

# **Perspectives of a dating researcher**

**Towards an understanding of Mediamatics dating service as artwork and research.**

Internship research at Utrecht University, MA new media and digital culture, by Kevin Breed on September 28th 2009.

# Preface

From the second of february till the first of july I have worked two to three days a week at Mediamatic to assist with Mediamatics dating service. This 'project' was like an abandoned vessel, a bit neglected and lifeless amongst the high, sometimes even chaotic activity going on inside the office at the Vijzelstraat in Amsterdam. When I started working I knew I was supposed to make some kind of improvement to the dating service, but the details and scope of this activity were completely unclear. In the search and a In the article "And so the story begins..." (Breed 2009a) I described my first attempts and search for improvements, with the promise I would regularly comment upon my 'dating activities'. The result of my attempts in both improving and commenting has led to a slightly improved dating service, some interesting message exchanges, a set of articles and some snippets of html/css/javascript code. Because work that yield results, 'useful work' so to say, at Mediamatic is often given priority over theoretical analysis and reflection, my 'assistance' can be viewed as a minor contribution. And of course, what else can be expected of the average internship? Nevertheless this date research is intended to increase my contribution a little. A contribution in the form of theoretical analysis and reflection. Though I know this contribution may not be highly desired in this form, I'm sure it is an useful one. My conviction that theory can be a very useful tool (even for yielding practical results) is the first drive behind, and point to make with this research.

# Contents

- Contents ..... 1**
- Introduction ..... 2**
- 1. A work of art..... 5**
  - 1.1 Date ambiguity ..... 5
  - 1.2 Trivial profile questions ..... 6
  - 1.3 Matching people's profiles ..... 8
  - 1.4 Reconsidering perceptions and preconceptions ..... 9
- 2. A research tool..... 10**
  - 2.1 The social challenges of the arts and heritage sector ..... 10
  - 2.2 The gastarbeider project ..... 12
- Conclusion: a work of art or a research tool? ..... 15**
- References ..... 16**
- Appendix A: Overview of Mediamatics dating profile questions and answers ..... 18**

# Introduction

There are two things about Mediamatics dating service that make it both a very promising and a very difficult case study. These are its richness of connotations and its ambiguity in signification. The dating service relates to online dating, love, culture and art, functions as a 'real' dating service, but also as platform to come in touch with potential 'flatmates', 'sponsors', or 'muses'. Although it opens up multiple points of discussion to research and write about, it is easy to get lost in the multiplicity of overlapping fields. On top of that, considered its playful character --or existence as artwork as Mediamatic like to say theirself (*mediamatic.net a*)-- its ludic expressiveness covers up a large part of the relevancy for 'serious' researching the dating service.

To ask for the relevancy of a dating service does seem to ask for the relevancy of online dating. Such relevancy is not very hard to find. As I earlier argued myself (Breed 2009b) and other researchers have argued before, dating, and online dating in particular, is an increasing popular (Hancock, Toma and Ellison 2007: 449), social (Ellison, Heino and Gibbs 2006: 416) and cultural (Fiore and Donath 2004: 1395) activity. Now more and more people are using online services to meet other people or initiate romantic affairs, several concerns are raised. Some researchers are worried if online dating is capable of helping users accomplish their goals (Frost et. al. 2008), or are puzzled by the new possibilities of self-representation (Ellison, Heino and Gibs 2006: 415), which may be considered fertile ground for deception (Hancock, Toma and Ellison 2007).

