

Americans warm to online dating, survey shows

October 21 2013, by Rob Lever

Americans are growing more comfortable with online dating, and many are finding a spouse or partner in cyberspace, a survey showed Monday.

The Pew Research Center found 11 percent of Internet users—or some nine percent of all American adults—said they have personally used an [online](#) dating site.

That is a sharp increase from 2008, when just three percent of American adults had used [online dating](#) sites, Pew said.

The survey found 66 percent of those who use online sites or apps have gone on a date with someone they met through one of these services.

And 23 percent of online daters have married or begun a long-term relationship with someone they met through a [dating site](#) or app, Pew found.

Pew researchers said Americans' attitudes about online dating have dramatically changed since it first began studying the subject in 2005.

"When we conducted our first study of dating and relationships in the digital era just under a decade ago, the public had little exposure to online dating, and most viewed people who went online to meet potential romantic partners with a healthy dose of skepticism," said Aaron Smith, main author of the report.

"And although some of that skepticism remains, online dating has become much more culturally accepted in recent years. Americans are now much more likely to count an online dater among their friends and family, and a majority view online dating as a good way to meet potential partners—one that in some ways is superior to traditional ways of meeting people."

The survey found 59 percent of Internet users agreed with the statement that "online dating is a good way to meet people," compared with 44 percent in 2005.

And 53 percent of the group agreed that "online dating allows people to find a better match for themselves because they can get to know a lot more people," up from 47 percent in 2005.

Pew found 21 percent of Internet users claimed that people who use [online dating sites](#) are "desperate," down from 29 percent in 2005.

Around one in three, or 32 percent of online adults, said online dating keeps people from settling down by giving them more options to meet people. This is the first time Pew asked this question.

A number of respondents related negative experiences with online dating: 54 percent of those who used online services said they met at least one person who was "seriously misrepresented" and 28 percent said they felt harassed or uncomfortable by someone using online dating services.

The survey also found online daters going mobile: seven percent of cell phone apps users, or roughly three percent of all American adults, said they have used a dating app on their phone.

The survey highlights the growing role of the Internet in all aspects of

Americans' lives. It found the proportion of Americans who say that they met their current partner online has doubled in the last eight years to six percent of Internet users, up from three percent in 2005 the last decade, 11 percent said that their spouse or partner is someone they met online, the Pew researchers said.

The Pew survey generally supports the findings of a study published in June by University of Chicago researchers, which found more than one-third of US marriages between 2005 and 2012 began with online dating.

That study published in June in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* also found couples who meet online may be slightly happier than couples who meet through other means.

However, some experts took issue with the findings because the survey was commissioned by eHarmony.com, the [dating](#) site that attracted one quarter of all online marriages according to the research.

The Pew report was based on a phone [survey](#) of 2,252 adults between April 17 and May 19. The margin of error for the full sample is estimated at 2.3 percentage points.

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