# Missouri State Journal, Feb. 6, 2024

**00:00:03 Announcer**

The Missouri State Journal, a weekly program keeping you in touch with Missouri State University.

**00:00:10 Emily Letterman**

Can you feel that? Love is in the air. Valentine’s Day is just over a week away and while many are making plans or reservations with their significant other – many are still looking for that someone special.

Enter the not-so-new frontier of dating apps. Tinder if by far the most widely used on the market. Since its launch in 2012, Tinder reports about 26 million matches a day, leading to over more than 20 billion so far and counting. But as users will be quick to point out – a match does not equal a relationship.

I’m Emily Letterman.

My guest today is Dr. Alicia Walker, an associate professor of Sociology and Anthropology at Missouri State University and a noted relationship expert. Walker says dating apps such as Tinder, are fundamentally changing the way we enter interact with each other.

**00:01:02 Dr. Alicia Walker**

At least a third of us or so will admit that we've used dating apps. The percentages are probably higher than that, but at least roughly a third of us will tell us that they have. And if you're talking to young adults or LGBT folks, those numbers are going to be higher among young adults.

And LGBT adults, roughly 20% or so, have actually met their current partner online.

And so lots of folks are on them. Lots of folks are using them and there can be great things about them. Sure. But one of the ways that it's changing dating is that folks are getting sort of overwhelmed. You know, that decision fatigue, you have way too many options of folks. You know, you log on and millions of singles we're waiting on you, right. And you could spend hours.

There's no swiping dating apps are actually designed to be kind of like a video game. And so there is that respect to it, where people use it and it becomes difficult to stop swiping.

**00:02:09 Emily Letterman**

While many have found love on dating apps, Walker says their rise has also created an uncomfortable social space in society.

**00:02:18 Dr. Alicia Walker**

Fascinating is when we talk to folks. How? How is dating harder? Is it harder? How are the ways? It's harder. One thing, one thing that folks talk about is men not knowing how to behave with women and dating scenarios because of the whole me too movement. So a lot of men say, well, you know, I don't want to say the wrong thing. I don't want to do the wrong thing. I don't want to, you know, come across this creepy but then online on a dating app, some men seem to have this attitude that.

Hey, you knew what you were signing up for, right? You signed up for the app, and so you have to know that this is what comes with it. And I think certain apps definitely have a reputation, but some men seem to think, you know, if you're on Tinder, then you're on here to have sex. And so therefore I'm going to.

From the jump interacts with you in a way that I would never, ever walk up to you in a bar and do that. I probably wouldn't do it on eHarmony, for example. And so yeah, it it's created this very uncomfortable space for a lot of people are using this.

I hear this all the time from students and from folks. I interview women who say I don't want to be on the apps because of this behavior because it just feels like a waste of my time and it feels like I'm just opening myself up to men. Having license to say whatever they want to say.

**00:03:49 Emily Letterman**

If you’re ready to swipe left on dating apps all together, Walker says pause and give them a chance. She has some tips.

**00:03:57 Dr. Alicia Walker**

First thing you want to do is you want to be really clear with yourself about what are your intentions. Are you trying to date casually? Are you looking for a life partner? Be clear with yourself about what it is that you're actually trying to do.

Don't use too many apps at once. You want to limit yourself to one or two because you get any more than that, you're definitely risking burnout, you know, it's just too many things to be checking and it can become sort of like a game, right? To check all of these different apps.

You want to be patient. We don't make friends overnight. We're not gonna meet our life partner overnight, right? That's probably not how that's gonna work.

**00:04:36 Emily Letterman**

My guest today has been Dr. Alicia Walker, an associate professor of Sociology at Missouri State.

Wishing all the single listeners good luck this Valentine’s Day, I’m Emily Letterman for the Missouri State Journal.

**00:04:50 Announcer**

For more information, contact the Office of Strategic Communication at 417-836-6397, the Missouri State Journal is available online at ksmu.org.