# Online Personals Watch

## Online Personals News and Commentary

# Highlights

## June-December 2004

Mark Brooks, 1/20/2005

# Online Personals Rankings

**Top 15 Overall**

**Hitwise Competitive Intelligence – Dec' 2004**

1. Yahoo! Personals
2. Match.com
3. American Singles
4. eHarmony
5. Friendster
6. Friend Finder
7. Webdate.com
8. True.com
9. Perfect Match
10. Black Planet
11. Hot or Not
12. Tickle Matchmaking
13. Love Access
14. Cupid.com
15. Adam4Adam



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# News Categories

**OnlinePersonalsWatch.com**

**a.k.a. www.opw1.com**

- **The Big Deals**
- **Industry Trends**
- **New Products and Services**
- **International**
- **Off The Wall**

**Whirlwind News Summary…**



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# The Big Deals

## IPO's

**MatchNet Announces Plans for Public Offering**

**- Release, June**

**PlanetOut Postpones IPO - San Jose Mercury News, August**

**MatchNet Withdraws Plans for IPO – Release, August**

**PlanetOut IPO - The Deal, October**

**MatchNet Reports Third Quarter 2004 Results**

**- Release, Nov**



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# The Big Deals

## Acquisitions

**Monster Picks Up Tickle for $90 Million** – Reuters. May

**CGI Holding Announces Acquisition of WebCapades**

- Release, August

**eBay Acquires Minority Interest in craigslist**

- Release, August

**Lycos Sold to Korean Company for $105 million**

- Mass High Tech, October

**Cupid.com Acquires #1 Speed Dating Company; Pre-Dating.com**

- Release, October



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# The Big Deals

## Funding

**$7 Million Funding to Fuel PerfectMatch** – Release, August
**CGI Holding; Raises $15 million** – Release, December
**Intermix Unlocks Value in MySpace** – CBS, December

**eHarmony; IPO Outlook Hot For 2005** – THE DEAL, December
**Valley VC Firms Invest $110 Million in eHarmony** – Mercury News, December



