How Does Online Dating Service Affect Our Social Relations?

With the increasing use of internet in the society, online dating has become a new way for people to build up their relationship. According to the research, “in 2003, at least 29 million Americans (two out of five singles) used an online dating service (Gershberg, 2004); in 2004, on average, there were 40 million unique visitors to online dating sites each month in the U.S. (CBC News, 2004)” (Nicole Ellison, Rebecca Heino, Jennifer Gibbs, 2006), more people start to take part in online dating services. As it says in an “An Empirical Study on Online Social Networks Sites Usage: Online Dating Sites Perspective”, “[t]oday online dating site is one of the most popular social networking systems, which individuals, couples and groups contact and search their personal, romantic and sexual partners through their personal computers or cell phone.” (Syed Shah Alam, Pau H.P. Yeow, H.S.Loo, 2011), online dating cannot be separated from social network sites, such as facebook. This essay from the research of impacts of online dating sites on modern society is going to discover the main advantages and disadvantages of online dating services to the social relations of humans.

The first advantage of online dating service is that it creates a more convenient way for people to communicate. In modern society, online dating is always related to the social network sites, which “can provide effective and more enjoyable alternatives at a low searching cost…provide many new ways and organized approach to mating ritual.” (Syed Shah Alam, Pau H.P. Yeow, H.S.Loo, 2011). Most online dating websites help “Users join an online dating social network to communicate with potential partners and eventually set up the start of a good relationship”, so “a user is usually asked to provide his/her profile and partner’s preference during registration”(Lin Chen, Richi Nayak, Yue Xu, (2011)) In this case, online dating service creates a database for people to exchange and share personal information, and it also gives
people more free space to represent themselves, such as online albums or blogs. With gathered personal information online, people may find the potential partner according to his/her education, interests or careers.

Secondly, online dating service provides people an environment without restriction and limitation of time and distance. As it is defined in the journal article “A Recommendation ...Demographic Information”, “The internet has been embraced globally at an amazing speed because of its capabilities for communication and connection – for creating, cultivating, and continuing social relationships. One big advantage is that email, social networking tools and other apps allow people to maintain bigger social networks and allow people to learn more about those in their networks.” (Lin Chen, Richi Nayak, Yue Xu, (2011)) In many online dating networks, such as match.com and Harmony, they provide not only comprehensive personal information of users but also the chat room or even webcast for people to communicate with each other, which allow users to talk with someone who is anywhere in the world. Also, according to the research of Rubin in 1975 and the Joinson in 2001, “under certain conditions the online medium may enable participants to express themselves more openly and honestly than in face-to-face contexts.”(Nicole Ellison, Rebecca Heino, Jennifer Gibbs, (2006)) In this case, because there is no restrictions on manners or language, people can have a more relaxed condition to represent themselves better.

Thirdly, the shared information and the open community of online dating service allow people to meet others who live in their different life circles, which helps them to meet more friends easily. As it says in “Pew internet and American life project”, “A social networking site can be seen as an online community where a person is offered the opportunity to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system. Users then become ‘friends’ with other
users with whom they share a connection (Boyd, 2002)”, online community opens a new space that connects people from different areas. For example, a teacher may become friend with a doctor just because they all like reading Shakespeare even they do not have any other common interests. In this case, online dating service provides people a chance to expand their social relations, which builds weak ties among different groups of people according to their common interests.

Although online dating service opens a new style of social life to people, it still has problems on social relations. The first one should be the safety concern. As it says in “*Online relationship as an experience technology?*”, “Undoubtedly, there are safety concerns with meeting people online that one does not know. That said, the value that individuals place in online friendships suggest that these concerns, while real, are probably exaggerated by media stories. Many people online are likely to have met someone that they did not know before, and most of these individuals are likely to have met some of these individuals offline as well.” (Bernie Hogan y, Nai Li, and William H. Dutton, 2011) However, internet is a virtual world, so it is hard to tell if the person behind the screen is lying. In an article written by Mary Ann, it tells the story of “Online romance scams, a new form of cybercrime, is under-reported and increasing, and has victimized an estimated 230,000 people in England, costing them nearly $60 billion a year” On the other hand, another problem is about the privacy. For earning profit, some of the online networking firms may reveal the users’ information, such as phone number, email address or photos to the third party, which breaks users’ privacy. In this way, the existence of online dating service is breaking the balance of social relations since it causes damages on users.

Furthermore, another negative effect is that it is hard to turn online relationship to a real offline relationship. Although someone may get along well with his/her partner online because
of the same interests, career or life experience, it is still hard for us to know someone’s personality completely without face to face communication. Internet is a very convenient tool for communication, and people can webcam and chat at any time as they want, however, a relationship in the reality still has to face many problems, such as family background, different social values, education levels or cultural difference. As it in the article of Greg Bowe (2010), Internet is the place where to produce gossip and “The use of real names in friend lists, Facebook gifts, blogging, poking, uploading photographs, the inducement to increase social currency are all applications and activities on Facebook which encourage intimate gossip related activities that can impact upon the relationship”, which indicates that how fragile the online relationship is. Although online dating service can provide the same abundant personal information for people to know each other and build a relationship, it is hard to keep this relationship in long term because there are many differences between the reality and virtual world.