But because Mediamatics dating service is not necessarily intended as a serious and effective platform for finding a romantic partner, these concerns do relate, but can't be used as an appropriate starting point for this particular study. Instead I will explore two other perspectives in which Mediamatics dating service gains relevance and raises its own particular questions. These perspectives are borrowed from an explanatory text about the dating service. This text, written in Question/Answer format, answers the question "Is this dating project a waste of arts funding?" as follows:

"[...] The money and time we do spend on it is well spent because we seriously research and develop the social challenges of the arts and heritage sector with this

project. Also the project is an art project in the sense that it forces the user to reconsider their perceptions and preconceptions of their contemporary surroundings. And actually, we feel it is innovative and beautiful too." (*mediamatic.net a*)

This answer describes the dating service as art and part of serious research. Because it is not instantly clear how the dating service can be conceived as either art or research, but it is very valuable to do so --as I will argue later on--, this research will explore the value of these two perspectives. The question central to this exploration is: *How is Mediamatics dating service, as work of art, forcing its users to reconsider their perceptions and preconceptions of their contemporary surroundings, and capable of serious researching the social challenges of the arts and heritage sector?*

With this question I attempt to look beyond the playful character of the dating service, which makes it to a certain extent a 'just for fun toy', or viewed from a more artful perspective 'something to think about'. Just as ice-cream is "fun, but [...] not useful"<sup>1</sup>, and making art for the sake of art can be a valid legitimation, the friction generated by the dating service as either play or art also bears a value of its own and is not under discussion. Nevertheless, jokes are more fun when you understand the punchline, and games are more fun to play when you understand the rules. 'Knowledge' makes it easier to see opportunities, challenges and possible changes. Lifting up the top layer of the dating service to scrutinize its connections to "contemporary surroundings" and "the social challenges of the arts and heritage sector" is not only of concern to defend its social and cultural legitimacy --and thus its right at arts funding--, but also to make it more fun, beautiful and innovative.

---

1. Regarding *new media*, people are often searching for some form of legitimation for its existence. Apparently this was also the case with the 'micro-blog' tool *Twitter*. At the twitter-blog can be read that "[a]t the start, critics often said, "Twitter is fun, but it's not useful." At one point @ev responded dryly with, "Neither is ice cream"" - visited on 28-09-2009 through <<http://blog.twitter.com/2009/09/twitters-new-terms-of-service.html>>. Making things useful can provide a legitimation for things that only seems to provide trivial fun. But what about the things such as ice-cream which are also fun but are not very useful?

The dating service as a work of art is of central concern to part 1. It is argued that by utilizing the term 'dating' a set of culturally constructed meanings is adapted, which questions the meaning of online dating, the representational function of the profile questions, and the common principle of matching systems. It is argued that occupying a 'hypocritical' stance makes possible a reflection on its surrounding environment, but is not *forcing* the users to reconsider their perceptions and preconceptions.

The second part of the research question is about the social challenges of the arts and heritage sector. Part 2 will show the social challenges of the arts and heritage sector are essentially about involving the traditionally 'external' and 'passive' audience into the dynamic, professional, social machine of the arts and heritage sector, which is fueled by the sharing of art and culture. Within these surroundings the reflectory power of the dating service which was found in the perspective of art becomes valuable for the dating service perceived as a research tool. Finally, by considering the original context of the dating service, the questions raised in part 1 are connected to the social challenges of the arts and heritage sector. It is argued that making this context visible helps to locate valuable elements, see opportunities and possible changes for further development. In short, knowledge helps to make the dating service more fun, beautiful and innovative.

# 1. A work of art

In most cases websites are neither intended or perceived as art. Even within the cultural sector they are often used as tools to provide information about, or representations of artworks and other cultural artefacts. When the dating service --which is a website within a cultural environment-- is itself regarded as art, its meaning shifts from being an informative tool, to being an object which creates a space for reflection where it becomes possible to expose 'self-evident' assumptions. With other words, the dating service as work of art makes it possible to let its user reconsider their perceptions and preconceptions of their contemporary surroundings. Regarding my main question, the question in this part then becomes which 'self-evident' assumptions are exposed and how do they force the users to reconsider their perceptions and preconceptions?

When offering a *dating* service in the form of a website, there is no way to escape the common meanings and values attached to the phenomenon of online dating. It even can be stated that the pleasure derived from Mediamatics dating service is generated by the deviation between the common idea of online dating and the way Mediamatic dating makes use of it. By putting Mediamatics dating service in the context of online dating, it is argued that when the dating service is perceived as art, it creates a space for reflection which questions its surroundings. The questions raised are mainly discernible in the stretched meaning of online dating, the triviality of the profile questions and the underlying principle of the matching system. Respectively they question the meaning of online dating and contemporary love or romance, the representative function of user profiles, and the sharing of personal characteristics.

