

What is shaping culture? Dating online

By  Brett Rogers

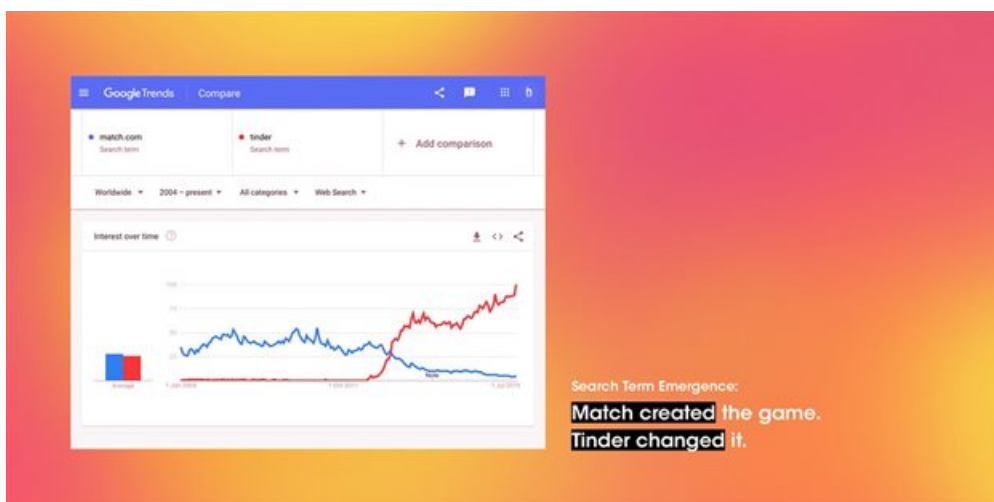
3 Aug 2020

Well, this is certainly an interesting time to be alive. And, while the world locks down, many are turning to dating apps to connect with others and these apps responded positively; Tinder, for example, freed up its 'passport' functionality to allow people to match across the globe. There can be no denying the unbelievable power of dating online. It has changed the way we meet, and how we view potential partners. We have become disposable and disposers, changing our partners on a dime as we seek out a 'better' option.



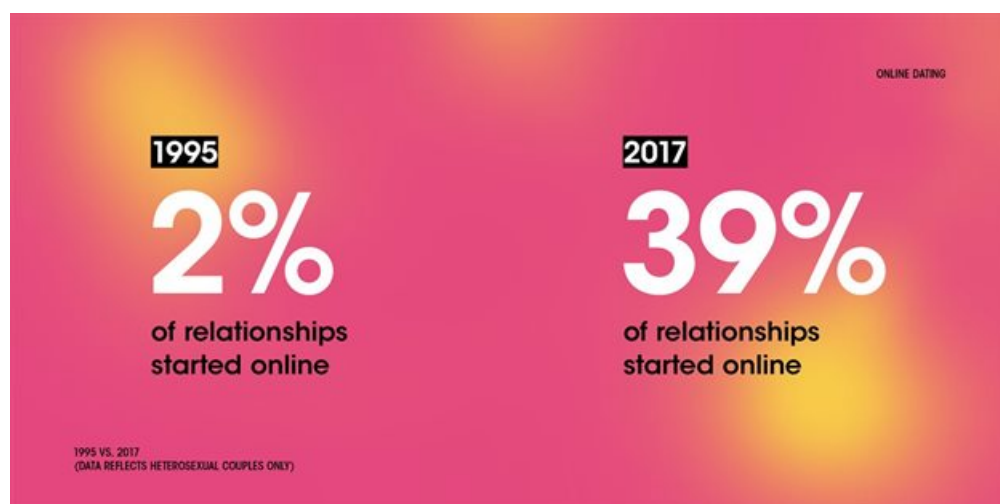
But, just maybe there isn't a better option. And, maybe you won't even notice them if they arrive as you seek out More/Better.

In 1995, Match.com was launched providing, for the first time, the opportunity to step into the unknown and attempt to match up with someone online. It was way ahead of its time and – although we can see with hindsight that Tinder is a far more interesting concept for users – what lies behind the name Match.com is far bigger. As of February 2018, the Match group of companies owned 45 dating apps ... including Tinder. The value of these companies at that time was \$2.1bn. Love and dating are big business Boo.



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1995: 2% of relationships started online
2017: 39% of relationships started online



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Of course, dating online is not exclusively about ‘dating’. People use online dating apps for so many reasons. One of them, of course, is love, but that is not the be all and end all of ‘dating’. The word dating has so many different meanings in real life, which can lead to miscommunication and misunderstandings. Online dating should – with its formal rules and processes – make communication and intent clearer than it might be in real life. But that’s not always the case. Love, sex, networking, friendship, loneliness are all reasons that people use online dating. Others use it for more nefarious reasons such as stalking, catfishing, blackmail and others.

