

Going online to find The One

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The results of the Classmates.com romance poll are:

- 71 percent think people will turn to the internet to find love in 2006

- 70 percent reflect on their first love or high school sweetheart when thinking about their love life.

- 54 percent thought of their first love or high school sweetheart in the last year

- 50 percent said they would like to be contacted by an old flame

- 30 percent said they have been contacted by an old flame in the last year

- 29 percent have used the

internet to look up or reconnect with an old boyfriend or girlfriend

- 29 percent think they met their true love in K-12

MySpace rising star in internet galaxy

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ComScore Media Metrix places it fourth by total page views, two notches above Google

Compared with rivals, MySpace profiles are more customizable — hence the “my” in MySpace. Users can obtain Web programming code elsewhere to create their own layouts, change background colors or incorporate photos and video stored at other sites. (Friendster, already trailing MySpace in usage, added a similar feature last fall.)

“MySpace gives you more freedom to express yourself,” said Zlatan Stankovic, 21, a sophomore at Hudson Valley Community College in Troy, New York. “You can leave different kinds of comments, pictures, movies, stuff like that.”

Brad Greenspan, an early MySpace investor no longer affiliated with the site, said that after observing Friendster, “we just realized that to allow people more personalization and control would give people more attachment to their Web pages.”

MySpace profiles are also more accessible. A challenger named Facebook requires an affiliation with a high school or college, while LinkedIn focuses on professionals. Friendster, meanwhile,

requires registration before viewing full profiles.

MySpace not only promotes openness, it also adds Anderson as your first friend, immediately connecting you with everyone else.

But ultimately music is what made MySpace special.

McIntosh's band can update fans on new gigs, when sending too many e-mail messages might otherwise appear to be spamming. People who happen to catch a performance can look up the band's MySpace profile and “friend it” when they get home.

Users can easily discover emerging and independent artists and instantly hear their tunes through a built-in music player.

“All you have to do is press play,” said Rob Theakston, 28, Detroit-based music editor for the site AllMusic and a co-worker of McIntosh's.

Other sites, he said, require you to download a file and open up a separate player.

Given the success, MySpace has even started its own recording label, and it is now hoping to bring that magic to

filmmakers, and later to comedians and fashion designers, said Chris DeWolfe, MySpace's chief executive.

But success also draws a spotlight on MySpace's darker side.

In Middletown, Connecticut, police suspect that as many as seven teenage girls recently were fondled or had consensual sex with men they met on MySpace who turned out to be older than they claimed.

In schools across the U.S., students have been suspended for threatening classmates on MySpace, and in a case outside Pittsburgh attracting the attention of the American

Civil Liberties Union, for creating a phony profile under the principal's name and photo.

Parry Aftab, who runs the Internet safety group WiredSafety, said most MySpace teens behave, but a good number are creating online alter egos with which they brag about nonexistent drinking and sexual conquests in a bid to appear cool.

DeWolfe said the company has worked with WiredSafety to create guidelines and improve practices — dozens of employees now monitor profiles and images 24 hours a day — and encourages parents to talk with their kids about online safety.

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Teen pageant

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training sessions. “We don’t do it all,” Cobbin said. “Instructors will be coming in and conducting their own classroom work and other fields of training that will enhance the girls’ self-development.”

Oliver-Cobbin enjoyed making friends with contestants during her time as a pageant contestant, and wants others to have the same experience.

“I made real lifelong friends that I’m still networking with today,” she said. “I want the girls to leave here believing in themselves. They have negative experiences telling them they can’t do things, but at this pageant I want them to gain full understanding of what they are capable of doing.”

For details, call Rachel Oliver-Cobbin, the Executive Director at (704) 392-6852 or go to the website at www.missteenafricanamerican.com

McDonald’s french fries

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lion to settle a suit by a non-profit advocacy group accusing the company of misleading consumers by announcing plans in September 2002 to change its cooking oil but then delaying the switch indefinitely within months. Reluctant to change the taste of a top-selling item, McDonald’s has continued to maintain for the past three years that testing continues.

Asked about the status of those efforts Monday, Kapica said: “It’s a very high priority and we are very committed to continuing with testing and lowering the level of trans fat without raising the level of saturated fat. It’s a lot harder than we originally thought but that is not stopping us.”

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www.mcdonalds.com

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