

Online Dating Covid-19 Survey

Summary of Results

May 2020

On behalf of the Online Dating Association, Populus conducted an online nationally representative poll among 2,075 respondents between 24th – 26th April 2020. Populus is a member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules. For more details, go to www.populus.co.uk.

Q1 – Usage of online dating services/apps

- We opened the survey by asking respondents about their usage of online dating services or apps. Overall, 27% of those surveyed currently use or have previously used online dating services/apps, with men (29%) more likely to say they currently/previously use than women (24%).
- 5% of respondents claimed that they are currently using online dating services/apps and 22% have used these services in the past. Unsurprisingly, younger respondents were more likely to say they were using these services (11% 18-24; 9% 25-34) than those in older age groups (2% 55-64; 1% 65+).
- Overall, London was the most likely region to be currently using or have used services or apps in the last 12 months (16%), this is significantly higher than all other regions.

Q2 – Value of online dating services/apps during lockdown

- We then asked the respondents to think about the current coronavirus crisis and the UK lockdown and whether they thought that online dating services/apps are more or less valuable now than before March 2020. Whilst just under half (47%) felt that these services/apps were about the same in terms of value, opinions amongst the remaining respondents appear to be divided. A quarter (25%) thought that these are more valuable now than before lockdown.
- It is not surprising that amongst those who are currently using online dating services/apps, the proportion of those thinking these are more valuable now, rises to 38%.
- Across regions, Londoners were the most likely to think that online dating services/apps are more valuable now (31%).

Q3 – Online dating service/app statement agreement

- We then asked respondents to what extent (using a Likert scale) they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements about online dating services/apps. The most agreed with statements were:
 - 1. Online dating services/apps can be a lifeline for those who are alone (64%)**
 - Women were more likely to agree here (68%) versus men (60%) as were those aged 18-24 (70%). 69% of 'Opinion Influencers'* agreed with this statement. Across user type, those who had never used an online dating service/app were the least likely to agree (60%).
 - 2. Online dating services/apps are a part of users' social life (55%)**
 - Again, women were more likely to agree here (59% vs 51% men) whilst men were more likely than women to say they neither agree nor disagree (38% vs 34% women) or disagree (11% vs 8% women). Non users (49%) were the least likely to agree (versus 72% Net currently using/used in the past 12 months).
 - 3. Online dating services/apps provide light-hearted entertainment during tough times (48%)**
 - Women (51% vs 45% men) and those aged 18-24 (67%) were the most likely to agree here. Overall 4 in 10 (40%) said they neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement and only 12% disagreed.

Q4 & Q5 – Current dating service/app users during lockdown

- The next two questions were asked of those who are currently using/have used online dating services/apps in the past 12 months. We first asked this group which aspect, from a list, they value the most from online dating services/apps during the current lockdown.
- Amongst **current** users, the most valued aspect was the ‘potential for romance’ with a third (33%) choosing this answer. This was followed by ‘distraction from difficult times/something to do’ (24%), ‘fun and entertainment’ (19%) and then ‘company and friendship’ (11%).
- Secondly, we asked this group whether they thought other dating service/app users were behaving in the following ways more, less or about the same now compared to pre-lockdown:
- Over half (53%) of **current** online dating service/app users felt that other users are having longer conversations more now, during lockdown than pre-lockdown. Only 8% felt this behaviour was happening less now.
- Encouragingly, 22% of these respondents felt other users are being rude less often than before lockdown. Nearly two thirds (65%) stating that they felt other users are acting in this way to the same extent as before.
- Over a third of **current** users (35%) felt that other users were being inventive in building a relationship on these services/apps more now than they were pre-lockdown. 54% felt this was happening to the same extent as before.

Q6 – The future features of online dating services/apps

- We then asked all of the respondents in the survey about new features or improvements, from a list, that they would like to see implemented on online dating services/apps. Overall, the most popular improvement was ‘stricter and enforced codes of conduct to help people feel safe’ with just under half (47%) saying they’d like to see this implemented.
- Women were particularly more likely to agree here (56% vs 37% men) whilst, across age groups, 25-34s were the least likely to agree (35%).
- Across online dating service/app user type, 39% of current users, 42% of those who have used in the past 12 months and 55% of those who’ve used longer than 12 months ago would like to see ‘stricter and enforced codes of conduct’ implemented on the dating sites/apps.

Q7 –Online dating services/apps advice

- To close the survey, we asked all respondents about advice for those who have never tried online dating services/apps. Respondents told us which pieces of advice, from a list, they'd give to these people.
- Overall, the most popular piece of advice was:
 1. **'Be careful – use credible services/apps committed to user safety' (47%)**
Over half of women agreed here (53%) compared to just 40% of men. Across age groups, older respondents aged 55+ were more likely to say they'd give this advice (52%) than younger respondents (40% 18-24; 42% 25-43).
- This was followed by:
 2. **'When you do it, take your time – begin to get to know the real person, not just the profile' (30%)**
34% of women agreed that they would give this piece of advice versus 27% of men. 55-64 year olds were the age group most likely to say they would give this advice (36% vs 27% 18-24).
- And then:
 3. **'Give it a go- it can be fun and doesn't need to be too serious' (22%)**
Amongst current online dating service/app users, 'Give it a go' was unsurprisingly the most popular piece of advice (59%), followed by 'Be careful' (42%) and 'When you do it, take your time' (33%).

Notes

*Opinion Influencers are defined as:

- **Highly active respondents in their community and online** – demonstrated by actions such as starting online campaigns, writing to newspapers, standing for elected positions and twice as likely to use Twitter as the general population
- **Actively sought out for their advice** – by extended family, senior colleagues, experts, and members of their local community
- **Highly informed** – five times more likely to read the FT than the general population
- **Future-shapers** – pointing towards future trends in behaviour and attitudes

Quotas and Weighting

- Populus online omnibus survey has quotas set on age, gender region and social grade. In addition, Populus, weight back the data to the known profile of Great Britain using age, gender, region, social grade, working status, number of cars in the household, taken a foreign holiday in the last 3 years and housing tenure.