

# White Label Dating Providers

## Comparison Study

### Point of Contact

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## **White Label Dating Provider Comparison**

### **Background To This Study**

Back in the fall of 2007, Courtland Brooks conducted a pioneering study that set out to compare the various white label dating providers and their service offerings. The objective was to assist potential dating site owners in making a more informed decision over which provider to shortlist / select.

A lot has happened in the intervening period since our inaugural study was conducted. The online dating industry has grown rapidly, more people than ever before are using online dating services and competition within the sector has risen dramatically. One of the main growth trends has been the emergence of a new breed of dating sites, one that is niched around shared user interests. By offering online daters a more targeted dating experience and matching them up with users who share the same interests, these niche sites have seen strong growth... generally at the expense of more generic mass appeal dating services.

### **The Rise of Niche Dating and The White Label Model**

The concept of niche dating has proved very attractive to webmasters and affiliates who have warmed to the idea of setting up their own portfolio of online dating sites. But how can you possibly hope to compete against the large established players like say Match.com or e-Harmony who spend millions of dollars promoting their brands both on and offline? How do you get over the 'cold-start' issue of not having any active members in your database for any traffic you generate to view and interact with on your site? In a recent study Courtland Brooks highlighted the pitfalls of trying to purchase your own user database to address this issue ([view study here](#)) and our recommendation was then and remains still... don't. Remember to be competitive in the online dating sector you will also need to provide first rate levels of customer service, profile moderation, secure billing, software, hosting, etc., the list goes on. The reality is that the resources and revenues needed to deliver all these vital components are sizable and experience of successfully operating a dating business is priceless. So unless you have very deep pockets or lots of financial backing then the only viable alternative is to partner with a White Label provider. Working on a revenue share business model they will provide all these services for you, leaving you free to concentrate solely on what you do best; driving and acquiring traffic to your dating site(s) of choice.

But the question still remains and one we still get asked a lot... which White Label provider should I choose? To make this task easier we decided to update our initial study, as much has changed in terms of White Label providers and the services they offer since our first study in 2007.

## Study Methodology

In terms of methodology our analysts compiled a list of the main companies, both large and small, who offer White Label dating software and services, for inclusion within this comparison study. However, as the type and scale of services and support varies by provider, we then drew up a list of 'key influencers' that a prospective partner should be taking into consideration when assessing which company or operator is best suited to their needs and requirements (see table below).

Key Selection Criteria	What To Look For
1. Company Overview	Length of sector experience, size and scale of the operation (revenues, people)
2. User base	Countries served and how many new members join up each day (very important metric as this keeps the user database 'fresh' with active members)
3. Product offering	Does the operator offer true niche dating (e.g. by interest) or just by network? Do they offer an adult network / niching? Do they accept payments via PayPal or via mobile? What currencies does the operator support?
4. Pay-outs	What is the commission structure? (see accompanying comments for more details) What is the pay-out frequency? (i.e. how quickly do you get your money) Does the operator offer pay-outs on any incremental revenue add-ons/upsells? What currencies does the operator pay-out in?
5. Partner Site Optimization	Do they offer any partner PR or marketing support? Do you get allocated a dedicated partner manager? Do they offer a site reporting and campaign management tool / software?
6. End User Customer Support	Series of key questions designed to identify the scale and type of customer care, support, moderation and retention the operator provides; all of which will help to keep and retain customers for longer, thereby maximizing lifetime value
7. Languages supported	Which languages does the operator support?
8. Courtland Brooks Provider Summary	Concise summary based upon the information published on their website and answers to the key criteria questions above

## A Changing White Label Operators Market

Since the last study was done the white label operator landscape has altered considerably. Whilst some companies that were part of the original study have grown rapidly and increased their market share, other leading players have declined and are no longer featured or have been surpassed by new entrants. Others have evolved to concentrate more on developing their own in house sites international expansion and revenues over their white label service.

In terms of new entrants, the sector has seen the arrival of **The Dating Factory**, whose primary focus is on International non-English speaking markets, although English is supported. They offer true niche dating and are particularly strong in certain European markets. However, no information was provided as to their revenues (to gauge scale/success) and the numbers of new joining members their platform attracts.



