely than men to say these checks should be required, as are adults 50 and older compared with younger adults.

These checks do not have majority support among online dating users themselves, however: 47% of users say companies should require background checks, versus 65% of those who have never used a dating site or app.

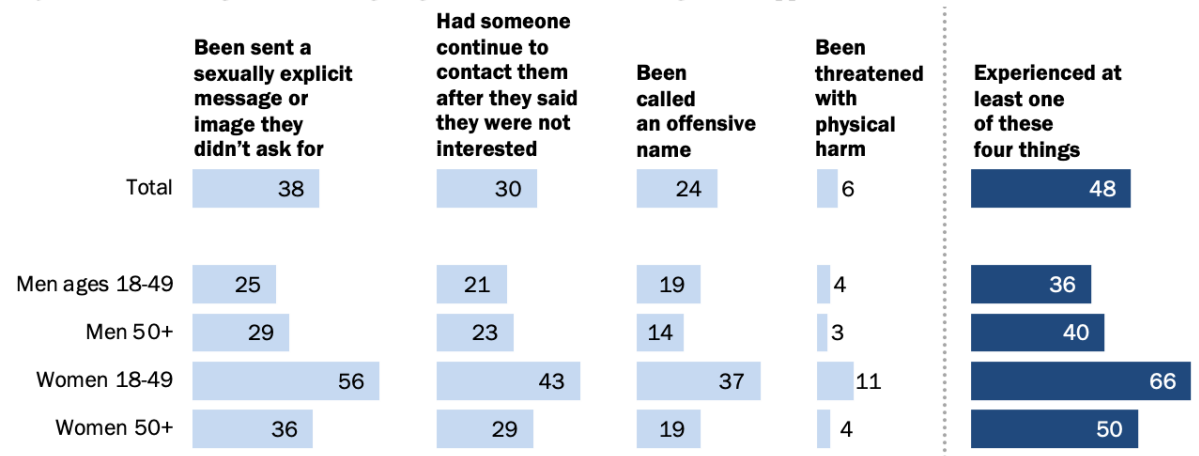
11 Younger women who have used dating sites or apps stand out for experiencing unwanted behaviors on these platforms.

A majority of women under 50 who have used dating sites or apps (56%) say they have been sent a sexually explicit message or image they didn’t ask for, and about four-in-ten have had

someone continue to contact them after they said they were not interested (43%) or have been called an offensive name (37%). Roughly one-in-ten of this group (11%) have received threats of physical harm. Each of these experiences is less common among women online dating users ages 50 and older, as well as among men of any age.

A majority of women younger than 50 who have used dating sites or apps have received unwanted sexually explicit messages or images on these platforms

% of U.S. online dating users who say they have ever ___ on a dating site or app



Note: Online dating users refers to those who have ever used a dating site or app. Those who did not give an answer are not shown.
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Among all online dating users, 38% have ever received unsolicited sexually explicit messages or images while using a dating site or app; 30% have experienced continued unwanted contact; 24% have been called an offensive name; and 6% have been threatened with physical harm.

12 About half of those who have used dating sites and apps (52%) say they have come across someone they think was trying to scam them. Men under 50 are particularly likely to say they have had this experience: 63% of men in this age group who have used dating sites or apps think they have encountered a scammer on them. Smaller shares of men ages 50 and older (47%) and women of any age (44%) say the same.