

Study touts success of married couples who met on social networking sites

11 February 2014, by Christine Metz Howard

(Phys.org) —Those searching for love on Valentine's Day might want to amp up their Facebook friend requests.

A new study from the University of Kansas shows Americans who married between 2005 and 2012 and met through [social networking](#) sites were just as likely to have successful marriages as those who met offline or through other online locations, such as Internet dating sites. And, they were more likely to be satisfied in their marriage than those who met in traditional offline ways, such as through friends.

"It's a low-risk, high-reward potential place to meet someone," said Associate Professor of Communication Studies Jeffrey Hall, who conducted the study. "You don't have to pay for it, you don't have to create a profile that you wouldn't share with friends and family anyway, and it has a built-in way of recognizing people that you might want to be friends with."

Hall found [married couples](#) who met through social networking sites were younger, married more recently and more likely to be African-American compared with those who met through other online locations. Compared to those who met offline, the social networking couples were also younger, married more recently and more likely to be male, African-American or Hispanic and frequent Internet users with higher incomes.

Hall looked at a nationally representative sample of 18,527 Americans who married between 2005 and 2012 and compared those who met through social networking sites to those who first connected online in other ways, such as Internet dating sites, chat rooms, discussion groups, virtual worlds, email, instant messaging or messages on blogs. He then looked at how social networking site couples compared to those who met offline.

While the study didn't explore why couples

connecting through social networking sites were just as successful as other ways of meeting, Hall said one explanation could be that social networking sites bring together couples in much the same way that traditional methods do and keep them within a close network of similar people.

"When we meet through traditional places like school, church or through friends, we meet people who have some sense of shared values, characteristics and experiences. And that makes them attractive to us," he said.

Hall suggests that younger generations were more likely to meet through social networking sites because they were early adopters of the technology and had more expansive friendship networks. His research showed that as the overall number of Americans who used social networking sites grew from 2005 to 2012, so did the average age of Americans who met on social networking sites and then married.

Hall's advice for those looking to find love on Facebook is for more mature users to take a cue from younger generations, who tend to be less guarded on who they accept as friends.

"Start saying yes to friend requests," he said.

Hall, who in 2013 published the book *The Five Flirting Styles: Use the Science of Flirting to Attract the Love You Really Want*, is now studying how different flirting styles translate to finding romance on [social networking sites](#).

Provided by University of Kansas

APA citation: Study touts success of married couples who met on social networking sites (2014, February 11) retrieved 17 November 2019 from <https://phys.org/news/2014-02-touts-success-couples-met-social.html>

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