

The Right Stuff: The new conservative dating app which has, unsurprisingly, failed to attract women

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Credit: Austin Distel/Unsplash

[The Right Stuff](#) is a new conservative dating app, recently launched in the US. Not yet available in Australia, the app was apparently created "for conservatives to connect in authentic and meaningful ways."

It offers to bring people together with shared values and similar passions, ensuring users "view profiles without pronouns" and are able to "connect

with people who aren't offended by everything."

As you might anticipate, the app has drawn immediate, and controversial attention, for a variety of reasons. Firstly, and importantly, there appears to be an absence of [female-users](#). Problematic, given the app only caters for an heterosexual audience.

Secondly, the app was co-founded by former Trump aide [John McEntee](#). Ryann McEnany, the sister of the former White House press secretary Kayleigh McEnany, is the [app's spokesperson](#). Finally, the app is financially backed by right-wing billionaire and [PayPal co-founder Peter Thiel](#).

The [ads](#) for the app have also attracted a level of derision from audiences. Featuring an all-female cast, [women](#) are asked "What they're looking for in a man?"

They respond they are looking for an "alpha male vibe," an independent man, a man who is family-orientated.

When women in the video were asked what their "biggest red flag" in their potential partners was. They all replied they couldn't be with a Democrat.

Politics and dating apps

This isn't the first dating app to intersect tech, dating, intimacy and politics.

In 2016, Bumble launched its political digital "bumper stickers," which featured Hillary Clinton, Bernie Sanders, Ted Cruz and, of course, Trump. These were later updated, replaced by iterations reflecting the political times.

In America, the app currently allows you to share whether or not you have voted in the mid-term elections. Whitey Wolfe Herd, creator and CEO of Bumble, [has said](#): "Political views are more than just current topics, sometimes entire value sets can be tied to [political views](#). It tells you a lot about a person."

In 2020, OkCupid launched its "[Voters Make Better Lovers](#)" campaign in advance of the presidential election.

In a [press release](#), the company said "practicing your right to vote is the biggest turn-on to OkCupid singles today."

Shared values

Speaking to the Slow Love podcast in 2020, OkCupid's then chief marketing officer, Melissa Hobley, said users on the app [were increasingly](#) making match-decisions based on shared values, with political inclinations and climate philosophies ranking highly in the mix.

In my research into [dating apps](#) and intimacy, I have found women would quickly ghost matches who made racist, sexist or overly sexualized statements in chat or on their profile.

User reviews and [media reports](#) have overwhelmingly indicated a lack of women on The Right Stuff. (This has not yet been corroborated by the Right Stuff spokespeople.)

Take this [user complaint](#) for example: "These days, it's hard to find a woman who values my patriotism. My faith. And so after being ghosted by every match on Tinder, I decided to give this app a try. [...] But the weird thing was, I couldn't find any women on it. I don't know, maybe the app is bugged?"

Dating apps are not merely a platform for personal relationships. As Lik Sam Chan, assistant professor at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, explores in his research, apps are an [emerging arena](#) for gender and politics. These spaces can provide opportunities for women's empowerment and men's performances of masculinity.

Similarly, Australian academic Martin Nakata [argues](#) online spaces—such as dating apps—can be understood as digitally mediated "sites of struggle over the meaning of [our] experience."

Dating apps constitute relatively new sites of culturally and politically mediated encounter. They are emerging as the new digital interface for gender and political negotiation.

Certainly, the launch of the Right Stuff tends to suggest the importance of political orientation for women looking to date—and reveals that right wing values are indeed viewed as "the wrong stuff" for many American women.

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