On the other hand, online dating service also causes the loss of communication in the reality. As it says in the article, “Internet & American Teens’ life”, for many American youth, “face-to-face interaction and some telephone conversations have been partially replaced with email and instant message communication. Relationships that once might have withered are now nourished by the ease and speed of instant message exchanges and email messages.” For many people, online dating service is more exciting and relaxed because they can meet people from different places. Also, some people are not good at representing themself in front of others, so they prefer to build the virtual relationship and talk to people online. In this case, many people may lose the interest or ability to communicate with family and friends, which may break their strong ties or social relations in the reality. Also, it may cause the separation between the person and reality which may cause the loneliness and other mental problem.
In conclusion, as it indicates in the article, “A Global Shift in the Social Relationships of Networked Individuals”, for the social relations in the future, “The internet lowers traditional communications constraints of cost, geography, and time; and it supports the type of open information sharing that brings people together.” In the future, our social relations are mainly determined by internet since it has become an important part in everyday life so that online dating will become a popular form for people to build up relationships. In this case, although online dating service may provide people a more convenient environment, freer space of self-representation and more chances to know different people, it still may cause damages on people’s emotions, privacy and ability of communication in the real world, and it is hard to be transformed from a virtual relationship the reality. Due to the limitation of research, it is hard to discuss every aspects of online dating service, but as a result, online dating service has the advantages to expand our life cycle, however, it may also break the balance of our social relations.
Reference


7. New Rochelle, NY “Mary Ann Liebert, Inc./Genetic Engineering News; Online dating scammers looking for money, not love” April 14, 2012, P958


15. Bernie Hogan, “Analysing Social Networks Via the Internet” July 18, 2007
Explanatory part:

This was a research essay for a MIT course, and I choose this essay because I want to represent my knowledge and ability of analysis in media program in my portfolio. I did not make much change on the content except for some proofreading, which makes the structure clearer and easier to understand. Also, I removed the cover to make it more convenient to read online.

On the other hand, since it is written for a specific academic course, there may be some use of terminologies. Since the audience of my portfolio can be any person, I am planning to add some footnotes in my final version. I hope my peer reviewer can point out the words that need to be explained.

Since this is an academic research essay, I am going to use the simple design and make the final version in MLA format.

I found this essay really interesting and you obviously found a lot of research to support your case! Just be careful for wordiness and grammatical errors such as those that I pointed out. I didn’t make any comments on the formatting and in text citations as I have no knowledge of MIT writing, so just make sure to properly convert it to MLA! Good job, if you have any questions feel free to email me!
How Does Online Dating Service Affect Our Social Relations?

Name: Yue Yin
Date: 2012/4/10
Student No.: 250540343
Course: MIT 3650
With the widespread use of internet in the society, online dating has become one of the newest forms for people to build up a relationship. According to the research, “in 2003, at least 29 million Americans (two out of five singles) used an online dating service (Gershberg, 2004); in 2004, on average, there were 40 million unique visitors to online dating sites each month in the U.S. (CBC News, 2004)” (Nicole Ellison, Rebecca Heino, Jennifer Gibbs, (2006)) More and more people have start to take part in the online dating service. And based on the academic explanation, “Today online dating site is one of the most popular social networking systems, which individuals, couples and groups contact and search their personal, romantic and sexual partners through their personal computers or cell phone.” (Syed Shah Alam, Pau H.P. Yeow, H.S.Loo, 2011) In this case, online dating cannot be separated from social network sites, such as facebook. In this essay, from the research of the impacts of online dating sites on modern society, it is going to discover its main advantages and disadvantages to the social relations of human.

Firstly, online dating is always related to the social network sites, and these online sites “can provide effective and more enjoyable alternatives at a low searching cost.” And “provide many new ways and organized approach to mating ritual.” (Syed Shah Alam, Pau H.P. Yeow, H.S.Loo, 2011). So the first advantage of online dating service is that it creates a more convenient way of communication for people. As we know, most online dating websites help “Users join an online dating social network to communicate with potential partners and eventually set up the start of a good relationship”, so “a user is usually asked to provide his/her profile and partner’s preference during registration”(Lin Chen, Richi Nayak, Yue Xu, (2011)) and most of websites ask users to post real information because online dating is also the preparation for the future offline relationship so it requires users to be honest to others. In this case, online dating service creates a database for people to exchange and share personal information, and it allows people to have
freedom to represent themselves in any ways they prefer. With the information of others’ personal profile, people may find the potential partner according to his/her education, interests or careers.

