

Sociosexual uses of Internet among French-speaking gays from Québec : results from a quantitative research

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Introduction

- By providing new forms of sociability, Internet has contributed to changes in the strategies of communication, patterns of socialization, types of encounters and sexual practices.
- These impacts have been particularly studied among American gays, showing the diversity of sociosexual uses.
- Our study seeks to provide a comprehensive portrait of the of Internet socio-sexual uses among gay men living in Quebec.

Objectives of presentation

To outline:

- Patterns of socio-sexual activities on Internet
- Patterns of encounters off-line
- Impacts of Internet on sexual life among gay men who answered a questionnaire on line :

Methodology

Following a qualitative analysis of face to face interviews

- An Online questionnaire (www.cruise.uqam.ca) was developed:
 - 62 principal questions organized into 5 sections
 - General profile (e.g., socio-demographic informations)
 - Social, romantic and sexual uses of the Internet
 - Encounters with other Internet users
 - Psychosexual impacts of Internet use
 - General health and wellbeing

Methodology

- Recruitment
 - February 3, 2004 to August 5, 2004 (7 months)
 - Multiple strategies
 - Flyers and other handouts distributed in the Gay Village of Montreal (e.g., businesses, bars, community groups)
 - Online adverts (e.g., banner on *Priape*, repeated mailings to members of *Qcboy*)
 - Gay media (e.g., *Fugues* February issue)

Methodology

- Inclusion criteria (online questionnaire)
 - Male
 - Aged 18 or older
 - Sexually active or attracted to members of own sex
 - Have ever used the Internet for social, romantic or sexual purposes
 - Informed consent
- Analysis
 - Student T-tests, variance analysis
 - Pearson Chi-Square

General characteristics

Mean age	35,5
-25 years	31.1%
26-40 years	31,9%
41 et +	36.8%

Sexual orientation

Homosexuals	82.1%
Bisexuals	16,6%

Couple	24,7%
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Education

Secondary level or less	23%
Technical formation	20,2%
College level	47,5%
Undergraduate level	23,0%
Graduate level	11,3%

General characteristics

Place of residence

Montréal	56,1%
Québec city	15,5%
Other regions	28,4%

Income

Less than 10k	17,8%
10K to 29 999	35,,4%
30k to 59 999	34,4%
More than 60K	12,4%

Internet use

Began using the Internet...

-less than 6 months	1.5%
-6 to 12 months	2.5%
-1 to 3 years	23.3%
-4 to 6 years	44.0%
-7 or more years	28.6%

Internet use

Frequency use(last 6 months; Very often or often)

-Chat	54,8%
-E-mail	47,6%
-MSN	45,7%
-Encounter sites	42,7%
-Video	23,2%
-Forum discussion	9,1%
-MUD	1,6%

Sociosexual activities

Motivation to use Internet (often, very often)	%
- Contacts with family- friends	75,6
-Distraction	68,4
-sexual excitation	55,6
-similar interests	35,5
--off-line sexual relations	28,7
-frequentations	27,6
-outings	24,8
-cybersex	19,3

Sociosexual activities

Motivation to use Internet (often, very often)	%
-Informations on gay communities	18,7
- Other informations	12,7
-Support	7,9
-Informations on STDs	6,6
--Informations on HIV/AIDS	6,1
-Research	4,4
-sexual work	3,4
-	

Sociosexual activities

Activities (often, very often)	%
- To see pictures with sexual content	39,5
-Online masturbation	30,8
-Explicit sexual language	28,4
-Sexual ads	14,7
--Webcam	13,6
-Romantic ads	12,7
-To read or publish erotic stories	10,9
-To transmit nude pictures	10,4
-to buy erotic material	2,3
-Direct erotic show	1,6

Encounters with other Internet users

Importance of the following when deciding to meet potential sex partner (in past 6 months)	%
-Ask for picture	78,3
-secure sex practices	76,9
-compatible sexual practices	74,5
-precise criteria	68,5
-Ask questions on STDs	54,5
-Same serological status	49,7
-No specific expectations	49,6
-Take out precious objects	49,3
-Meeting in public places	47,3

Encounters with other Internet users

Importance of the following
when deciding to meet potential
sex partner ¹ (in past 6 months) _____
%

-wait after several sessions	40,0
- phone talk	39,3
-have meeting the same day	33,2
-different serological status	31,1
-ask questions on sexual past	30,9

Impact of Internet

Following use of Internet
Agree or rather agree with the
following statements _____
%

-new sexual experiences	57,5
-express sexual desires	57,2
-sexual life more active	48,1
-Less shy	47,6
-Know themselves better	46,4
-are better able to contact people	44,8
-Accept their sexuality and sexual orientation	42,3
-more active social life	26,1
-Feel more isolated	13,4
-have lost time online	48,9

Encounters with other Internet users

(past 6 months)

Number of partners: 6 (SD, 9,7).

Anal relations :62,4%

Number of anal partners: 4,4 (SD: 2,48)

Did not use condom: 35,1%

Oral relations: 56,7%

Number of partners for oral relations: 4,6 partners (SD: 7,58)

Partners coming from the same city: 56,7%

Partners coming from neighboring cities :27,6%

Impacts of Internet use

Perceived dependency

-On the Internet 31,1

-On sexuality 48,3

-On online sexuality 23,1

Internet technology is mainly used for sexual encounters, viewing of sexual material and masturbation online while other activities are less frequent. Furthermore, the use of Internet seems to contribute to a better sexual life. Comparisons with a heterosexual population could help to better understand variations in sociosexual uses of Internet.