## 1.1 Date ambiguity

Despite the actual capabilities of dating systems (matching profiles with eachother), most dating sites claim they are capable of finding *the* partner that really suits *you* for starting a serious, romantic relationship. In this respect Mediamatic dating clearly tries to be different. It attempts to connect people who aren't necessarily looking for a romantic date, or serious relationship, but who are nevertheless interested in getting in touch with other people. This

becomes clear in the possibility for the user to indicate she is not only looking for a partner, but, among others, also for a muse, sponsor, flatmate, or one night stand. By providing these possibilities the meaning of 'online dating' is stretched to signify the activity of coming in touch with people whom you might want to get to know better.

At the same time the dating service still provides the possibility for the user to indicate she is looking for a 'partner / marriage / friendship', and as such also doesn't exclude the goal of finding a romantic partner. This can be very confusing because, as an user of the dating service noticed in a message exchange, "the problem with this site is that it is not clear if it is about love, or some kind of linkedin." From an usability perspective this lack of clearness would be a bad thing, because the user is left in the dark about what she is supposed to do. But viewed from the perspective of art it can be argued that this ambiguity makes the user think about the assumption that online dating is about finding a romantic partner. In this sense the stretched meaning of online dating extracts romantic incentives from dating activities. But when coming in touch with people whom, for any reason whatsoever, you might want to get to know better takes place in a dating environment, the stretched meaning of online dating also works the other way around. When searching for a 'sponsor', or 'flatmate' some sense of romance is injected into activities which previously fell outside the domain of love.

This means that the dating service doesn't only questions the meaning of online dating, but also the meaning of contemporary love, or romance. Do you start a romantic affair because you have fallen in love with someone, or is it because you need money, housing, or a residence permit? Is love really about romance, or is it driven by a fulfillment of wants and needs? In this way, as art, the affected surroundings of the dating service stretch beyond online dating, and also incorporate more general cultural constructed meanings and values about relationship initiation.

## **1.2 Trivial profile questions**

The pursuit of dating sites to initiate serious, romantic relationships between complete strangers most often leads to an inquiry of personal, sometimes (pseudo) psychological questions. The popular dutch dating site *Parship* for example, is well known for the presumable 'scientific guarantees' of its 'psychological' personality tests, which are heavily

promoted through radio and television commercials. Although not all dating sites strive for objective user profiles, Fiore, Taylor, Mendelsohn and Hearst notice that "the bulk of the typical [dating] site's profile is devoted to describing ones personal characteristics and ideal match" (2008: 798). Supported by Arvidsson who argues that "[e]ven if site managers encourage you to 'think of your profile as your online identity [...], a quick sketch of who you are [...], and what counts most in a relationship' the effect is primarily that of leaving blanks that stimulate curiosity and fantasy" (2006: 679), it can be argued that profile questions on dating sites are often forcing the users to think or fantasize about their (desired) personality and important relationship values.

Mediamatics dating service takes the same approach when asking for "*your* gender", "*your* date of birth", *your* stance towards "religion", "god herself", "politics" and "money", or choosing the "dating images" *you* like<sup>2</sup>. It is implied that the profile questions offers the possibility for the user to represent her (desired) personality and her culture (the latter through questions such as "my native country" and "cultural background"). At the same time however, most available answers are near trivial jokes. Religion, for example, "is opium for the people", or you can "[...] like their rituals", "[...] buildings", or "[...] art". God herself "is great", or an "imaginary friend for grown ups" and about politics the user "don't care", "won't say", "don't vote", or "don't know". Though it is suggested the user can tell something about herself through the profile questions of a dating profile, the triviality of the answers do relativate the assumption that dating profiles are capable of fulfilling a very useful representative function.

