



True.com a few safety clicks above the rest

ONLINE DATING: The Web site weeds out people with felony convictions and spouses.

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One of the many scary things about online dating sites: You never know exactly who's on the other end of the high-speed connection. After all, no one lists convicted rapist in his profile.

Dating sites can't guarantee you'll find a mate without emotional baggage or a roomful of "Star Wars" memorabilia. But now you can find out whether the person you're pursuing has a spouse or a criminal record.

True.com, which launched last year, has taken up the banner of safe dating; the company, which runs background checks on its users, is even lobbying for legislation that would require all dating sites to offer the same.

The site screens users for criminal histories by searching for felony convictions on rapsheets.com, a criminal database. Those with convictions are automatically blocked from using the service. The site also uses public records to learn whether a user is married.

Is it foolproof? Of course not. There's no national criminal database, so even rapsheets.com can't cover everything. It does search national, county, state and regional records, but remember that not every state has an accessible database. It's possible someone can slip through the cracks, so you still can't take safety for granted.

True.com advertises features that allow you to screen out people who are dangerous or bothersome or simply don't meet your requirements.