

The good, the bad, and the ugly of online dating



Everyone has a story about online dating or knows someone with a story, some good, some bad, and some just plain ugly!

by David Haddon

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Most, if not all of us, have tried online dating at some point in our lives. Why not? It's an easy way to expand your social circle and introduce you to a world you would not normally interact with. Not too long ago, online dating was only for computer geeks and the thought of going online to become lucky in love was akin to tying yourself to a boulder and jumping into the ocean! Not so much today. With dating sites like Match, Plenty of Fish, eHarmony, and even [Tinder](#), more and more people are turning to their computers to find that one true love, or close proximity to it.

There are a lot of good reasons to try online dating.

You find yourself not meeting anyone new when you go out with friends, work-place relationships are not possible, and you don't feel comfortable hitting on someone at the gym. For as many reasons as there are for not finding a knight in shining armor or princess in flowing robes, there are just as many reasons for trying online dating. Like any potential social setting, there are always going to be good and bad qualities, and online is no different. The only difference between online and traditional dating is you don't have to dress up.

The good in online dating

When it's good, it's right. I've met a few happy couples that have met online and ended up married, and I've met plenty with terrible stories to tell.

First, let's focus on the good.

Opening up your social circle - I think the biggest reason why online dating became popular is the simple fact that while it's a big world out there, we tend to stay within our social circles. It's comfortable and fun and there is no reason to leave. Unless of course, you're like me and all of your friends are married and their friends are married.

It does not leave a lot of options for sources Online dating allows you to expand your social circle and meet new people.

Learn a new hobby - As you begin surfing the waves of online dating sources, you'll run into people that can open your horizons to new things. You may find a new activity you like such as Paddleboarding or painting.

Discover a new restaurant or sports bar - Travel to interesting places you may have never thought about. Opening yourself up to meeting new people will cascade into much more than that. Plus you get the added benefit of doing this with someone special, which makes the experience all the more memorable.

Starting over - Moving to a new city for work or school or just a change of pace can be frightening, not knowing anyone before you get there is no fun either. Meeting new friends is not easy for everyone and when you move to a new city, where you don't know anyone, it can lead to stress and anxiety. With online dating or social media in general, you have a chance to start chatting with a few people before you make the big move.

Don't worry if you are over the bar scene - As you get older, the usual ways you go out to meet someone new or just to hang out change. Clubs are replaced with local sports bars and wild parties are replaced with small dinner parties with close friends. We change as we get older and we have to change how we find love as well. A common phrase you'll see in profiles is "Over the bar scene." I see this one little line in a lot of profiles out there. If you find yourself in this situation, pull out the laptop and set up a dating profile.

The bad in online dating

There is a lot of bad going on in the online dating world. Throw a rock and you'll hit five people who have had a bad experience with online dating. Mind you, it's not the concept of online dating that can sour you on it, it's some of the people that you meet.

This is just a few of the bad situations I've heard about or come across in my online dating experience.

Photos are not accurate - At the beginning of online dating, there was no way to prove the photos you were looking at were real. This is where online dating has gotten a bad rap. For whatever reason, people would use fake or old photos. Most times, someone would put up a photo that was a few years old as that's when they looked the best. Trouble occurs when you are expecting someone that looks like their photo and you find out they are not.

Nowadays, most dating sites will have some sort of photo verification out there. You will still see some fake profiles, but they are usually easy to spot and are quickly deleted from the site.

Unfortunately, they can't do anything about people who use old photos on their dating profiles. Age and weight gain are the two top reasons someone would use a photo that did not accurately portray them as they are today. I never understood why someone would do that because as soon as you meet and they would see that you are different from your photos, it would start the date off on a bad foot.

Lying on profiles - Speaking of lying, there is no way to immediately verify someone's life story. This is another reason why online dating got such a bad rap in the beginning. You're going off of the assumption that the person you are talking to is being truthful. Usually, after a few online conversations you can weed out the liars and fakes, but it puts a bad taste in your mouth and you start doubting whether anyone is telling the truth or not.

Serial daters - Sites like Tinder and Plenty of Fish are known for users who may not be looking for a monogamous relationship. They have options like not looking for anything serious or just looking to date. Tinder is basically a photo app where you can put in a limited description, but generally, most people will swipe based solely on the persons' appearance. If that's what you're looking for, then great! Nothing wrong with that, just stay honest about what you are looking for.

The ugly in online dating

There are a lot of great benefits to searching for love or companionship online, but like everything, there are some bad that goes along with it. [Cyberbullying](#), [online stalking](#), and [identity theft](#) are all problems everyone should be looking out for.

We all have heard stories about a predator using online dating to lure their victim. While some of these ugly stories make for some good laughs after the fact, there are some truly disturbing people out there and you need to use some common sense when it comes to meeting someone new.

Dangerous intentions - While the majority of people out there are good, the ones that are bad can be really bad. A friend of mine met someone online a few years back. They chatted online for a few days and then it moved to text and phone calls and shared friends on Facebook. They made plans to grab a drink at a local bar, but before that happened, she started getting a weird vibe from him. Questions about past photos on Facebook and other random things set off her Creepy alarm and she canceled the date.

A week later she saw the guy on the news being arrested for killing a young woman he met online.

That was just one example of how bad things can get. Even if you are meeting someone who seems like a great person, you want to use a little caution when first meeting. Never go to someone's home, save that for another time, and meet in a very public place, no dive bars, parks, or other spots where you are alone.

Inappropriate photos/comments - This is where common sense and online dating have yet to meet. It amazes me how many stories I hear about women getting inappropriate comments or photos. Sending unwanted naked photos seems to be the new "Hello" for some people, or for those who think that's a bit far, they will just describe what they want to do to them, in graphic detail.

Instead of starting out the first communication with "Hello...," they begin with, "You're hot! Let's hook up!" Try doing that in a bar to a few random women and see what happens.

The ugly but funny - I thought I would end on a fun note here. Here are a few examples of what NOT to do;

- On your first date, don't get so drunk you turn into a tool and scare your date away, then follow it up with a photo of your name tattooed somewhere on their body.
- When talking about yourself, be humble. Don't brag about how many women you've been with or how rich you are. You just come off as an idiot and will not get a second date.
- McDonald's is not an acceptable first date unless you're thirteen and with your Mom.