
Subject: Offline matchmaking making a serious rebound
Posted by [1stworldview](#) on Mon, 10 Oct 2016 23:45:21 GMT
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After nearly 20 years of growth in the online dating/matchmaking industry, offline is making a big comeback. Why online matchmaking is prone to massive fraud, intentional and unintentional. Men complain that women's profile pictures have no resemblance to the way they really look. Both men and women constantly use old photos from 10 to 20 years in the past. Also with people now taking literally thousands of photos of themselves, they have a chance to find one that makes them look really good. If you have 1,000 photos of yourself and pick the one that makes you look your best, most likely it is not going to be a real representation of yourself. James of Scottsdale, Arizona, was so frustrated about the way women looked that he started asking women to meet him outside the restaurant and then he would sit in his car with binoculars to see if they even came close to looking like their profile picture. If they did not, he would just stand them up.

Men also make themselves sound better physical and economically. The term "\$30,000 dollar millionaire" was coined to describe men who drive very high-end cars but are flat broke. Women start dating these men, thinking they are extremely wealthy, then later find out they live at home with their mothers. So there is no wonder many men and women feel like the Internet is just too laced with fraud.

Jenny from Wisconsin says she is frustrated that men online are fixated on women's appearances and have no interest in getting to know the person inside. Dating expert Steven says men's brains are hardwired to look for a mate that will have a high probability of producing and caring for offspring, just as women are hardwired to search for men who can be good providers for the family. Evolutionary biologists have discovered a lot of the physical traits we consider attractive have a sound basis in genetics.

Many websites have now started doing ID verifications, guaranteeing that the person posting the profile is who they say they are, but this only addresses their identity, not their social standing or appearance. Over the years many companies have been trying to use live video chat to help its clients get a real idea of the person's appearance. But so far, no company has had a great success with this. One of the main reasons is that women tend to surf dating sites at night, after they have come home from work or school. At that point, they have removed their makeup and dress more casually; thus, they do not feel comfortable with live video.

So with so many users dissatisfied with online experience, many users are just giving up on online dating, citing too many bad experiences. According to industry experts, as many as 50% of women do not show up for dates made online. So what is the best way to find love? For age groups in the early 20s, social events (work, school, bars, parties, and activities) are still one of the main methods of meeting someone that leads to a serious relationship. These seem to work much less well as men and women get older. When you are in your 30s or 40s, your options decrease, as the people you meet in social environments are more likely to be already in a relationship, disqualified due to personal reasons, have children, pay alimony, medical issues and so on. This group from the mid-30s and up has the hardest time finding love online or in their everyday social life. So what seemed to be a dying industry is now having a rebirth. Matchmakers and speed dating companies are booming. The singles events company Pre Dating now offers over 1,000-speed dating events yearly in the US, some upper-end matchmaking services like Executive Global Match charge from \$15,000 to \$25,000. It's Just Lunch and Great Expectations

start off around \$5,000 for arranging dates.

One of the biggest jumps in offline matchmaking is the international matchmaker or foreign bride industry. A Foreign Affair has combined offline with online matchmaking. A unique business, it requires all women to come into a local office in one of thirty different countries. This guarantees the appearance of the women and their identity. The men must fill out a background form. The men can correspond with the women online, but when they are ready to meet, they have the option going on one of the company's group tours and attend several events they call "Socials or Dating on Steroids." These events consist of 20 to 50 men and 200 to 500 women. The men travel in groups to Russia, Ukraine, Asia, and Latin America. All women are prescreened by their local offices. Kenneth Agee, co-founder, says, "This is the ideal situation. We screen the women for looks and sincerity. The women love the events because they know men who travel this far are very serious about finding wives. It is a perfect combination. Just think about the last time you were in a room with hundreds of beautiful single women all looking for love."

Neil Clark Warren, CEO, co-founder and spokesperson for eHarmony, is the most recognized face in the online matchmaking industry. As EHarmony moved back to offline matchmaking, Warren went on Fox News to say, "Let us do all the work. You will never get a rejection letter again. We talk to you before, and we talk to them after, and we get you at least one match per month." The new offline matchmaking service is \$5,000 per year with a minimum of 12 matches a year. eHarmony has gone through several shakeups over the years but has returned to its roots as a matchmaker service instead of being a dating site.
