KSTARR Enterprises, LLC

Negligent Dating™ Exposed: How a Billion-Dollar Industry Fails to Protect

When passion meets vulnerability, the platform must bear responsibility.

I come to this topic not as a casual observer, but as someone who has spent a lifetime at the intersection of passion, vulnerability, and institutional failure. I was once an elite athlete driven by ambition and trust in the system that surrounded me, and for the past two decades, I've worked as an expert in grooming, abuse prevention, and institutional misconduct. My focus has largely been on youth sports, where the stakes are deeply personal and the betrayal of trust is all too familiar.

But the mechanisms that allow abuse to flourish in those settings the gaps in oversight, the prioritization of convenience, the refusal to invest in safety infrastructure are not unique to sports. They are playing out in the digital world as well, particularly on online dating platforms, where the pursuit of love has become fertile ground for emotional manipulation, financial exploitation, and systemic grooming. Negligent dating platforms have become high-risk environments disguised as connection hubs.

In early 2025, a Guardian investigation revealed that even the largest dating platforms under Match Group—Tinder, Hinge, OkCupid—failed to meaningfully track or block repeat offenders. According to internal documents, there were no shared records across apps and no reliable method for identifying users who were banned for abusive behavior. The result: scammers and predators were able to return under new names, new emails, or simply by switching apps[1].

Being an athlete is driven by passion. So is searching for love. Both require vulnerability, trust, and hope. And in both environments, when there is no protection built into the system, that passion becomes the very thing used against people.

The grooming process used by romance scammers mirrors what we see in coach-athlete abuse cases. It's calculated. It's manipulative. It's reinforced by the structure surrounding the individual or more accurately, by the lack of structure. These are not random, isolated acts of deceit. They are predictable outcomes in environments that prioritize growth over safety, user numbers over user protection, and plausible deniability over accountability.

In youth sports, we now require coaches to undergo background checks, submit references, and complete abuse prevention training. We hold organizations accountable when they fail to screen

[1] https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/feb/13/tinder-hinge-match-investigation

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individuals or respond to red flags. But in the world of online dating a multi-billion-dollar industry the standards are nonexistent. This is negligent dating by design.

Dating platforms do not perform background checks. They allow anyone to create a profile with nothing more than an email address, sometimes even less. There is no meaningful identity verification. A user banned for abuse, manipulation, or fraud can simply return under a new name, new number, or behind a VPN. There is no shared database of bad actors. No permanent bans. No industry standard for security or protection.

And perhaps most critically: the entire burden of safety has been placed on the user. These platforms post blog articles about "how to avoid a scam," issue vague warnings, and encourage members to report suspicious behavior all while continuing to grant scammers uninterrupted access to a vulnerable population.

Many of these victims are older adults, widowed, lonely, or navigating grief individuals who are seeking connection and instead are targeted by professional scammers, many of whom operate outside the United States. Platforms like Christian Singles trade on their name to convey trust and moral security, yet they employ the same lax standards as any other app. For users trying to protect themselves, the system gives them nothing. If they want to know whether the person messaging them is real, or safe, or has a criminal past, they must pay extra for a third-party background check if that option is even available.

This is the equivalent of a sports league letting a stranger coach your child and telling you, “If you want to know whether he’s a sex offender, you’ll have to look it up yourself and we’ll still let him coach until you prove otherwise.”

We wouldn’t accept that in youth sports. Why are we accepting it in online dating?

This failure isn’t technological. The tools exist. Banks and fintech platforms detect fraud in seconds. VPN access can be blocked. AI can analyze behavioral red flags like love-bombing, repetitive language, and financial grooming. IP addresses can be matched to geographic regions and flagged. Yet these platforms choose not to implement these measures. Not because they can’t—but because safety creates friction, and friction slows profit.

The result is a system that enables harm by design. It’s not just inadequate. **It’s negligent dating at scale.**

The Harm Is Preventable: The Negligence Is Structural

These platforms often position scams as the fault of individual users as if being emotionally vulnerable is a liability, as if recognizing red flags is the responsibility of the grieving widow or

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the newly divorced father. But this framing ignores the core truth: scams succeed not because users are naive, but because the platform is unregulated and indifferent.

