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Online dating has something for everyone

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Christian Mingle. eHarmony. Match.com. There's a veritable "who's who" of online dating websites.

People looking for love use these sites all across the Internet. Each wants to guarantee you will be satisfied with who you find. The question is, what are the best matchmaking sites to use and how can you be successful in using one?

Online dating has gone mainstream. It is a booming multi-billion dollar business, with hundreds of sites accommodating every preference and background. Around one in 10 Americans visit these dating sites each month, looking for 'the One.'

Many reviewing sites rank these dating services differently depending on user feedback. ConsumerRankings.com, for example, ranks their top-five dating sites as follows: Zoosk, Match, Our Time, eHarmony and PlentyOfFish. Other websites, like Top10BestDatingSites.com, rank Zoosk, Match.com, eHarmony and Christian Mingle in their top five, with PlentyOfFish at number seven.

Factors such as number of users and success rates also influence a person's choice in which site they choose. Match.com, for example, boasts that "over 1 million match.com babies" have been born because of its matchmaking success. eHarmony shows upwards of 600,000 married couples since 2001 and Christian Mingle shows an addition of more than 10,000 new members daily, with each site logging millions of visits each month.

How do they attract so many viewers and members? It all depends on what a visitor's wants and values are. If a person was looking for a long-lasting relationship, eHarmony would be one of their best options. For those looking for singles with Christian values, Christian Mingle is the site they would want.

Whatever your preference, there is a site that will accommodate you. And that is all well and good. For the user, however, there is always a question in the back of their mind: how can I be successful in finding that special person? The answer may vary because only the user can decide how successful they want to be. All is not lost, though, there are tips out there for site-goers who need help.

Dating expert Dr. Hu Fleming suggests keeping your messages between possible matches engaging and personal. April Masini, a dating columnist, said keeping an updated profile is key, also. She said it's "just like real estate: If a property is on the market too long, people assume there's something wrong with it." If you want to keep others interested, make sure your profile is up-to-date to keep viewers interested.

Internet dating can be unpredictable because you never know how things are going to evolve until they do. It does, however, give you access to a lot more people than you'd ordinarily ever get to meet. And if what these sites advertise is true, if you try hard enough, you will find that person for you. Fear not, all you singles out there. More than likely, you are not alone.

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