

INTERNET DATING STATISTICS: 7.8 million UK singles logged on to find love in 2007

Submitted by: PARSHIP GmbH

Friday, 18 January 2008

Under strict embargo: Monday 21st January 2008

London - According to PARSHIP, Europe's largest premium online matchmaking service, which uses a rigorous personality profiling test to determine compatibility, the Internet has become a mainstream way to meet someone special: there's now a 50:50 chance that any single person you know is currently logging on to find love. In 2007, 7.8 million single Britons used some form of online dating service to find romance, compared to the 5.4 million who used a mixture of offline and online services in 2005.

If many British singles still prefer the more casual approach, with over one third (39%) ready to sit back and wait for that special person to come along by chance, Internet dating is now far more than a niche activity: in the last 12 months, 52% of British men and 48% of women have used the Internet to find a date, compared to 2005 figures of 36% for men and 34% for women. What's more, 53% of singles (59% of men and 46% of women) say they intend to use the Internet meet someone in the future, with figures rising to 65% with 36 to 40 year olds who say they intend to log on to find love in 2008.

Nearly one third of singles (29%) believe it's a great way of finding love (as opposed to a casual fling), and nearly two thirds of singles (57%) say it's socially acceptable, even if 25% of people in a relationship would beg to differ.

Tony Blin Stoye, PARSHIP's country manager for both the UK and Ireland, commented:

"UK singles, particularly those between 30 to 40, the fastest-growing group of online daters, recognise that as they get older and their social networks become smaller, they need to maximise their opportunities in order to meet a partner. It's possible that some online dating sites take too random an approach for older, choosier people, but PARSHIP's premium service has been created to take the pot luck out of dating. Our approach, in some ways closer to matchmaking, uses a scientifically-based compatibility test and has a record of delivering real results. Our research suggests that if you rely on traditional routes and wait for a chance encounter with someone special, you could end up waiting a very long time."

13,000 people were polled in 13 Western European countries for PARSHIP's singles survey, which determined that three out of four (75%) of UK singles haven't had a serious relationship in more than 12 months, while half (53%) have been without anyone special for more than three years. Of the British singles logging on to find love, men dated 4 different women over a 12-month period and women clocked up three dates. .

Dr Victoria Lukats, psychiatrist and dating expert for PARSHIP.co.uk comments: "Provided people choose an internet dating site that helps them to meet like-minded people, it can be a great way of meeting someone special. With the busy lives that people lead today the old saying 'love only comes along when you least expect it' is at best outdated. The Internet now allows single people to be much more proactive in finding a relationship.

“The last five years have seen a huge rise in the popularity of Internet dating sites and much of the stigma of using the Internet to meet people has disappeared. Most people will have heard of friends or colleagues meeting their partner online, making it even more socially acceptable.”

There are an estimated 15 million singles now living in Britain (source ONS 2006) of which half (51% or 7.65 million) are looking for a long term-relationship; 17% would prefer a casual relationship and 28% are not looking for a relationship at all. However, unlike their European counterparts – who, with the exception of Ireland, would choose an unformalised long-term relationship over marriage (across Europe an average of 35% favour a long-term relationship and 17% a marital commitment) – UK singles would go for commitment leading to marriage (29%) rather than simple cohabitation (24%). As might be expected, it's women in the UK who especially favour marriage vows: one third of them (33%) are looking forward to their Big Day, compared to just one quarter (24%) of British men.

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For more information, a copy of the report or case studies, please contact.

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About PARSHIP

PARSHIP.co.uk, the largest premium online matchmaking service in the UK, is specifically for people who are serious about forming a lasting relationship and is built on a rigorous personality profiling test that determines compatibility.

It is the British subsidiary of Europe's most successful serious online dating service, now with millions of members, predominantly affluent, educated men and women between 28 and 55 years old.

Since its launch in Germany in 2001, PARSHIP has matched thousands people who are serious about forming a long-lasting relationship, and it now operates in 14 countries of Western Europe and also in Mexico

PARSHIP GmbH is headquartered in Hamburg and is 87%-owned by Holtzbrinck networXs AG, part of the Georg von Holtzbrinck publishing group, one of Germany's largest publishing companies with financial interests in more than 80 companies, including the Macmillan Group.

About the 2008 Singles Survey

For this study, conducted in October 2007, PARSHIP joined forces with the market research institute Innofact to survey more than 13,000 people aged between 18 and 59, single and in long-term relationships, in 13 Western European countries. The study focuses on the topics of lifestyle, relationships, looking for a partner and online dating, embracing more than 100 different themes. The random sample in each country was identically structured in terms of age and gender, with a 50/50 split between: male and female respondents; single people/partnered people; the 18-39 and 40-59 age groups. The survey covered:

Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the UK.

About Dr Victoria Lukats, MBBS MRCPsych MSc

As well as working as a dating expert for PARSHIP, Dr Victoria Lukats is a specialist registrar within the NHS. She graduated with a medicine degree from King's College London in 1998, is a member of the Royal College of Psychiatrists and has a Masters Degree in Mental health from King's College London. In addition, she writes an agony aunt column on relationships and dating for a national newspaper and is a spokesperson for Psychologies magazine. Dr Lukats is regularly asked to comment and provide advice on large range of relationship topics in the media and her expert opinion often draws on her medical background and therefore combines both science and psychology to provide clarity and greater understanding to the audience.

