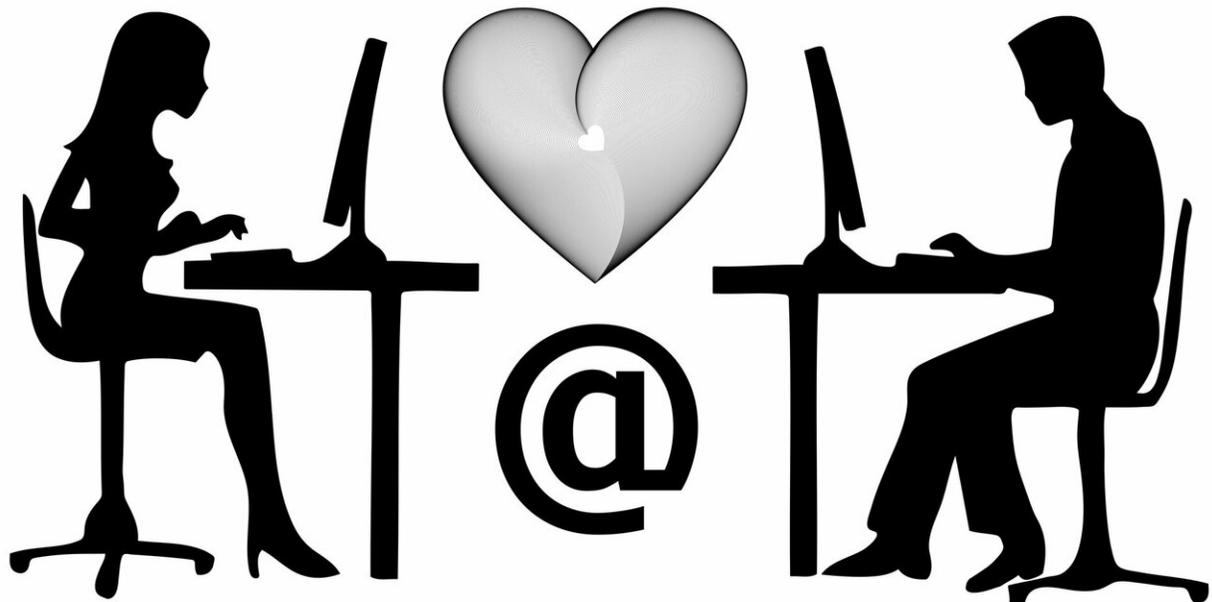


Looking for love online may impact how humans evolve

February 12 2019



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Anybody looking for a Valentine's Day date in cyberspace might want to consider this prediction from an evolutionary biologist: Online dating could affect how humans evolve in the future.

"The way in which humans are choosing their [sexual partners](#) is changing

rapidly," said Scott Solomon, an associate teaching professor in the Department of BioSciences at Rice, author of *Future Humans: Inside the Science of Our Continuing Evolution* and the author and instructor of *What Darwin Didn't Know: The Modern Science of Evolution*. "In most species that reproduce sexually, the way in which they choose their sexual partners has a major impact on their evolution."

Solomon said the proliferation of web- and app-based dating options over the past 20 years may be affecting men and women differently.

"We already know that evolution influences traits that have to do with how attractive we are to the opposite sex and how people perceive attraction in the opposite sex," Solomon said. "Men rely more on vision cues in determining attractiveness, but women rely on a wider range of cues, including vision and smell."

For example, women use smells to determine how genetically similar they are to a man, he said.

"Studies show that [women](#) tend to prefer men who are not too genetically similar, which likely evolved to prevent incest and/or to increase [genetic variability](#) in offspring," Solomon said.

But that evolved cue doesn't help much when a woman is looking for a partner online. As a result, Solomon said, [online dating](#) offers more of an evolutionary advantage to men.

More information: Are humans still subject to the forces of evolution? An evolutionary biologist provides surprising insights into the future of Homo sapiens. [yalebooks.yale.edu/book/978030 ... 208719/future-humans](http://yalebooks.yale.edu/book/978030...208719/future-humans)

Provided by Rice University

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