(As an aside, unfortunately, I’ve been the victim of an attempted blackmail as well as catfishing. Safety is paramount. When I go online now, I insist on verified images of matches, it’s another layer of security that hopefully will keep you safe. Not all sites get verified images. So, to get a verified image from someone, take an unusual image of yourself, perhaps making strange shapes with your fingers, send it to the match and ask them to send a photo of them making the same strange shapes in return. Please be careful out there.)

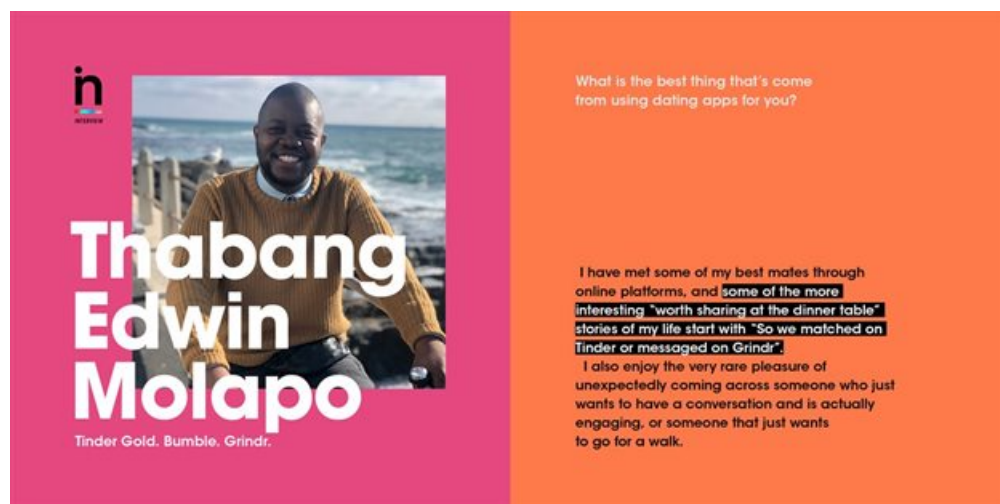
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Our first podcast was with Nicole Rudlin who, after a relationship ended in 2012, decided to give online dating a try, interestingly enough the first way that that happened was through Twitter. Nicole spoke frankly about the dangers that people, especially women, face in the online dating world.

South Africa has a dire relationship with intersectional gender-based violence and women have to constantly consider the safety of each and every situation where they are alone with men, so dating is especially fraught with dangers.

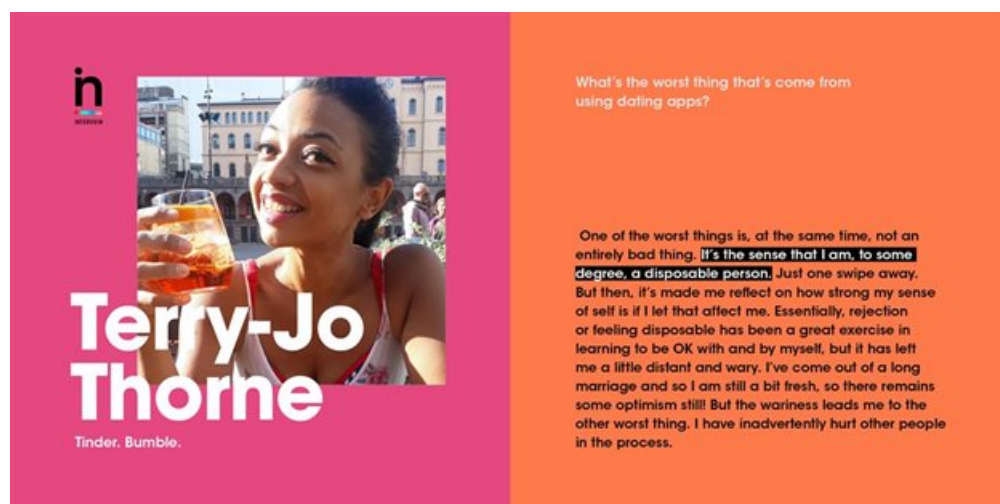
Nix calls herself a 'self-preservation queen'. She un-matches at the slightest discomfort or hint of bigotry, and she and her girlfriends have a strict protocol. They always share pertinent details of upcoming dates with each other (I will be going here {dropped pin} with this person on this day and at this time) and check-in with each other during and after the date. If there is a sleepover, they'll check in again the next morning, too. Asked if this applied for all genders Nix replied: "No, just the men."

One of the more beautiful things to come out of the online dating system is friendship, something Thabang Edwin Molapo noticed himself.



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Disposability was something else that Edwin noticed, and he is not alone. Norway-based Terry-Jo had a similar realisation and concluded that perhaps we all need to be a little kinder to each other. Agreed, this world could do with a whole lot more kindness.