If a dating platform truly wanted to protect its users, it could. The technology is there. In fact, many of the tools already exist and are widely used in other industries where fraud prevention is non-negotiable. Financial institutions flag suspicious activity in real time. Streaming services block VPN access. Even ride-share companies require identity verification for drivers.

A negligent dating platform could prevent access from known scam-heavy regions. It could block traffic from VPNs, Tor nodes, and public proxies using real-time IP intelligence. It could validate a user's location against their stated geography and flag inconsistencies. These are not new ideas they are standard practices in fraud prevention elsewhere.

Phone number verification is similarly toothless in its current form. Most platforms allow disposable SMS services and VoIP numbers offering users the illusion of verification while doing little to prevent fraud. A robust system would require a verifiable, region-matched number tied to an actual identity and flag mismatches before the user can ever send a message.

When scammers are reported and banned, they don't disappear they reappear under a new name, often on the same day. That's because there is no device tracking, no browser fingerprinting, no internal fraud recognition system to identify repeat behavior. A truly preventative platform would block users based on behavioral patterning, not just login credentials.

Behavioral red flags are consistent: sudden intimacy, copy-paste messages, rapid escalation, and pressure to move conversations off-platform. AI can identify these patterns, but most platforms choose not to apply it. Instead, they place the burden on the victim to detect the deception, take action, and hope the platform responds.

Even users who reach out to dozens of potential matches per day a clear indicator of spam or manipulation face no extra scrutiny. There is no requirement to upload a government ID, no selfie verification, no graduated access tied to verified trust. In almost every meaningful way, these platforms invite deception.

And this isn't just emotional harm - ***the cost is staggering***.

In 2023, Americans lost more than $1.3 billion to romance scams, according to the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center[2]. The AARP has documented a dramatic rise in fraud targeting adults over 50, many of whom are preyed upon precisely because of their emotional openness and trust

[2] https://www.ic3.gov/Media/PDF/AnnualReport/2023_IC3Report.pdf

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in these platforms. These aren't anomalies. They are the natural outcome of a system that refuses to build in prevention.

What these platforms are doing or failing to do is no longer a question of capability. It is a question of accountability. And it is the defining liability issue behind negligent dating in the modern digital landscape.

A Call for Accountability

The romance scam epidemic is not a surprise. It's a known outcome of a system built without guardrails. When platforms make access easy, oversight optional, and protection voluntary, harm is not just likely it's inevitable.

The dating industry has benefited from a kind of regulatory blind spot. While we've tightened protections in schools, sports, and workplaces, online platforms that encourage emotional intimacy and personal exposure have slipped through with no meaningful standards. That era must end.

It's time to treat these platforms as the environments of influence they are spaces where grooming occurs, trust is manipulated, and lives are upended. When harm is foreseeable, preventable, and still allowed to persist, the legal term is negligence. And when profit is made from that harm? It's not just negligence it's institutional failure.

We wouldn't allow a school to hire a teacher without a background check. We wouldn't allow a youth camp to ignore a known offender reapplying under a new name. We wouldn't accept a sports league that shrugs at abuse and blames the child for not recognizing the danger. So why are we allowing dating platforms whose users are just as emotionally exposed to operate with less scrutiny than a summer camp?

This is not a question of possibility. The tools exist. The models exist. What's missing is the will and the accountability. Until that changes, the burden of prevention will continue to fall on the very people these platforms profit from. That's not innovation. That's exploitation.

As someone who has seen what happens when systems fail, I'm speaking out because I recognize this pattern. I've seen the damage it causes. And I know we can do better.

As someone who has spent decades inside the systems where failure leads to harm, I'm not just writing this to raise awareness I'm offering solutions. I recognize the patterns. I understand the infrastructure. And I know where the pressure points are for meaningful, legally sound reform.

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