Objective of presentation

- Among men reporting a face-to-face sexual encounter with a man met online in the past 6 months...
 - Compare those who have had at least one episode of unprotected anal sex in the past six months with a sexual partner they met online with those who did not...
 - In terms of their social, romantic and sexual uses of the Internet and a variety of other factors potentially linked with sexual health and wellbeing

Internet use

Variable	Group		Statistic	<i>p</i>
	UAS	No UAS		
First online pursuits ¹				
-Sexual	3.27	2.99		0.029
-Information	3.17	3.93		0.021
-Work or study	3.06	3.36		0.021
Motivation for current uses ¹ (past 6 months)				
-HIV/AIDS information	2.08	1.88		0.027
-STI information	2.13	1.93		0.033

¹Scale from 1 to 5: 1) never; 2) rarely; 3) sometimes; 4) often; 5) very often

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Internet use (past 6 months)

Variable	Group		Statistic	<i>p</i>
	UAS	No UAS		
Media for romantic or sexual purposes ¹				
-Email	3.76	3.44		0.007
Online sexual activities ¹				
-Transmit nude pictures of yourself	2.15	1.91		0.039

¹Scale from 1 to 5: 1) never; 2) rarely; 3) sometimes; 4) often; 5) very often

Encounters with other Internet users

Variable	Group		<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
	UAS	No UAS			
Internet as a means of meeting people ¹ ...					
-“is a more certain way of meeting people who might want to meet you”	3.79	3.47			0.001
-“is a more efficient means of finding a sexual partner”	4.12	3.83			0.003
-“generally results in more satisfying sex”	3.21	2.96			0.010
-“is a more thrilling way to set up a sexual encounter”	3.77	3.55			0.032

¹Scale from 1 to 5: 1) completely disagree; 5) completely agree

Encounters with other Internet users

Variable	Group		F	df	p
	UAS	No UAS			
Importance of the following when deciding to meet potential sex partner ¹ (in past 6 months)					
-“Waiting until you had had several independent chat sessions”	2.90	3.17			0.035
-“Making sure he practices safer sex”	3.85	4.26			0.000

¹Scale from 1 to 5: 1) not at all important; 5) very important

Encounters with other Internet users

(past 6 months)

Variable	Group		χ^2	df	p
	UAS	No UAS			
Type of practices					
-Anal sex	100%	52.2%			0.001
-Oral sex (sperm in mouth)	69.9%	53.0%			0.001

Encounters with other Internet users

(past 6 months)

Variable	Group		<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
	UAS	No UAS			
Mean number of men met online with whom you had...					
-A "sexual encounter"	8.96	5.35	-2.91	603	0.004
-Oral sex (sperm in mouth)	6.36	4.01	-2.12	331	0.036
-Anal sex	5.44	3.91	-1.64	364	n.s.
-Unprotected anal sex	3.00	-			

Impacts of Internet use

Variable	Group		<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
	UAS	No UAS			
Among those who discovered or developed an interest in a sexual activity					
-Mean number of activities	6.17	4.56			0.001

Impacts of Internet use

Group

Variable	Group		X	df	p
	UAS	No UAS			
New substance discovered during a sexual encounter w/ an Internet partner (past 6 mo.)	14.0%	7.8%			0.042
-Viagra	42.1%	9.3%		1	0.005

Impacts of Internet use

Group

Variable	Group		t	df	p
	UAS	No UAS			
As a result of my social, sexual or romantic uses of the Internet ¹ ...					
-“I have experimented sexually”	4.01	3.72			0.004
-“I am better able to communicate my sexual desires”	3.88	3.66			0.035
-“I have a more active sex life”	3.95	3.57			0.001

¹Scale from 1 to 5: 1) completely disagree; 5) completely agree

Impacts of Internet use

Variable	Group		<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
	UAS	No UAS			
Dimensions along which Internet relationships and encounters may have differed from "real life" ¹					
-“The diversity of sexual partners”	4.07	3.69	-4.53	617	0.001
-“The number of casual sex partners”	3.99	3.67	-3.58	618	0.001
-“The diversity of sexual practices”	3.87	3.58	-3.46	617	0.001
-“The frequency of sexual activity”	3.82	3.54	-2.95	618	0.004
-“The practice of anal sex”	3.69	3.14	0.00	000	0.001
-“The ‘riskiness’ of sexual practices”	3.58	3.36	-2.55	617	0.012
-“The number of regular sex partners”	3.50	3.22	0.00	000	0.003
-“The practice of condomless anal sex”	3.14	2.56	0.00	000	0.001

¹Scale from 1 to 5: 1) much less; 2) a bit less; 3) no difference; 4) a bit more; 5) much more

Impacts of Internet use

Variable	Group		<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
	UAS	No UAS		
Perceived dependency ¹				
-On the Internet	2.88	2.82		n.s.
-On sexuality	3.60	3.29		0.009
-On online sexuality	2.87	2.51		0.002

¹Scale from 1 to 5: 1) completely disagree; 5) completely agree