**Cupid PLC** (formally EasyDate) successfully listed on the AIM market in the UK in 2010 and has subsequently focused primarily on growing its own in-house brand dating sites (Cupid.com, BeNaughty, Flirt.com, etc.) particularly internationally. Consequently Cupid's white label division now represents only a small part of their overall business compared to when our original study was first conducted. Whilst Cupid's white label division does offer niching, this is by network only (e.g. adult or non-adult), rather than true niching by defined interests, e.g. music tastes, income, ethnicity, interests, hair color, divorced, etc.

Finally **WhiteLabelDating.com** (WLD), who as the name suggests specialise in and are now the market leaders in this sector. WLD have grown rapidly since our first study from £3m to £30M and are now the [fastest growing online dating company in Europe/ EMEA according to Deloitte](#) . WLD offers true niche dating and their software and services power over 7,200 partner sites across all leading English speaking dating markets. Other differentiators include; a large team of dedicated partner managers; class leading levels of customer care, support and moderation; the only white label operator to have a dedicated customer retention team. In delivering approximately 15,000 new joining members a day to their platform, WLD's partners are assured of a highly active pre-populated member database. Over the peak post-Christmas period WLD claim to have one new member registering every four seconds to join their platform. Finally, at the i-Date Awards (the online dating industry's own awards), WhiteLabelDating.com was voted as the Best Dating Software Provider for the third consecutive year: reaffirming their commanding position in the sector.

## Viewing The Comparison Study Results

A hyperlink to all featured companies' respective website is provided below the name should you wish to visit them. In addition, where an explanation as to the Key Criteria in more detail was deemed suitable I have added this as a **comment** from myself, Mark Brooks. Likewise for those operators who responded to our request for answers to these Key Criteria, where greater detail has been supplied by the operator this too has been added to the spread sheet as a **comment** to provide the reader with more supporting information. These are worth reading. To read the **comment**, hover over the red triangle in the top right corner of the box in question.

We at Courtland Brooks sincerely hope that this White Label Provider Comparison Study is useful and succeeds in its objective and helping prospective dating site operators to make a more informed decision over which dating site operator to select.

If you would like any further advice on selecting a white label operator then please do not hesitate to contact me at [mark@courtlandbrooks.com](mailto:mark@courtlandbrooks.com)

*Full disclosure: White Label Dating is a Courtland Brooks client.*

# White Label Provider Comparison

[Click here to download the detailed Excel spreadsheet](#)

