

# Cultural Daily

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## Should You Do a Background Check Before an Online Date?

Our Friends · Sunday, July 12th, 2020

Meeting potential romantic partners online is a common practice. Only during 2017, almost 40 percent of heterosexual couples reported meeting online. The online dating industry has exponentially grown during the past decade, and currently generates billions of dollars per year. While each platform has systems to vet its users, there's still a large number of fake profiles, and date rape reports related to the online world are alarmingly high. While it's impossible to have guarantees as to how a date may unfold, there are some steps that can help you remain safe.

### Who are You Dealing With?

That online prince charming that says the most beautiful things can very likely be married. Or worse, a registered sex offender. Why wait until the moment in which you are face to face to find out? The internet offers an invaluable opportunity to check someone's identity and criminal records in minutes. [Checkpeople.com](https://www.checkpeople.com), for example, allows you to perform a background check in minutes. Their reports include identity verification, marital status, sex offenders lists, addresses, and even a list of close relatives.

Checking social media is also a good way to help you judge someone's character. Pay attention not only to what they post but to how they interact with other people. If they are rude or violent online, chances are, they will be rude and violent in real life too. Beware of people whose social media accounts are full of spam-like posts, who don't have clear profile pictures or who have no activity. These are usually fake profiles. [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com) is a very useful source if you want to verify where someone works and how they interact professionally.

### Before Meeting

While there's no "official" timeline that tells you when is the right time to meet someone in person, this checklist can help you make a good decision:

1. You are certain of the person's identity. This can be done through a background check, but you also need to ask for a video call before a date, just to make sure that the person you verified is actually the one you are talking to.
2. All your interactions have been respectful. Never agree to go on a date with someone that makes you feel in any way uncomfortable (for example, by asking you to send sensitive pictures of yourself, or sending unsolicited pictures of themselves).
3. You have selected a public place in which you feel comfortable for the first date, and you have a plan to escape if things go wrong. A friend or family member should be aware of the date and

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where it takes place, so they can help you in case you need it.

### **Other Dangers**

Scams and internet fraud can happen way before a first date. **Identity theft**, for example, is fairly common through online dating sites. In order to avoid being a victim of a crime, never disclose personal information, and never agree to any kind of money exchange (do not send gift cards and never send money). Usually, someone who asks for money before a first date is not trustworthy, and it's a good idea to end all interactions.

### **That “Gut Feeling”**

Remember that online dating is, in the end, dating. While dating apps can help sort through candidates and suggest people with whom you have things in common, the most important thing is how you feel. You can perfectly match with someone on a number of aspects, but if you don't feel comfortable with them, things won't work out. If, for any reason, you have a feeling of discomfort or something tells you that you may be in danger, pay attention. With so many people looking for romantic partners online, you have a lot of options, and you shouldn't settle for someone who does not “tick all the boxes.” Getting to know someone takes time, and you'll find the right partner eventually. The first and most important thing is to remain safe.

*Image by [athree23](#) from [Pixabay](#)*

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