

Is there such a thing as dangerous love?

**THE DANGERS OF
INTERNET DATING**
Wednesday 9pm **Channel 4**

The internet. It lets you send emails, create websites, order things online, chat to your friends. Basically the internet can do almost anything. Some of us love it; some of us don't even know how to use it. The majority of people using the internet are teenagers, with 21 million using it every day. But the big question is, are they using it safely? Tom Hartley, the presenter of 'The Dangers of Internet Dating', explores this problem further...

'Teenagers today always want to keep in touch with each other over the internet, the most popular website being Facebook. It seems that many teens are using an application (otherwise known as an app) on Facebook called 'Are you Interested?' But the new rising problem is that teenagers are signing up to proper dating sites and lying about their age. The bad thing about young teenagers doing this is that they have no confirmation that the image on screen is actual identification of the person they are meeting up with. Many incidents have occurred where teens have got themselves into trouble, but this is beginning to include the internet as well. Those who are meeting strangers from the in-

ternet don't understand that they might not be genuine and could be a threat. We need to address teenagers today and make this possibility of a dangerous situation known. The question is how can we do this effectively?'

'The Dangers of Internet Dating' gives us an insight into what happens when you meet a random person without knowing them properly and warns us of the consequences. The documentary contains a gritty reconstruction of what happened to 'Holly Smith', who lied about her age and signed up to a dating website when she wanted to meet someone off the internet. Fake names have been

"21 million teenagers use the internet every day"

used to keep the identity of both 'Holly' and the boy she met, - 'Matt', as he is known in the documentary, hidden.

The documentary is very 'fly on the wall'. The effect of the reconstruction was to make the audience feel like a bystander

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or witness', says Rebekah Harpham, the actress who plays 'Holly' in the reconstruction. 'We wanted them to feel a part of the reconstruction and add a realistic quality. The audience are wanted to be involved as much as the people acting are'.

Jacob Hall, the actor who plays 'Matt' provided his thoughts: 'I thought the general idea was really good for the documentary. It appeals to teenagers and adults alike and puts across how critical this issue on internet dating is. We documented what happens in the reconstruction near exact to how it happened in real life to 'Holly', making it seem like a soap was not going to make it become a serious piece of film'.

Tuning into this programme will make people realise that the internet can do most things but it can't keep people safe.

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Above: 'Matt' (Jacob Hall) and 'Holly' (Beki Smith) in a cafe
Left: Presenter Tom Hartley
Below: 'Holly'
Far bottom: The internet dating site 'Holly' used.



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