In this sense, the dating service as art questions the representative function of user profiles. The users are able to tell something about themselves, but common descriptors like appearance, political orientation, religion and hobbies are not taken very seriously. The deviation with conventional dating profiles questions if the real value of a profile can be found in descriptive texts which say something about the person behind the profile, or if it has to be searched somewhere else.

---

2. See appendix A for an overview of profile questions and answers on a Mediamatic profile.

## 1.3 Matching people's profiles

After the profile questions are answered, the retrieved information mainly serves two purposes. It is used to communicate information to other users, and as input for the matching system. Based on similarities in dating images, country of origin, religion, politics, pet legs, hobbies and bad habits, the system generates a list of matches ordered by 'relevancy'. The more similar choices a profile shares, the more relevant the profile is considered to be.

The deviation present in the matching system is more or less a recital of the difference in meaning of online dating and the representative function of the profile questions. Because the answers that are used for the matching are presented not to be very important, the generation of matches also becomes more or less arbitrary. And because the motive for using the dating service does not necessarily have to be about finding a romantic partner, a match isn't necessarily presented as *Ms./Mr. True Love*. This makes the dating service, even more than conventional dating sites, a platform for coming in touch with people whom you would otherwise probably never speak.

An important side note however, is the role of the dating images. These images are not only affecting a large part of the matches<sup>3</sup>, but also point out that the matching is not entirely arbitrary. Because dating images are presumably chosen on the basis of taste (whether the user likes an image or not), this becomes the main principle for generating matches. Like the main character Rob says in Nick Hornby's novel *High Fidelity*: "that what really matters is what you like, not what you are like... Books, records, films -- these things matter. Call me shallow but it's the damn truth" (Hornby 1995). Just as Rob, the role of the dating images in the matching system seems to say that sharing taste and passion is of main importance in finding someone you might like.

Although the matches of the dating service can also be filtered on gender and age, just as on any dating site, the principle behind the dating images do reveal a difference.

---

3. Dating images can make up two thirds of the possible similarities, because the user can choose ten of them, opposed to five answers to other questions. Because the matches are generated on basis of these similarities, they are for a large part affected by the dating images.

Profiles are not matched on basis of what they are trying to represent (who people are), but on basis of what they are. A collection of images and answers, chosen by people with a certain passion and taste. As such the matching system hints that the real value of a dating profile, already put in question by the profile questions, is perhaps to be found in the sharing of other things than personal characteristics.

## **1.4 Reconsidering perceptions and preconceptions**

The stretched meaning of online dating, the triviality of the profile questions, and the diminished emphasis on personal characteristics are all caused by what might be called a hypocritical stance. By making use of the same meanings and mechanisms as online dating, the dating service takes on the same connotations and values. But because the meanings and mechanisms are appropriated with a twist, the connotations and values that are taken for granted on conventional dating sites, are put into doubt by Mediamatics dating service. This makes it 'hypo-critical', the meanings and mechanisms of a source domain are adapted in a way they are neither affirmed or rejected.

This position in-between makes possible a reflection on its surrounding environment. The situation questioned by the dating service is not its own existence, but the position and movement within its own milieu. Because in this hypocritical milieu, the user isn't forced to choose one side or another, they are neither forced to reconsider their perceptions and preconceptions of their contemporary surroundings. Viewed from the perspective of art Mediamatics dating service might as well be a comfortable environment where users can get in touch with like-minded people they don't know yet.

## 2. A research tool

Whereas the previous part has shown the assumptions which become visible when perceiving the dating service as a work of art, this part will explore the value of the dating service as a tool for researching its social surroundings. These surroundings are no longer the environment of online dating, but will shift to the social challenges of the arts and heritage sector. Because this is such a natural environment for a cultural project, and the idea of 'the social challenges' is 'hidden' in an article on Mediamatics site, special attention is needed to highlight its significance.

By paying attention to the social challenges of the arts and heritage sector and the original context of the dating service, it is argued that the dating service is potentially a valuable tool for doing research. But to unlock this potential it is argued that a greater awareness and visibility of its context is needed. This will not only make the dating service valuable as research tool, but also connects the questions raised by the dating service as art to the social challenges of the arts and heritage sector.

