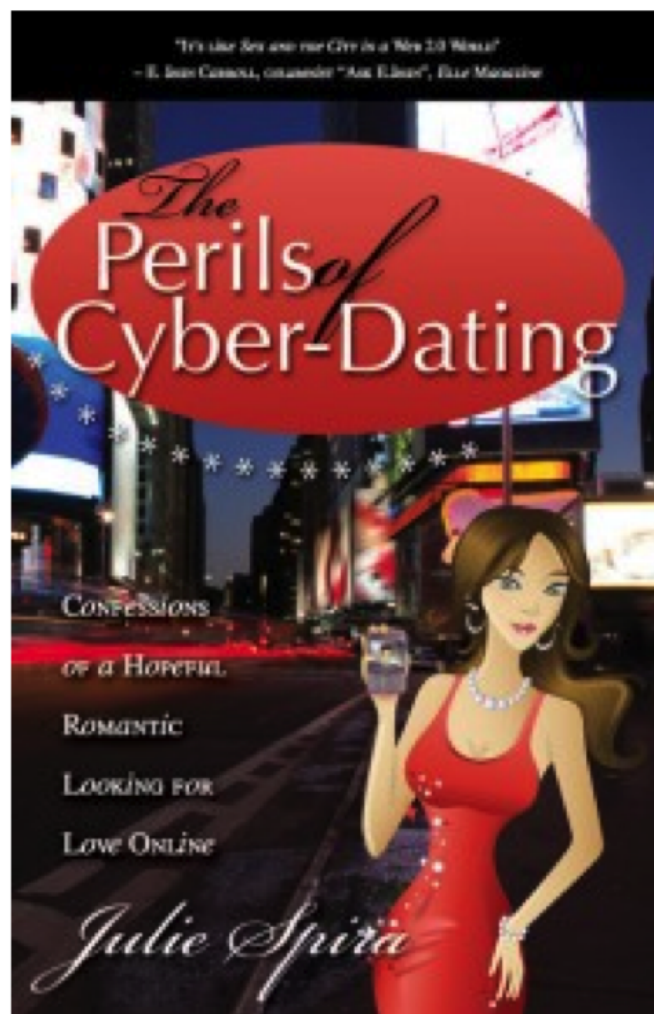# Julie Spira Discusses 'The Perils of Cyber-Dating'

By [Krissy Dolor](#)

More than 40 million singles are dating online. With around

2,500 online dating sites to choose from, how can you navigate your way safely and find love on the Internet? Julie Spira's tell-all memoir, [_The Perils of Cyber-Dating: Confessions of a Hopeful Romantic Looking for Love Online_](), can help. You'll follow her on her 15-year journey – which included 250 online dates – as she navigated the web in hopes to find an Internet mate to replace someone she thought was the love of her life. Through her romances, heartbreaks, and personal rules of "netiquette," Spira shares invaluable first-hand knowledge on the best ways to date online.

Cupid's Advice:

Online dating has it's own set of rules. Remember to be safe and savvy when on the web. Cupid caught up with the Spira via e-mail this week. Here's what the author had to say:

You were one of the first people to delve into the world of online dating. Were you scared? What were other people's reactions?

At the time I created my first online dating profile in 1994, I wasn't scared at all. I fully embraced the Internet both personally and professionally. But, since online dating was not mainstream at that point, I told very few people that I was meeting my dates from online dating sites. I told some close friends who I thought could benefit from online dating and helped them with their online dating profiles.

What's different about cyberdating (as compared to traditional dating), and how can people adapt to it?

The main difference between cyberdating and traditional dating is that you are meeting someone that you haven't met before in real life and you are getting to know them from behind their computer screen. Online dating, Internet dating, and cyberdating are all terms used for those using online dating sites, chat rooms, video dating, and social dating sites.

This also includes social networking sites such as Facebook and MySpace. In order to completely embrace online dating, one needs to be comfortable using their computer. It's also important to be very organized as you may receive hundreds of emails in the first day or two. I[n] order to be successful, if you create a system that helps keep all of the replies and emails sent, you'll be able to communicate with your dates with their background information. If you are already using Facebook to communicate with friends, it's the next logical step.

What have you seen change about the online dating world since you started?

When I first started dating online, Match.com hadn't been launched yet. There were very few sites to pick from. It was a much simpler process without all the Web 2.0 bells and whistles. You weren't seeing video dating and text messaging wasn't an option in the U.S.

What is your relationship to online dating now?

As an online dating coach, I help singles create their irresistible online dating profiles and work with them to search the best possible matches. I also help them decide which sites to join and teach them how to craft and email introduction and response that will grab the attention of those profiles they select.

What are your top 5 netiquette rules for cyberdating?

My Rules of Netiquette from my book, *[The Perils of Cyber-Dating: Confessions of a Hopeful Romantic Looking for Love Online](#)*, include:

1. The Google Rule: If you Google your date before you meet them, don't let them know on the first date. You'd be surprised how some people actually print out the Google results and start questioning their date about specific entries. It's not appropriate first date material and no one

wants to feel like they are on a job interview or under the microscope.

2. The Food and Beverage Rule: If you ask a date out for coffee, be prepared to order a beverage for her and yourself. I have heard stories many times where either someone arrives with their own water, or simply does not order a coffee or tea for their date. You should assume that a coffee date includes a drink, and a dinner date includes some form of food.

3. The Ex Rule: Don't talk about your ex-wife or husband, ex girlfriend or boyfriend, or spend time talking about the past. You'd be surprised that some talk about their spousal support, or a relationship that didn't work out on the first date. Keep it light and leave the baggage at home.

4. The Send Button Rule: My mother always says, "If you don't have anything nice to say about someone, don't say anything at all." Too often someone gets mad and drafts an email and pushes the send button. When in doubt, send it to yourself. You might feel differently in the morning. Once you push the send button, you can't take it back.

5. The Break Up Rule: Never break up with a significant other in an email or a text message. It's just common courtesy to have a conversation and preferably in person. Do you really want to go down in history as the one who frequently dumps their dates in an email or text? Sure, celebrities are ending relationships in text messages and on Twitter these days. But is it right?

Most importantly, be authentic. Authenticity is really in style now. With over 400 million members on Facebook, it's easy for someone to see if your photo on your online dating profile does not match the recent birthday or vacation pictures on Facebook. We know that many singles lie about their age in their online dating profiles to fit into a search, but the truth will come out when you meet in real life. You start out on a bad foot if you are lying about your age, weight, and height. Enjoy the process and look at cyberdating as a way to increase your social and business networks in the event it doesn't turn into a romantic relationship.