

Your OkCupid Self

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The New York Times:

Who are you when you're online dating? Are you your real self, stripped of the pretenses you put on when you're out in the world? Do you take those pretenses with you when you log on? Or do you perhaps construct new ones, unique to the medium? And what does the self you bring to a dating site say not just about you, but about the site itself?

The philosopher Evan Selinger gets at some of these questions in his recent Los Angeles Review of Books review of "Dataclysm," an exploration by Christian Rudder, an OkCupid co-founder, of his site's trove of numbers. The book's subtitle is "Who We Are (When We Think No One's Looking)," and Mr. Selinger takes issue with the idea that the data Mr. Rudder marshals can reveal our true selves. Mr. Rudder, he writes, "takes it for granted that, in general, people are genuine when they think nobody is watching, which means, in this particular case, that OkCupid's data is a transparent window into an authentic reality." He adds:

"Renowned sociologist Erving Goffman convincingly demonstrated that social interactions can be performative. In other words, we often modify what we do to account for other people's expectations and judgments. But Rudder just assumes that all of the reasons we have for impression management fade away on OkCupid. An equally plausible alternative possibility is that when OkCupid users interact with the platform and express themselves through the constraints it imposes, they don masks appropriate for the occasion."

Read the whole story: [*The New York Times*](#)