

Title: The Overton Window of Modern Romance: Finding Love in an Ever-Changing Landscape of Social Media and Internet Dating

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There is considerable controversy surrounding contemporary dating rituals and romantic relationships, specifically in terms of technological shifts and social norms. The Overton Window, a framework for understanding public opinion, social policies and the range of acceptable vs. unacceptable behaviors, is useful in examining the customs, discourse and behavior that is currently acceptable by the public in its entirety (Russel 2006). The purpose of this project is to apply the Overton Window framework to modern romance. We focus specifically on how prior negative connotations regarding geosocial dating apps and online dating services have shifted towards positivity and acceptance in recent years. We draw on peer-reviewed research on social media, geosocial dating apps, and online data sites to argue that the acceptable codes of conduct that provide the foundation of seeking, maintaining, and even ending relationships have witnessed significant change due to technological advancements (Cacioppo et al. 2011). Previous research highlights the stigma associated with online dating and geosocial courtship rituals (Rosenfeld and Duggan 2012). However, current research demonstrates more acceptance and an increased willingness to participate in technologically-driven dating services and customs. We suggest that with a rise in popularity, online dating and geosocial dating apps are central to contemporary dating rituals and romantic relationships. This yields a change in the Overton Window of romance and represents a significant cultural shift (Doan 2011). Social policies concerning intimate relationships and families, as well as social norms regarding courtship and dating rituals, will undoubtedly become more progressive due to such technological developments.

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