Chapter 11

The Impacts of Alcohol on E-Dating Activity:
Increases in Flame Trolling Corresponds with Higher Alcohol Consumption

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ABSTRACT

The impact of alcohol on Internet use is relatively unexplored. This chapter presents the results of a study conducted over a period of 1 year, which investigated whether persons who stated on their e-dating profile that they drank alcohol were more or less likely to contact another person. The study found that increased consumption of alcohol resulted in a person posting more flames (i.e. abusive posts) to their target. No such difference existed in terms of whether a person drank alcohol in relation to whether they had a low education, spoke more about themselves, their target, or whether they posted kudos to their targets. The chapter concludes that further research is needed to uncover the effects of alcohol on participation in social networking services, so that young people, like Liam Stacey and Isabella Sorley are not unfairly targeted for Internet trolling.

INTRODUCTION

The Internet has been a basis for much good in society, but as with all technologies since the dawn of humans, it can be misused to harm others. The existence of e-dating has opened up many opportunities for people who might not otherwise be able to find a relationship with someone they feel compatible with. E-dating is also a multi-million dollar industry, with Cupid Plc raking in $44,044,725 in sales in 2013 alone. The websites that are either run by or promoted by Cupid Plc include www.cupid.com, www.flirt.com, www.benaughty.com, www.girlsdateforfree.com and www.datetheuk.com, www.datingforparents.

Table 1. Platforms providing e-dating services their potential for successful dating and description

Platform	Score	Description
Facebook	2.00	Facebook is a social utility that connects people with friends and others who work, study and live around them.
Second Life	1.83	Second Life is a free 3D virtual world where users can socialize, connect and create using free voice and text chat.
Badoo	1.67	With over 232m users, Badoo is great for chatting, making friends, sharing interests, and even dating!
MySpace	1.67	Myspace is a place where people come to connect, discover, and share. Showcasing artists and their work, the site gives people access to 53 million tracks and videos-the world's largest digital music library.
Friendster	1.67	A global social network that emphasizes friendship and the discovery of new people. Search for old friends and classmates, stay in touch with friends, share
OkCupid	1.50	OkCupid is the best dating site on Earth, with apps for iOS and Android. Start meeting people today!
Plenty of Fish	1.17	Plenty of Fish is a free online dating and matchmaking service for singles. 3000000 Daily Active Online Dating Users.
FreeDating.co.uk	1.17	FreeDating.co.uk, one of the most popular free dating sites in the UK. Free online dating with profile search and messaging.
Bebo	1.00	Old Bebo was great fun, but ultimately time passed it by. Its original founders bought Bebo back for $1M to re-invent it as something new – a mobile phone application.
Meetic	0.83	Meetic is the premier dating and chat site in Europe. You can chat with and date a soulmate and love! Have great dates by talking directly via chat.
Match.com	0.83	Match.com is the number one destination for online dating with more dates, more relationships, & more marriages than any other dating or personals site.
LoopyLove	0.83	Online dating's fun on Loopylove's dating services. Free to join singles dating site for online dates, chat, new friends, romance, love & more. Safe & secure.

Source: (Bishop, 2008) and e-dating service's own website.

com, www.indiandating.com, www.loveagain.com and www.uniformdating.com, among others, making its market reach a phenomenal size. These are only a small number of websites that provide e-dating services. Table 1 shows a number of e-dating platforms and how they have been rated in terms of their effectiveness for allowing relationship building (Bishop, 2008).

E-Dating and Social Networking Services

In recent years, online dating has become the way for many people from all backgrounds to find a re-lationship (Minichiello, Hawkes, & Pitts, 2011). This essentially involves cutting out the need to spend a lot of money going to clubs, bars and various other social activities in the effort to find someone else to have a relationship with (Couch & Liamputtong, 2008). It is very easy now to browse people within your sexual preferences for a relationship, or even other factors, such as finding someone in a specific profession like fire fighter and police man (DeMasi, 2011). There are hundreds of dating websites, both free to use and monthly subscription, though each of these claims to have huge success of their users finding love, the information gathered in the research would prove otherwise (Schmidt-Hellerau, 2010).

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