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Impression formation in the information age : a study and design for online dating

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Abstract:

43% of American adults are single and many are looking for new social and romantic connections. At the same time, the Internet offers services to both research and contact other individuals. As a result, proactive computer savvy singles are logging on to find romantic partners. While the online dating industry advertises its success citing the large number of registered users, other evidence indicates broad dissatisfaction: the analysis of website behavior reveals that most users are inactive and experienced online daters state a preference for dating offline versus on. To account for this dissatisfaction, I locate decision-point failures. To improve the process, I propose and test an alternate model. Part 1 shows that acquiring more information - one of the perceived benefits of meeting online and reading profiles - can have negative effects, such as leading to less liking over time, while failing to make people really believe they know others better. The expectation that getting to know others more will lead to more liking, coupled with the fact that more information leads to less liking, means that online daters are frequently disappointed, causing them to leave dating sites, and to continue to prefer offline dating despite its drawbacks.(cont.) Part 2 focuses on interventions to improve the online dating experience, making it more similar to life offline through the introduction of "virtual dates" where people "pre-meet" online before they meet face-to-face. In particular, these interventions are targeted at mitigating the overly positive expectations online daters who only read profiles have, bringing expectations for dates more in line with reality, leading to less disappointment- and possibly increased likelihood of finding a match.

Description:
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PDF | People use online dating systems to form and create impressions of potential romantic partners. While there is a wealth of research on the use of profile pages for impression management in online dating systems, there is little work on how other forms of communication in... Effect in the Online Dating Environment. Journal of. Business and Media Psychology, 1 (2010), 1-7. In the case of adults also, impression formation about others is influenced by physical attractiveness. This was found by Walster & others. According to them, college students in picking their dates for a computer dance from photographs were mainly guided by physical attractiveness. It appears therefore that the greater the amount of information and more varied the information which is available about a person, the impact of physical appearance, attractiveness, clothing etc. appears to follow the principle of diminishing returns. Factor # 3. Cognitive and Learning Styles: The reader is already familiar with the role of cognitive and learning processes in the development of behaviour.