

## male call



If one picture is worth a thousand words, one *bad* picture in your Internet dating profile is worth a novel. A bad novel.



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As online dating goes increasingly mainstream, people are discovering the need for attractive photos where you're not bending over unattractively or somehow got caught with french fries in your nose.

It just so happens I know whereof I speak this month. I've actually spent a lot of time learning photography and I could even explain the inverse-square rule if you've got a minute. More to the point, I can Photoshop your head onto a gnarled elf's body...and I *will*, if you don't stop making some of these ridiculous mistakes that your 10-year-old knows better than to commit.

First off, don't post a nearly black photo. I've seen images so dark you can barely make out a figure. *Message to viewer: I can't bear to be seen in the light of day.*

Next, when your neighbor comes by to take some fresh shots of you standing lifelessly in front of

your stucco back wall, at least take the trouble to change your outfit once so it doesn't look like you only own one set of clothes. *Message: I'm so out of it that I don't have any current pictures of myself and I couldn't find a carnival photo booth.*

Now that we're warmed up, let's get to the serious problems.

I have in front of me a picture showing an attractive woman... with an obviously male arm around her shoulders. Why not just upload a photo ripped in half! *Message: The only attractive pictures I have of myself were taken with my ex-husband.*

Next, I see three women of varying attractiveness and ages. Which one are you though? It doesn't matter how many other pictures you have posted and it doesn't matter if

the other person is obviously your child. It won't be obvious to the viewer. Worst case – they may prefer one of the *others* in the image. *Message: I don't care if you prefer to date my daughter or best friend.*

Speaking of best friends, one of mine, bless her heart, committed this mistake: She has a lovely picture of herself with a male friend. I happen to know both of them and know that they are strictly platonic. But no one *else* knows that. *Message:*

*Maybe I'm married, maybe I'm not. Care to guess?*

Never show another person above the age of eight in your picture. We want to see *you*, not play "beauty or the beast."

Want to show your dog? OK...you're allowed one pet shot. Want to show yourself playing a sport or posing in an exotic locale? I'll go for that since it shows you in action.

But that leads to the final rule for this month. An Internet profile is not a vacation slide show for your relatives. Show yourself and your horse, yourself on the beach or busting a dance move...but spare us having to wade through a dozen pictures of your pets, your grandchildren, your friends at happy hour and your ex's disembodied arm around your waist.

Now, since I'm feeling generous today, here's a limited-time offer. Send me your pic for an insta-critique. I won't Photoshop your ex's arm out for you but I may be able to save you some humiliation.

**At the very worst, your viewer may prefer one of the others in the image.**

*James Roberts is an over 40-something Phoenix-based writer, author of "On Being Eight Again" and "The Tao of Coyote." Divorced with no children, he has been exploring the dating scene and collecting tales of woe for many years. Need a guy's perspective? Jot a note to Male Call at jrobertpenn@aol.com.*