### 2.1 The social challenges of the arts and heritage sector

In an article on the future and social function of the arts and heritage sector, present at [mediamatic.net](http://mediamatic.net), Willem Velthoven --one of the founders and chairman of Mediamatic Foundation, and partner in Mediamatic Lab--, argues for a participatory approach to utilize the real chances of new media in the cultural sector (2007). His vision favours social participation and user generated content (indeed subsumed under the popular denominator *web 2.0*) over education, digitalization and communication of digital artefacts. Instead of perceiving new media, and the internet in particular, as another channel to represent and communicate cultural artefacts to an external public, Velthoven sees the internet as a means to make the public a part of the "social machine" which the cultural sector already is for professionals. The public, which shares the same passion for culture and art, should also be able to do things together in these social surroundings. This emphasis on the public shows his main concern is not only about a profitable utilization of new media in the arts and heritage sector, but even more about the social role cultural institutions could (and

should) play in contemporary society.

When talking about web 2.0, user participation, and the even larger fields of culture, culture industries and cultural studies, it is easy to get caught in an incomprehensible web of complications, ranging from the Frankfurter Schule to British Cultural Studies to present day studies about user participation (Jenkins 2005, Schäfer 2008) and immaterial modes of production (Hardt 2009). Theoretically these perspectives provide very useful insights into and relativisations of the vision proclaimed by Velthoven, but exploring them in advance would neglect the way in which Mediamatic is doing research. To be more precise, it wouldn't enable me to answer the question how the dating service is capable of serious researching and developing the social challenges of the arts and heritage sector.

Now some awareness is created about the social challenges of the arts and heritage sector, it is instructive to call in mind the dating service as a work of art. In part 1.4 it was argued that the dating service occupies a hypocritical stance, which makes possible a reflection on its surrounding environment by neither affirming or rejecting the adapted meanings and mechanisms of a source domain. Regarding the position of the dating service within the social challenges of the arts and heritage sector this source domain shifts from online dating to the social machine of the cultural sector and is put into doubt by the social potential of web-platforms.

Inserting digital technology into a cultural environment is very recognizable as Mediamatics signature. The default 'material' they work with in almost all of their projects are digital technologies and the concept of user participation, which makes social interaction a common concern. Because the dating service actively makes use of web technology and user participation inside a cultural environment, yet again a space for reflection is created. This time what is questioned is the function and social capabilities of web-platforms inside the cultural sector, and the 'self-evident' assumptions about social interaction and established relations within this environment.

Starting from the hypothesis that a website inside a cultural environment is capable of connecting people (artists, organizers and audience alike) on the basis of sharing art and culture, the dating service becomes a valuable tool for doing research. Not only for researching how the dating service as technological means can reach a social end, but also how the tension between digital material and the established values and meanings of its surrounding environment are constantly affecting each other. How do the particularities of

the dating service relate to the surroundings of the arts and heritage sector? By taking into consideration the original context of the dating service, part 2.2 connects the questions raised in part 1 to the social challenges of the arts and heritage sector.

## **2.2 The gastarbeider project**

The exhibition series 'Gastarbeider Dating' (immigrant dating) is the last element in this research which complements the questions that are raised when perceiving the dating service as research. The workshops, performances, film screenings, public discussions, speed dating sessions and other activities, given form through the cultural background of ten artist from seven different countries, constituted the original context wherein the dating service was initially launched. Apart from being interesting cultural exchanges during the 27th of January till the 16th of March 2008, they also provide a context which connects the questions raised in part 1 to the social challenges of the arts and heritage sector.