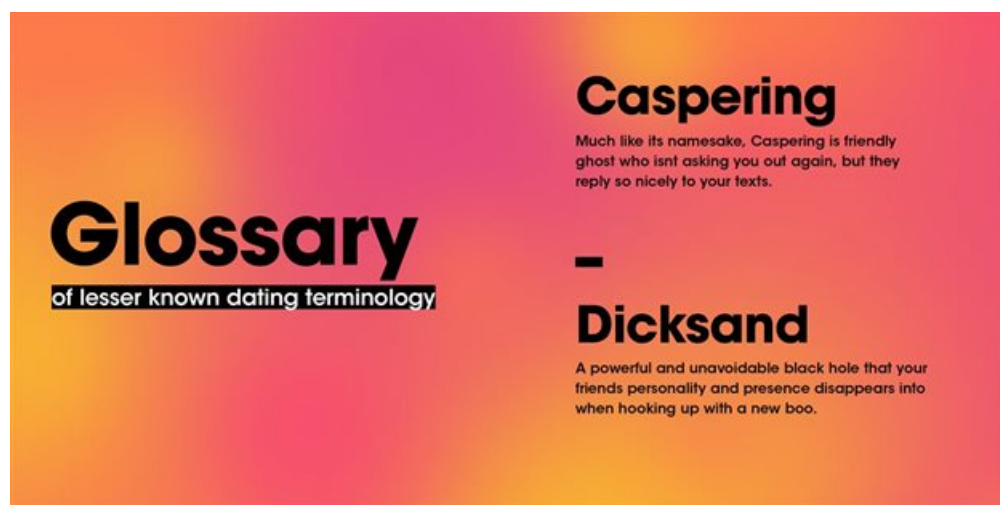
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Conclusion

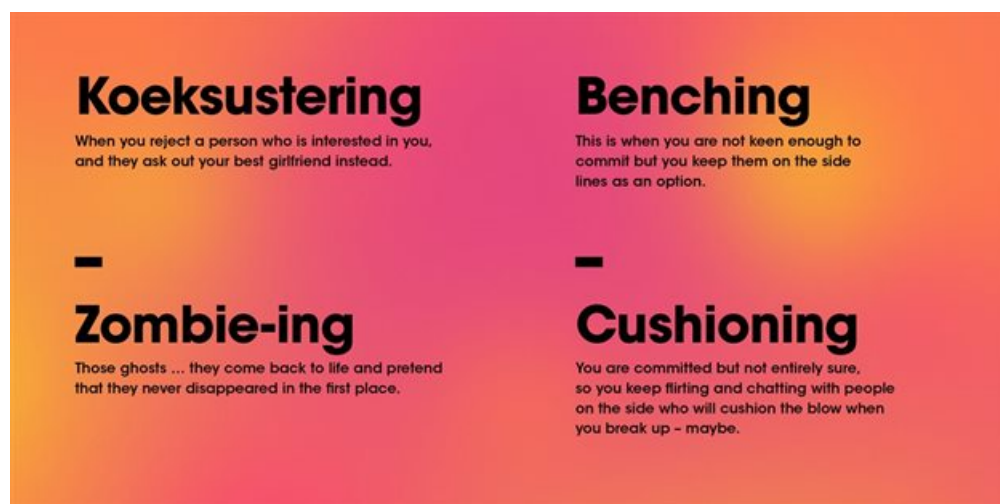
The age of corona has caused us to adjust our behaviour in the dating world, and perhaps making connections online that can't be 'realised' in real life will have a fascinating impact on norms. Whether you are online or in the real world, dating is a highly-charged atmosphere: you are on highest alert for danger, attraction and chemistry. The online dating space has changed how we behave and how we consider the relationship choices in our life. Whatever you do, please be aware and

conscious of your safety, and be kind to each other.

As an extra little treat, you know of ghosting, catfishing, Netflix and chill, situationship,   and   but here are a few more dating terms you might not have heard of ... yet



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Stashing

When the person you are dating doesn't introduce you to their friends, their family, or anyone else in their lives ... and is also not seen on social media.

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Mosting

Similar to ghosting, but is preempted by multiple shows of love, care and affection getting you all excited about this beautiful love ... then they ghost.

Texttationship

Your chemistry is wild and exciting and sexy AF, but only in text.

—

Tindstagram

When someone contacts you through Instagram DM's after they have seen you on Tinder, but you have not matched. An annoying and vaguely threatening attempt at making contact with someone who hasn't matched with you.

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ABOUT BRETT ROGERS

Brett Rogers, culture lead at Cape Town advertising agency HaveYouHeard and content curator for In_, a channel of content, which showcases cultural forces that are changing the world. It aims to inform, inspire and entertain the viewer and does so with multimedia posts, including podcasts, videos, google trends, mini Q+A's and more. In_ talks to those interested in in-depth cultural exploration and those curious about the world we live in.

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