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# Industry Trends

## Sociological Trends

**Male Marital Outlook Linked to Upbringing** – AP, June

**'Mr Right' Wants to Take His Time Tying the Knot**

- Reuters, June

**Women Say Single Life Is Better?** – Reuters Berlin, July

**Experts Wonder Aloud if Marriage is 'Disposable'**

– Clarksburg Exponent, Oct

**Older Men Still Want to Become Fathers** – ABCNews, Oct



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# Industry Trends

## Online Dating Goes Mainstream

**Speed Dating Services Becoming Big Business**

– Marketdata Release, June

**Online Dating's Creep Factor**

– Motley Fool, Aug



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# Industry Trends

## Premium Services Lift-Off

**Lonely Hearts, Deep Pockets - Yahoo Personals Premier Service Launched** - Reuters, Nov



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# Industry Trends

## Personality Profiling Finds It's Feet

**True; Millions of Singles Could Be Using Flawed Compatibility Tests** – Release, July

**Men Are From Mars, Women Are on PerfectMatch**

– Release, August

**Compatti Releases Social Network and Personality Tests Endorsed by Nobel Laureate** – Release, November

**Valley VC Firms Invest $110 Million in eHarmony**

– Mercury News, December



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# Industry Trends

## Social Networking Shoot Out

**Social-network Sites Scramble for Prosperity**

– Seattle Times, October

**Friendster Names Former NBC President as New CEO**

- Release, June

**MySpace Pulls Ahead of Social Networking Rivals**

– Release, July

**MySpace Emerges as Social Networking Victor**

- Sacramento News & Review, December

**Business Networking; I'll Introduce You** – Forbes, July

**Buy.com Entering Social Networking Scene** – Boston, October

**Social Networking Coming to Netflix** – Miami Herald, December



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# Industry Trends

## The Big Squeeze

**True.com lays off 90 Workers, Match.com cuts 30**

– Dallas Business Journal, Sept

**Spring Street Slashes Staff Amid Red Ink**

– NY Business, Nov

**Online Dating Faces Rejection**

– Ecommerce Times, October

**E-Dating Bubble Springs a Leak**

**– NY Times, December**



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# Industry Trends

## Seniors Warm up to Online Personals

## Online Romance; Age No Bar

– Times of India, December

## Older People Turn to Internet to Find Love

– MSNBC, October

## Over 50's are Ab Fab As Singles

– UK Daily Record, November

## FriendFinder Launches YoungAtHeart.com

– Release, December



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# Industry Trends

## 800+ Sites; More Slicing and Dicing

**FriendFinder Launches ItalianFriendFinder**

– OPW Exclusive, June

**Beliefnet Launches Soulmatch**

– Release, October

**Internet Dating Gets a Foothold on Campus**

– Boston Herald, October

**Degreedate.com Launches**

– Release, December

**FriendFinder Launches LesbianPersonals.com**

– Release, December



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# Industry Trends

## Real World Events; In or Out?

**Evite 2.0 Features Events Listings from Match**

**– Release, July**

**Loews Cineplex and Lavalife Introduce 'Click at a Flick'**

**– Release, July**

**Mercedes-Benz and Match Pair Up for SpeedMatching**

**- Release, August**

**JDate's Matzo Ball on Christmas Eve - Release, December**

**Pre-Dating Announces Position as World's Largest Speed Dating Company – Release, September**

**Cupid.com Acquires #1 Speed Dating Company; Pre-Dating.com - Release, October**

**Las Vegas It's Just Lunch – Las Vegas Business Press, October**



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# New Products and Services

## Anonymous Phone Calls

**TangoPersonals Offers Anonymous Phone Calling**

**- Release, October**



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# New Products and Services

## Background Checks

**True Launches Campaign Proposing Legislation Requiring Online Dating Services to Conduct Criminal Background Checks or Disclose Absence** - Release, July

**Virginia Joins Texas and Ohio as the Third State to Support TRUE's Nationwide Safety Campaign** – Release, July

**TRUE Sets the Standard; Becoming the First Service to Provide Verification of Members' Single Status** – Release, July

**True Filters Two-Timers** – Associated Press, July

**Florida Becomes Fourth State to Support TRUE's Safety Campaign** – Release, August

**True; Safer Dating, Or Not?** – Ledger-Inquirer, October

**TRUE Secures Support of Michigan Legislature** – Release, October

**Lawmakers Don't Belong in Online Dating Game**

– Petoskey News, November



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# New Products and Services

## Profile Improvement Services

**Photo Makeover Gives New Hope to Online Daters**

**– Release, October**

**Personal Ad Tune-Ups** **– Times Argus, October**

**Online and lovelorn? Call in a Coach**

**– St Petersburg Times, December**

**Dating Headshots: the Key to Online Dating Success**

**– Release, December**

- **LookBetterOnline**
- **DatingHeadShots**
- **ProfileDoctor**
- **E-cyrano**



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# International

## Europe

**Six Million Brits Sign Up for Singles Bars in Cyberspace**

**- The Independent, Novemer**

**UK Singletons Turn To Web For Dates**

**- Yahoo News UK & Ireland, December**

**Match.com Europe's #1 in Online Dating**

**- Release, December**

**MEETIC; European Leader for Online Dating**

**- PR Web, December**



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# International

## The World

**eHarmony Matches Soul Mates Around the Globe**

**- Release, July**

**Online Personals in South Africa**

**– Angola Press, October**

**Phillipines; Launchpad of Friendster Cell Phone Service**

**- Infotech, November**

**Japan Singles Courted by Match.com**

**- Reuters, November**

**Lavalife Australia Helps Singles Click**

**- Asianet, December**



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# Off The Wall

**Yahoo! Personals Reveals 90% of Single Women Believe How a Man Treats his Pet Indicates How He Treats a Love Interest** – Release, July

**Love with a leash** – Mercury News, September

**Dark Side of Dating** – Milwaukie Journal Sentinal, October

**TellCupid Launches** – Release, August



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# Press Release Tips

1. Is it revelational and newsworthy?
2. Compelling ‘lead’ (three lines max)
3. Effective first 10 words.
   - Brief description. Distinguish announcer
4. Simple sentences.  Simple language
5. Short paragraphs
6. Deal with the facts
7. Full contact info
   - Real people, not voicemail
8. Send to specific contacts
9. Know their preferred format!
10. Cultivate your ‘Golden Rolodex’



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# Tips for Hiring a PR Agency

- Size of the agency?
- Specialties?
- Online personals experience?
- Is agency efficient at reaching your media targets?
- Test their 'Golden Rolodex'
- How do they charge?
- How personally involved will agency head be with your account?
- References?
- Sample of story ideas and media targets?



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# CourtlandBrooks

## *Online Personals Marketing Agency*

**Mark Brooks - 408-828-6886**

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**Worked with...**

- Friendster
- FriendFinder
- Cupid
- PreDating
- Hypermatch
- One 2 One Living

**Services Offered...**

- PR
- Media Buys / PPC
- Affiliate Marketing
- Marketing Strategy
- Naming and Branding
- Business Development
- M & A

# New Products and Services

## Mobile Advances

**Wanted: New Friend, Must Have Bluetooth**
**Webdate Launches Webdate Mobile(TM)**
**SpotMeeting; Location-Based Singles Network**
**Lavalife Mobile; color, picture wireless dating**
**Webdate Expands Wireless Services**
**Match.com; Smile, Dial, Date**



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