Being an immigrant worker is about being foreign. Alien to the native language, habits and people of the country you work in. But it is also about getting to know these foreign particularities without losing your identity, or forsaking your cultural origins. The people Mediamatic regarded as *gastarbeiders*, international artists, are struggling with these issues to benefit from the Dutch "international scene and broad government support for the arts", driven by their search for "inspiration, money or success" (*mediamatic.net b*). When this image of immigrant workers, including their struggles, is taken as role-model for the dating profiles, the service as a whole becomes more than a playful, or comfortable platform for meeting unfamiliar people. It becomes a platform for sharing art, culture and ideas between cultural natives and cultural foreigners. It introduces foreign people to a native environment and native people to foreign cultures.

Now the gastarbeider project is over, the dating service is still haunted by its 'ghost'. The immigrant workers have left the platform and took with them its charm and significance. They took out art and culture as discursive objects, they took out their dreams as drive to struggle (and date), they took out their otherness to explore and discover. But they didn't completely erase their presence. If the characteristics of the gastarbeider project are compared to the questions raised in part 1, some similarities arise. If you imagine struggling international artists who make use of the dating service and come to the

Netherlands in search for inspiration, money or succes, you might ask if online dating is still about finding a romantic partner, or love is perhaps driven by a fulfillment of wants and needs. If you not only imagine struggling international artists as users of the dating service, but also native artists, art directors, and a native public, the triviality of the dating profiles might help to flatten a pre-assumed hierarchy. Does it really matters who you are, or would a more valuable focus be on what you like? And if art and culture are the constitutive factors for what you like and what you want to share, then isn't a matching system which tries to find matches based on these criteria more valuable than a system which tries to match personalities?

To ask the same questions regarding the social challenges of the arts and heritage sector, the foreign *gastarbeiders* only have to be replaced by a 'foreign' audience. This 'audience', alien to the social machine of the 'professional' art scene, might come in touch with artists and organizers on basis of what they like. They can share art, ideas and 'culture', because they are passionate about it, because they love it. The 'audience' might benefit from the social machine of the art scene, and the art scene might benefit from a more involved audience. But for this value to become visible, awareness has to be created about the surrounding of the arts and heritage sector, and the social challenges present within. Presenting the dating service as 'crazy' art project where the users can reconsider their perceptions and preconceptions of their contemporary surroundings is not enough.

Regarding the beta stage of the dating service, with the incentive to keep developing and improve it, as can be read in the Q/A text about the dating (*mediamatic.net b*), it can be argued that after the *gastarbeider* project ended, the dating service lacked considerable attention, and is still in need for improvement to generate the same tension and significance which were present during the *gastarbeider* project. Against such an argument would be the perspective of the dating service as research tool. To research is to question, and to generate appropriate questions, awareness is needed about the social challenges of the arts and heritage sector. Knowledge about this context helps to locate valuable elements, see opportunities and possible changes.

Usability concerns for example, don't only interrupt a users 'flow', but also affect if and how people share their passions and with who they will get in touch. The hypothetical possibility to date with your *Mediamatic* profile would not only 'expose' the user's identity, but would also affect the things the user is able to share, like contributed articles, images,

or participating events. The whole dating service is taking on a new dimension when you are able to see it from another perspective.

## Conclusion: a work of art or a research tool?

This research has attempted to scrutinize the relations between the dating service and its surrounding environment as a work of art and a research tool. The questions raised in part 1 by perceiving the dating service as work of art which creates a space for reflection, were complemented in part 2 where the dating service, from the perspective of a research tool, exposed the social challenges of the arts and heritage sector. Already embedded in the formulation of the main research question 'how Mediamatics dating service *as work of art* [...] is capable of doing serious research', it was argued that the reflectory power of the dating service as art is mainly of value for doing research. But when considering the context of the arts and heritage sector and *gastarbeider* project in part 2, it also became clear that knowledge about these surroundings complements the questions raised from the perspective of art. Choosing between the dating service as work of art or research tool would be unnecessary, because it is capable of being both at once.

The reflectory power of the dating service which makes it both question its contemporary surroundings and a valuable research tool was found in its hypocritical stance. By adapting the meanings and mechanisms of a source domain with a twist, it puts them in doubt without affirming or rejecting them. But to be able to generate this tension between acceptance and reprehensibility it is argued that the context of the dating service has to gain a stronger awareness and visibility. Knowledge about the social challenges of the arts and heritage sector and the original context of the dating service helps to locate valuable elements, see opportunities and possible changes.

