

# Online dating heats up

## Top safety tips for online dating

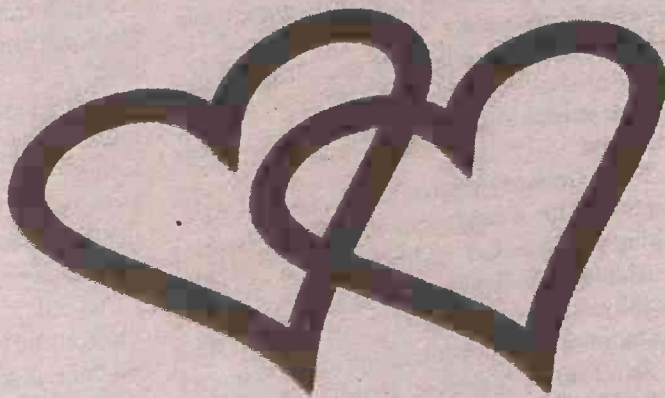
Match.com has 11 tips to make sure you stay safe while using their services.

1. Start the relationship out slow.
2. Guard your anonymity.
3. Exercise caution and common sense.
4. Do a little digging.
5. Request a photo.
6. Chat on the phone.
7. Meet when you are ready.
8. Watch for red flags.
9. Meet in a safe place.
10. Take extra caution.
11. Be able to get yourself out of a jam.

## Getting Personal: A tale of love on the Internet

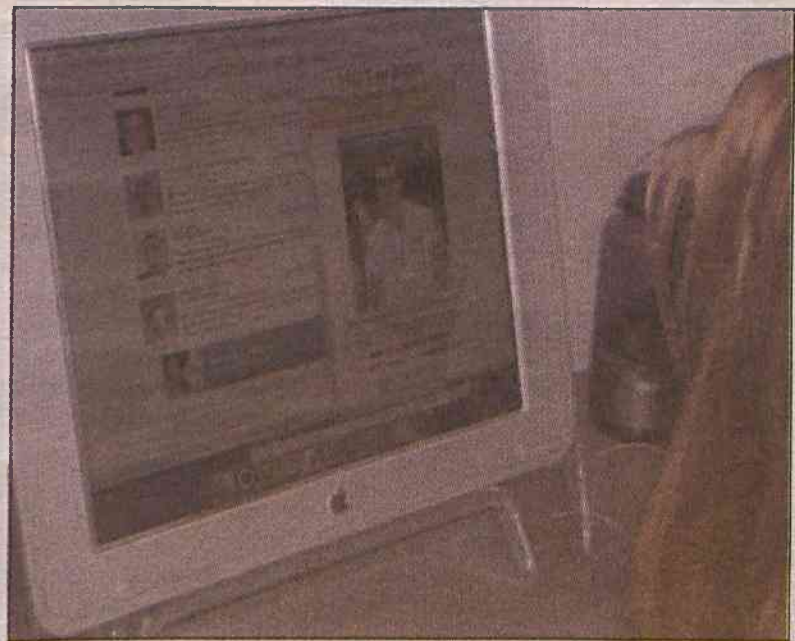
"Matt and I met in a chat room one night. It was so random because neither of us had ever been to a chat room before. His screen name caught my eye, but I'm not really sure why. Pretty soon I was ignoring everyone else in the chat room and he and I typed for hours that first time. We started off casual, saying hello to each other when we saw the other person online. Then he left for his last deployment to Iraq, so things were on hold for about four months. Our relationship took a different path when he got back. It was better timing at that point. We found out so much about each other in the next six months. I didn't even see a picture of him until about three months into our chatting. I think his picture was just icing on the cake at that point. Not being able to see each other in person in a way forced us to really focus on each other's personalities. I remember how I began to look forward every day to coming home and flipping on my computer, hoping he would be signed on. We waited almost nine months before we met in person. We really felt that waiting that long was the best thing for the both of us, to avoid rushing into things. Matt told me on the first night that he came to my house that he felt like he had known me his whole life. It really did feel that way. We had spent so many hours talking, even learning all the little annoying things about each other. By the time we met, it just all seemed to come together. Online dating is not for everyone, because I'll admit there are a lot of scary people on the other end of the connection. You have to be really careful at first and just make smart decisions about giving out information. I just think I was fortunate enough to meet such a great guy who makes me happy. It's kind of like an Internet fairy-tale romance."

- Katie, an Elon student



The purpose of online dating services is for people to meet other people. It is a chance for people to mingle, flirt and have fun while making a connection with someone who could potentially be their next boyfriend or girlfriend. However, people should still be wary when they first decide to meet their new friend.

Overall, it's a personal preference whether or not you want to give online dating a try. There are safety issues at risk and you have to be able to judge whether or not another person's profile is true. Many people have found their true love online and maybe you will too.



Jessica Kimmel/ Photographer

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