

Social norms and expectations change with time

Technology changes the dating scene and confuses single people

Back in the day, when easily defined social norms existed, social networking meant seven women sitting on the front porch gossiping and giggling while sipping sweet tea.

As a young adult in a fast-moving age, it seems the contrast between the current and past generations is wider than before.

Before, people knew the clearly defined etiquette.

Families met for dinner and discussed their activities, and young men took women out for milkshakes.

Nobody follows the so-called rules anymore. That is, if there are still rules to follow.

Now, fast food and frozen dinners rein the table, and couples argue about appropriate venues and splitting the check.

Texting, digital music players and networking Web sites, like Facebook and Twitter, have encroached on what used to be normal relationships, with a disconnect occurring where bonds used to form.

How often does one hold serious conversations via Facebook chat or through a text message?

Almost every day, severe confrontations and hopeful advising discussions happen via online chatting, where the only advantage is using emoticons to express the pseudo-heartfelt emotion the user might be trying to convey.

Mike Mikolajczyk said he had an almost entirely technological relationship with one of his ex-girlfriends.

They met on the free dating Web site PlentyofFish.com and spent a few days e-mailing and getting to know each other through online chatting.

Therefore, justifiably, she should not have been surprised. Luckily, Mikolajczyk, now an employee at Best Buy on Tunnel Road in Asheville, had good things to say to



By Caillin Halloran
STAFF WRITER
CMHALLOR@UNCA.EDU

people who follow him on the Web site. "Mmm, so that just might have qualified as the best all around date I've ever had. Definitely the best first date. Lovely night," the A-B Tech sophomore posted.

Is this acceptable?

It depends on the individual relationship, but overall it makes for a complicated mess of who knows what.

It is acceptable if both individuals are OK with it, as Mikolajczyk and his date were, but not all couples would handle the surprise blog as well as others.

The "OMG you tweeted our date?" giggling text might become an incredulous and uncomfortable feeling about the public's knowledge of personal details.

Associate professor of anthropology at UNC Asheville, John Wood, cautioned against adopting a timetable of BT, or before technology, and AT, for after technology.

However, it seems to be the easiest scapegoat.

"One hundred years ago, 200 years ago, people still got distracted," he said.

It is becoming a new problem of accessibility. Wood described some generational differences in personal relationships and the way they have changed course.

"When I see two people walking together and they're on the phone with different people, that seems weird to me. Or when they're walking through the forest and they've got an iPod plugged into their ears, that

Social norms and dating statistics

- * On free dating Web sites, roughly 10 percent of new, daily accounts are from scammers.
- * For singles using dating sites, one-third form a relationship, one-third do not, and one-third gives up on online dating.
- * There are approximately 1,400 online dating sites in North America.
- * Almost half of Americans know someone who has found a date online.
- * Americans will spend \$ 1.7 billion on dating services in 2013.
- * In 2008, the online industry raked in a little more than \$ 950 million.
- * Online dating sites had nearly 28 million different visitors last June.
- * Ninety-two percent of single parents prefer to date other single parents.
- * There are approximately 95 million single people in the U.S.

Information courtesy of Dating Sites Review

just seems weird," he said. "Also, it just seems normal to that generation. I don't think it's a problem, it's just a different way to hang out with friends."

Wood, who has a doctorate and master's in anthropology, argued against the idea that this generation is vastly different.

"I'm not sure there was a time when things were fixed," he said.

Wood used Plato as an example, citing that even in ancient times people bemoaned the corruption of

youth.

Consider the Elvis generation, and how their parents insisted it was devil music.

Those youth are this generation's grandparents, and they probably hate what they must consider obscene musical brain rot.

This is not a recent debate. Plato complained of children's antics, "The young people of today think of nothing but themselves. They have

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