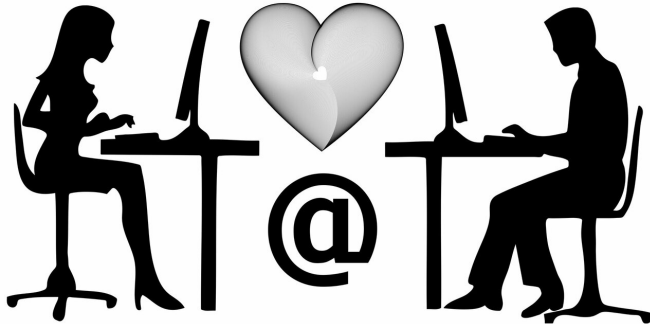


Looking for love online may impact how humans evolve

12 February 2019



Credit: CC0 Public Domain

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

Provided by Rice University

APA citation: Looking for love online may impact how humans evolve (2019, February 12) retrieved 23 January 2021 from <https://phys.org/news/2019-02-online-impact-humans-evolve.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.