For the users the knowledge generated with this research isn't of much help, because it's unlikely many users will read this research. But when they do, they can perhaps try to discover and explore the foreign spots of their cultural surroundings. Because now they also know what makes Mediamatics dating service more than a playful and comfortable environment.

## References

Adam Arvidsson, "Quality singles': internet dating and the work of fantasy." *New Media & Society* 8.4 (2006): 671-690.

Kevin Breed, "And so the story begins... Overview of my first activities for the dating project" [2009a] *mediamatic.net*. Visited on 28-09-2008 through <<http://www.mediomatic.net/page/77718/nl>>.

Kevin Breed, "Online dating at Mediamatic - Mooi en innovatief?" [2009b] *mediamatic.net*. Visited on 26-07-2009, through <<http://www.mediomatic.net/page/72182/nl>>.

Nicole Ellison, Rebecca Heino and Jennifer Gibbs, "Managing Impressions Online: Self-Presentation Processes in the Online Dating Environment." *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 11 (2006): 415-441.

Andrew T. Fiore and Judith S. Donath, "Online Personals: An Overview", *CHI 2004 - Late Breaking Results Paper*. Vienna, 2004: 1395-1398.

Andrew T. Fiore, Lindsay S. Taylor, G.A. Mendelsohn, and Marti Hearst, "Assessing Attractiveness in Online Dating Profiles." *CHI 2008 Proceedings - Friends, Foe, and Family*. Florence, 2008.

Jeana H. Frost et. al., "People are Experience Goods: Improving Online Dating With Virtual Dates" *Journal of Interactive Marketing* 22.1 (2008): 51-61.

Jeffrey T. Hancock, Catalina Toma and Nicole Ellison, "The Truth About Lying in Online Dating Profiles", *CHI 2007 Proceedings - Online Representation of Self*. San Jose, 2007: 449-452.

Michael Hardt, "De productie en distributie van het gemeenschappelijke - Enkele vragen aan de kunstenaar." *Open 16, De kunstbiënnale als globaal fenomeen* (2009): 22-31.

Henry Jenkins et. al., "Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture: Media Education for the 21st Century" (2005). Available at <http://www.newmedialiteracies.org/files/working/NMLWhitePaper.pdf>, visited on 04-09-2009.

Nick Hornby, *High Fidelity*, 1995.

"On line dating at Mediamatic - Discrete and effective." *mediamatic.net (a)*. Visited on 20-07-2009, through <http://www.mediamic.net/page/28034/en>.

"Gastarbeider Dating Opening - A festive start of the exhibitions series and the kick-off of the Mediamatic dating service." *mediamatic.net (b)*. Visited on 02-09-2009, through <http://www.mediamic.net/page/27412/en>

Mirko Tobias Schäfer, "Bastard Culture! User participation and the extension of the cultural industries." Utrecht University 2008.

Willem Velthoven, "Cultural Dating - on the future of museums, archiving and cultural institutions" [2007]. *mediamic.net*. Visited on 31-08-2009, through <http://www.mediamic.net/page/15117/en>

## Appendix A: Overview of Mediamatics dating profile questions and answers

Question	Answer(s)
Your gender *	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Female</li> <li>• Male</li> </ul>
What gender are you looking for? *	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Female</li> <li>• Male</li> <li>• Female or Male</li> </ul>
Your date of birth *	<i>free choice</i>
What age range would you prefer? *	Range from 16 to 119
What do you want?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner / Marriage / Friendship</li> <li>• Whatever I can get</li> <li>• Random play / Just teasing / 1night stand</li> <li>• Sperm donor / Surrogate mother</li> <li>• A muse</li> <li>• Residence permit</li> <li>• Secret lover / I don't really want a date but I want to fantasize about one</li> <li>• Sponsor</li> <li>• An escort</li> <li>• Flat mate</li> </ul>
Your dating images ∞	<i>choice out of 83 different images</i>