Secondly, online dating service provides people an environment without the limitation of time and distance and a chance of free self-representation. As it defines in the journal article “A Recommendation ...Demographic Information”, “The internet has been embraced globally at an amazing speed because of its capabilities for communication and connection – for creating, cultivating, and continuing social relationships. One big advantage is that email, social networking tools and other apps allow people to maintain bigger social networks and allow people to learn more about those in their networks.” (Lin Chen, Richi Nayak, Yue Xu, (2011)) In many online dating networks, such as match.com and Harmony, they provide not only comprehensive information of users but also the chat room or even webcast for people to communicate with each other, which allow users to be able to talk with someone who is not in the same place. Also, according to the research of Rubin in 1975 and the Joinson in 2001, “under certain conditions the online medium may enable participants to express themselves more openly and honestly than in face-to-face contexts.”(Nicole Ellison, Rebecca Heino, Jennifer Gibbs, (2006)) In this case, because there is no pressure of manners or verbal, people can achieve a more relaxed condition to represent themselves better.

Thirdly, as it mentioned before, the online dating market is increasing, and more and more people take part in, which involves people in different areas. As it defined in “Pew internet and American life project”, “A social networking site can be seen as an online community where a person is offered the opportunity to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system. Users then become ‘friends’ with other users with whom they share a connection (Boyd,
2002). In this case, the shared information and the open community of online dating service allow people to meet someone who live in their different life circles. For example, a teacher may become friend with a doctor just because they all like reading Shakespears even they do not have any other similarities. In this case, online dating service provides people a chance to expand their range of social relations, which builds weak ties among different group of people according to their common interests but with individualism, since online dating is fair for everyone to represent themselves and build their own social network.

However, on the other side, online dating also has negative impacts on social relations. Firstly, especially for young people, one of the most important elements is the safety. As it defines in “Online relationship as an experience technology?”, “Undoubtedly, there are safety concerns with meeting people online that one does not know. That said, the value that individuals place in online friendships suggest that these concerns, while real, are probably exaggerated by media stories. Many people online are likely to have met someone that they did not know before, and most of these individuals are likely to have met some of these individuals offline as well.”(Bernie Hogan y, Nai Li, and William H. Dutton, 2011) Although most online dating service sites ask users to provide true information, however, internet is a virtual world, so we cannot control other people’s behaviors and stop some of them lying. In an article written by Mary Ann, published in New Rochelle, NY, it tells the story of “Online romance scams, a new form of cybercrime, is under-reported and increasing, and has victimized an estimated 230,000 people in England, costing them nearly $60 billion a year” On the other hand, since running online dating service sites is also a business, some of the firms may reveal the users’ information, such as phone number, email address or photos to the third party, which causes the damage on
users’ privacy. In this way, the existence of online dating service is breaking the balance of social relations since it causes damages and loss of users.

Furthermore, another negative effect is that it is difficult to change online dating relationship to a real offline relationship. In this case, although someone may get along well with his/her partner online because of the same interests, career or life experience. However, as it mentioned before, it is hard for us to know someone’s personality completely without face to face communication. Although internet is a very convenient tool for communication, and people can webcam and chat at any time as they want, however, a relationship in the reality still has to face many problems, such as family background, different social values, education levels or cultural difference. As the author defines in the article of Greg Bowe (2010), Internet is the place where to produce gossip and “The use of real names in friend lists, Facebook gifts, blogging, poking, uploading photographs, the inducement to increase social currency are all applications and activities on Facebook which encourage intimate gossip related activities that can impact upon the relationship” In this case, it indicates that how fragile the online relationship is. Although online dating service can provide abundant individual information for people to know each other and build a network, it is still very hard to keep this relationship long or to transfer it to a real offline one because there are many differences between the reality and virtual world.

Furthermore, online dating service may also cause the loss of communication in the reality. As it says in the article, “Internet & American Teens’ life”, for many American youth, “face-to-face interaction and some telephone conversations have been partially replaced with email and instant message communication. Relationships that once might have withered are now nourished by the ease and speed of instant message exchanges and email messages.” In this case, online dating service is facing the similar situation as well. For many people, online dating service is more
exciting and relaxed because they can meet people from different cycles and someone is not good at representing himself in front of others, so they prefer to build the virtual relationship and talk to people online. In this case, many people may lose the interest or ability to communicate with people in the reality, such as family and friends, which may break their strong ties or social relations in the reality. In this way, it may cause the separation between the person and reality which may cause the loneliness and other mental problem.

In conclusion, as it indicates in the article, “A Global Shift in the Social Relationships of Networked Individuals”, for the social relations in the future, “The internet lowers traditional communications constraints of cost, geography, and time; and it supports the type of open information sharing that brings people together.” In the future, our social relations are mainly determined by internet since it has become one of the most important parts in everyday life, and also, online dating is going to be a popular form for people to build up relationships. In this case, with the online dating service, although it may provide human a more convenient environment, freer space of self – representation and more chances to know different people, it still may cause damages on people’s emotions and privacy and ability of communication in the real world; also, it is hard to be transformed from a virtual relationship the reality. Due to the limitation of research, it is hard to discuss every aspects of online dating service, but as a result, online dating service has the advantages to expand our life cycle, however, it may also break the balance of our social relations.
Reference


22. New Rochelle, NY “Mary Ann Liebert, Inc./Genetic Engineering News; Online dating scammers looking for money, not love” April 14, 2012, P958


30. Bernie Hogan, “Analysing Social Networks Via the Internet” July 18, 2007