	White Label Dating	Bonefish Dating Central	Dating Factory	DIY Dating	Cupid PLC (White Label Division)	Hub People Sites Instantly	The Dating Lab
<b>Company Overview</b>	<a href="http://whitelabeldating.com">whitelabeldating.com</a>	<a href="http://bone-fish.com">bone-fish.com</a>	<a href="http://datingfactory.com">datingfactory.com</a>	<a href="http://diy-dating.com">diy-dating.com</a>	<a href="http://whitelabeldating.cupidplc.com">whitelabeldating.cupidplc.com</a>	<a href="http://sitesinstantly.com/">sitesinstantly.com/</a>	<a href="http://thedatinglab.com">thedatinglab.com</a>
Year established	2003	2000	2008	2001	2002	2002	1994
MAT White Label Dating Revenues	£30m / \$45M	Not Disclosed	Not Disclosed	Not Disclosed	Not Disclosed	£1M	Not Disclosed
Total number of full time employees	103	8	Not Disclosed	10	20	7	50
<b>Userbase</b>							
Main countries served	UK, AU, SA, USA, IE, CA, NZ	UK, IE, USA, AUS	UK, USA, Switzerland, France, Italy, Spain	UK, US	UK, US, CA, AU, Ireland, S. Africa, India	UK, USA	SA, UK, Belgium
New white label registrants per day	14,750	2,500	Not Disclosed	1,300	Not Disclosed	Not Disclosed	Not Disclosed
<b>Product Offerings</b>							
TRUE Niche Dating	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N
Site examples (x 3)	<a href="http://plentymorefish.com">plentymorefish.com</a>	<a href="http://bbwhotdate.com">bbwhotdate.com</a>	<a href="http://datingdisabled.net">datingdisabled.net</a>	<a href="http://sexy-places.com">sexy-places.com</a>	<a href="http://lonelygirlfriend.com">lonelygirlfriend.com</a>	<a href="http://Dirty-david.com">Dirty-david.com</a>	<a href="http://Love2meet.co.za">Love2meet.co.za</a>
	<a href="http://mumsdatedads.co.uk">mumsdatedads.co.uk</a>	<a href="http://babesandblokes.com">babesandblokes.com</a>	<a href="http://aminfi.com">aminfi.com</a>	<a href="http://psychodates.com">psychodates.com</a>	<a href="http://singleparentsfriendship.com">singleparentsfriendship.com</a>	<a href="http://genuineukswingers.co.uk">genuineukswingers.co.uk</a>	<a href="http://mweb.datingbuzz.com">mweb.datingbuzz.com</a>
	<a href="http://jazzfm.com/dates">jazzfm.com/dates</a>	<a href="http://lesbian.queerhub.com">lesbian.queerhub.com</a>	<a href="http://zacasualdating.com">zacasualdating.com</a>	<a href="http://gay.diydating.com">gay.diydating.com</a>	<a href="http://seniormatch.co.uk">seniormatch.co.uk</a>	N/A	<a href="http://ioldating.co.za">ioldating.co.za</a>
Adult dating white labels available	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Paypal accepted	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
Accept payments via mobile	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N
Currencies supported	UK, USA, Euro, Aus, Can, NZ	UK, USA, Euro, Aus, Can, NZ	USD, Euro, GBP, CHF	UK, USA, Euro	UK, USA, Euro	UK, USA, Euro	SA, UK, Euro, USA
Full HTML control of home page	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
<b>Implementation</b>							
Setup costs	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free
<b>Payouts</b>							
Commission structure	50-70%	50%	50-65%	30%-75%	50-80%	50%	45-60%
Payout frequency	Two Weeks	Monthly	Two Weeks	Monthly	Monthly	Monthly	Monthly
Payouts on add-ons / upsells	Y	N/A	N/A	N/A	Y	N/A	N/A
Payout currencies	GBP, USD, Euro, Rand + more	GBP, USD, Euro	Euro, CHF, GBP, USD	GBP, Euro, +more	GBP, USD, +more	GBP, USD	Rand, GBP, Euro, USD
<b>Partner Site Optimization</b>							
Dedicated partner PR and marketing team	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N
Dedicated partner account manager	Y	Y	Y	N	1	Y	2
Site performance and campaign tracking reporting system	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
<b>End User Customer Support</b>							
Customer support department hours	15 hrs/day, 8am-11pm, 7 days	8 hrs/day	24/7	14 hrs/day, 7 days	7am to 7pm	Not Stated	Not Stated
Dedicated number of customer care representatives	40+	Not Stated	Not Stated	Not Stated	Not Stated	Not Stated	Not Stated
Customer service in-house / outsourced / partner responsibility	100% in-house	In-house	Not Stated	Not Stated	Not Stated	in house	Not Stated
Dedicated customer support phone number <8>	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	Email
Email response time	2 - 3 Hrs	24 Hrs	24 Hrs	24 Hrs	24 Hrs	Not Stated	24 Hrs
Dedicated customer retention team	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N
Languages supported	English, Afrikaans	English	English, German, Spanish, Italian, more	English	English	English, French, Spanish, German	English, Afrikaans, Dutch, Spanish, Polish
<b>Courtland Brooks Provider Summary</b>	The dating industries largest full service white label provider and in terms of revenues arguably the most successful. Offers large database with high volume of new members daily, true niche dating, dedicated in house partner support, and world class in house customer support.	Bonefish established in 2001 but evolved into Dating Central in Sept 2002. White label provider. Partner focused approach. Commission is fixed at 50%, but offers bonuses. Site however last updated in 2008.	Primary focus on international non-English speaking markets with 15 languages supported. Offers true niche dating, wide selection of front end templates available.	Smaller (10 person) white label provider that focuses primarily on adult and casual dating markets.	Cupid PLC's primary focus as a business is on Cupid's own brand sites (B2C) and affiliate network. Their white label division now represents only a small part of their business.	Smaller software focused operator. However no information on scale of database, new members daily provided on website.	Primary focus on SA with smaller presence in other markets through selected sites. More branded sites than traditional niches.