Do you want children?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No thanks</li> <li>• Yes please</li> <li>• Not right now</li> </ul>
Current number of children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0</li> <li>• 1</li> <li>• 2</li> <li>• many</li> </ul>
Country of origin	<i>list of countries</i>
My native country ∞	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I miss it every day</li> <li>• I couldn't care less</li> <li>• I have a love/hate relationship with it</li> <li>• I like my country</li> </ul>
Relational status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single</li> <li>• In a relationship</li> <li>• It's complicated</li> <li>• Still in mourning</li> <li>• None of your business</li> </ul>
Religion ∞	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is opium for the people</li> <li>• Monotheistic</li> <li>• Agnost</li> <li>• I like their rituals</li> <li>• I like their buildings</li> <li>• I like their art</li> </ul>
God herself	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is great</li> <li>• There are many</li> <li>• Is dead</li> <li>• Imaginary friend for grown ups</li> </ul>

Politics ∞	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I don't care</li> <li>• I won't say</li> <li>• I don't vote</li> <li>• I don't know</li> </ul>
Professional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I'm self employed</li> <li>• I'm employed</li> <li>• I'm an employer</li> <li>• I'm happily unemployed</li> <li>• I'm looking for a job</li> <li>• I'm a student</li> </ul>
Sector	<i>many, from advertising to urbanism</i>
Money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can support myself</li> <li>• The state can support me</li> <li>• I still have parents</li> <li>• I have a day job</li> <li>• I could even support you</li> </ul>
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I'm homeless</li> <li>• I live in a squat</li> <li>• I live as anti-squat</li> <li>• Shared apartment</li> <li>• Living with partner</li> <li>• Renting</li> <li>• I own my own place</li> <li>• I own many houses</li> </ul>
Pets ∞	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0 legs</li> <li>• 2 legs</li> <li>• 4 legs</li> <li>• 6 legs</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 legs</li> <li>• I love pets</li> </ul>
Clothing style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elegant</li> <li>• Trashy</li> <li>• Glamorous</li> <li>• I don't care about clothing</li> </ul>
Hair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blond</li> <li>• Dark</li> <li>• Red</li> <li>• Grey</li> <li>• No</li> <li>• I shave a lot</li> </ul>
What part of yourself are you proud of?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My smell</li> <li>• My voice</li> <li>• My looks</li> <li>• My inner beauty</li> <li>• My style</li> <li>• My friends</li> <li>• My car</li> <li>• My online persona</li> </ul>
What do you not like about yourself?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The shape of my nose</li> <li>• The size of my nose</li> <li>• I pick my nose</li> <li>• I stick my nose in places where it does not belong</li> <li>• I'm smelly</li> </ul>
Let's discuss weight now	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please no</li> <li>• I'm fine, thank you</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BMI &lt; 18</li> <li>• BMI 18 - 25</li> <li>• BMI &gt; 25</li> <li>• What is BMI?</li> </ul>
What do you look like?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Like a princess</li> <li>• Like a frog</li> <li>• Like shit</li> <li>• Well preserved</li> <li>• Next question</li> </ul>
Snoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No</li> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• I don't know</li> </ul>
Hobbies ∞	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What kind of question is THIS?</li> <li>• Physical stuff</li> <li>• Brainy stuff</li> <li>• Girly stuff</li> <li>• Stuffy stuff</li> <li>• No</li> <li>• Other</li> </ul>
Bad habits ∞	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I sleep long</li> <li>• I watch tv</li> <li>• I'm lazy</li> <li>• I abuse drugs</li> <li>• I wear fur</li> <li>• I'm jealous</li> </ul>
<p>What do you do?</p> <p>(Passions, habits and obsessions you would like to share with your date)</p>	<i>open answer</i>

<p>What about your drug use: (include chocolate and alcohol)</p>	<p><i>open answer</i></p>
<p>Cultural background: (Do you have culture? Do you like it? Is it inherited or self made?)</p>	<p><i>open answer</i></p>