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Daters Find "Spark" With Niche Online Communities

Research by Spark Networks®, Inc. Reveals More Daters Are Turning to the Web to Find Love

Beverly Hills, Calif. – December 5, 2007 – Daters of all religious backgrounds, races, ages, and sizes turn to specialized dating Web sites such as JDate®.com, ChristianMingle®.com, BlackSingles.com®, PrimeSingles®.net, and BBWPersonalsPlus®.com to find love, according to a 2007 trend report released by Spark Networks, Inc. (AMEX: LOV), the leading online personals provider with online communities.

A majority of users believe their use of personals sites helps them to find a better match. Some 31 percent of American adults say they know someone who has used a dating website and 15 percent of American adults – about 30 million people – say they know someone who has been in a long-term relationship or married someone he or she met online (Source: Pew Internet Research).

"People know what they're looking for in a significant other. Sites targeted toward specific affinity groups provide an ideal forum for singles looking to meet like-minded individuals," says Greg Liberman, president and chief operating officer of Spark Networks, Inc. "We expect to see continued segmentation of this market to satisfy the varied and ever-changing tastes of today's daters."

In fact, 58 percent of JDate (the premier online community for Jewish singles) members polled say the most important criteria for a life partner is to have similar lifestyle preferences and values, while 35 percent cite physical chemistry, four percent declare shared goals, and only three percent admit professional stability.

This year also saw a significant push toward offline extension events, with online daters looking to extend their experience beyond the browser. In order to meet user demand, JDate held 55 offline events in 2007, including a trip to Cancun, bungee jumping and skydiving excursions, and weekend wine tastings. An additional 200 speed dating events in partnership with HurryDate®.com were also orchestrated, totaling more than five times the amount of events offered in 2006.

Another online dating trend of 2007 was an increased subscriber base of single parents. On any given day in the United States, about 397,000 people who are the single parent of a child in their household have used online dating within the last 30 days (Source: Mediamark). This statistic, coupled with the fact that single parents represent more than 44 percent of ChristianMingle's member base, spurred Spark Networks, Inc. to create SingleParentsMingle®.com, a site exclusively dedicated to this emerging demographic.

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Looking ahead to 2008, online daters can expect to get luckier in love by further personalizing their profiles, video blogging and podcasting, using mobile dating applications on their cell phones, and taking advantage of community-building features, according to a recent 2008 forecast report released by Spark Networks.

"User-generated content will continue to play a large role in the online dating sphere," says Liberman. "JDate, for example, has created an exclusive channel on YouTube called JDate Video, which will feature video profiles and other member generated content."

Just as sites like BlackSingles.com and ChristianMingle.com launched their mobile counterparts this year, more dating sites will follow suit in 2008. Daters can expect to have complete and total access to member profiles and social networking features, thereby increasing their chances of meeting Mr. or Ms. Right. In fact, the number of users utilizing mobile chat and dating services is expected to rise from 40 million in 2007 to 260 million by 2012 (Source: Jupiter Research).

Based on the success of community-centric features on dating sites (JDate.com received nearly 800,000 posts on its message board in 2007), a greater emphasis on interactive features will also be a focus in 2008. Online personals sites will continue to build out these capabilities, as online journals, message boards, and instant messaging continue to be the fastest, most convenient ways to communicate and build relationships.

Finally, as marketers continue to utilize online communities as an effective source of word-of-mouth advertising, advertisers will seek content-safe, niche environments to provide a more targeted, inexpensive and effective alternative to mass market websites.

About Spark Networks, Inc.

The Spark Networks portfolio of online personals communities includes, among others, JDate.com (www.jdate.com), AmericanSingles®.com (www.americansingles.com), BlackSingles.com (www.blacksingles.com), and ChristianMingle.com (www.christianmingle.com). More information can be found on the Company's website at: www.spark.net.

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