**Under embargo until 00:01 on Wednesday 27th November 2019**

**Future of Dating: the rise of the ‘ebabies’ and families created online**

*Fifth annual report from Imperial College Business School and eharmony predicts the effect online dating will have on the way people meet, date and have children over the coming years*

* By 2037, more babies will be born to parents who met online than offline and within the next decade 40% of babies born will be so-called ‘ebabies’
* Additional research also identifies the ‘Tipping Point’ – the year when more people meet on rather than off-line – as 2035
* Report finds that whereas in the seventies and early eighties one in five couples met in the pub, nowadays just one in 14 do so (22% v 7%)
* Just under half of Brits (47%) agree that the Internet makes it easier for introverted people to meet a partner

Within 20 years, ebabies – babies born to parents who met online – will be more common than babies born to couples who met by traditional means.

Meeting online will increasingly be the norm, with projections pinpointing 2035 as the year when more couples will meet online than in real life.

This is according to the fifth iteration of eharmony and Imperial College Business School’s Future of Dating report. Weekend MBA students from Imperial College Business School used new eharmony research alongside demographic and population growth projections to examine the impact of technology on how we will find love in decades to come. The key findings can be found below.

**1. ebabies and the future of starting a family**

Using eharmony data and projections from current ONS birth rates, the authors of the report pinpoint 2037 as the year when more than half of babies born will be born to online couples. Furthermore, by 2030, four in 10 babies born will be ebabies.

The report also considers current trends, finding that around two and a half million ebabies have been born since the turn of the millennium.[[1]](#endnote-1)

Further, the report reveals that over a third (35%) of online couples that had a baby did so within a year of meeting.

Couples who meet online most commonly have two children – with one in five welcoming this number of ebabies to the family (18%). This is closely followed by having just one ebaby (16%).

Men are also more likely than women to have children with a partner they met online (42% v 33%).

**2. Defining the ‘Tipping Point’**

In the second part of their report, the students estimated the year when more couples will meet online than offline.

Using a combination of ONS data and statistical probabilities, they conclude that 2035 will be the so-called Tipping Point, when just over 50% of relationships begin online.

This growth in online dating has particularly accelerated over the past few years, with almost a third of relationships started between 2015 and the present day starting online (32%). This is almost a 68% increase on the period between 2005 and 2014 (19%).

Interestingly enough, whereas in the late seventies and early eighties one in five couples met in the pub, nowadays just one in 14 do so (22% v 7%).

*Please see table 1 below for today’s top five methods of singles meeting.*

**Table 1: Method of single people meeting between the years of 2015 & 2019**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Rank** | **Method** |
| 1 | Dating apps (32%) |
| 2 | At work (23%) |
| 3 | Through a mutual friend (12%) |
| 4 | Via social media (7%) |
| 5 | At a bar, pub or club (7%) |

Further research also reveals almost half of Brits believe online dating allows for better matching, with 46% agreeing that it is easier to find someone compatible.

Online dating has given more Brits the confidence to date, too, with 47% of those surveyed agreeing that the Internet makes it easier for introverted people to meet a partner.

**UK MD Romain Bertrand comments:** *“It’s very positive to see that online dating is set to continue opening doors for singles into the future. At eharmony we are consistently updating our site functionality and unique Compatibility Matching System to ensure we remain on the front foot when it comes to creating online relationships.”*

*“What’s more, our long-term partnership with Imperial College Business School continues to give us valuable insight into how the world of dating and relationships might look in decades to come and how society will continue to evolve over time.”*

Dr Paolo Taticchi, Principal Teaching Fellow at Imperial College Business School adds: *“The digital world has streamlined the online dating process – making it easier to find someone while ensuring that they match your criteria.”*

*“2035 will be an instrumental year for finding love, and begin a new era of twenty-first century dating.”*

To find out more visit: [insert link here]

**ENDS**

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**Methodology**

Unless otherwise stated, research was conducted by Opinium on behalf of Third City in September 2019, among a nationally representative sample of 4,008 UK adults.

 The research estimate found that 2.6 million babies had been born to parents who met online between the years of 2000 and the present day

**About eharmony.co.uk**

eharmony launched in the UK in 2008 with a clear vision: to create more lasting love in the world. The experts at eharmony use an intelligent compatibility matching system (CMS) to match singles, according to 18 bespoke dimensions of compatibility. These are powerful indicators of relationship satisfaction. Today eharmony, fondly know as ‘the brains behind the butterflies’, proudly serves a like-minded community of 60 million members globally and has amassed 5 million registered users in Britain. Find out more at <http://www.eharmony.co.uk/tour>.

**About Imperial College Business School**

As part of Imperial College London, a global leader in science and technology, Imperial College Business School aims to drive business advantage through the fusion of business and technology and an entrepreneurial mindset. Our world-leading research informs our postgraduate and Executive Education programmes and is sought by governments, policy-makers and global business leaders who often partner with us on research projects. We attract brilliant minds and provide the environment to foster innovative and entrepreneurial thinking, resulting in ground-breaking ideas that unlock business opportunities. Our life-long professional development service and global alumni network ensure our graduates go on to have long and successful careers in various industries all over the world. www.imperial.ac.uk/business-school/

1. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)