



NEWS RELEASE: Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2007

## **Secrets of the public confession**

*- Brits are sharing secrets online -*

Confessions are no longer the preserve of the church confessional booth, with one in ten Brits admitting they've gone online to disclose a guilty secret anonymously, new research out today reveals.

The research among 2,000 British adults was commissioned by classifieds site Gumtree.com which has collected over 10,000 confessions in the past six months alone. In the past week has seen a sharp increase in postings as the Christmas office party season gets into full swing.

The research reveals that 16% of Brits would rather confess their secrets to a total stranger, with twice as many people (10%) preferring to go online to a chat room or forum to confess Catholic-style, rather than speak to a priest (5%). Telling a friend a secret remains the most popular way to offload with 44% of Brits confiding in a trusted friend.

The time to confess is Tuesday at 3pm, the exact moment most people choose to tell their secrets online, probably after committing an indiscretion the previous weekend and allowing it to eat them up on Monday.

The top ten secrets Brits have confessed in common are:

1. An embarrassing incident
2. A naughty sexual fantasy
3. Told a lie
4. Having a secret crush
5. Cheating on a partner

6. Spent money on something silly
7. Being lonely
8. Interviewing for another job
9. Coming out of the closet about sexuality
10. Betrayed someone's trust

Sins of the nation vary according to region also, with Welsh people admitting the most to telling a lie (22%), Londoners spilling the beans about their secret crushes (28%) and one fifth of randy Scots going online to share their unspeakable sex secrets.

The confessions on Gumtree feature a wide mix of entertaining and serious admissions, from "I'm having an affair with my neighbour" and "I hate my work colleagues," to heartbreaking revelations such as "I was abused as a child but still haven't told my parents" and "I feel really lonely."

Spokesperson for Gumtree.com Sophy Silver comments: "It's a real sign of the times that confession is now just a keystroke away. We all have secrets, inner thoughts, desires and wishes and coming clean online is a bit like the new group therapy!

"For many, an online forum offers a certain catharsis with no-one there who knows them to judge or recriminate. For others it's pure voyeurism to read about other people's failings and deepest, darkest secrets. And let's face it, at this time of year after the office Christmas party, sometimes you just need to tell someone what actually happened rather than denying events to the office gossips."

### **An example of confessions on Gumtree.com**

"I love sleeping with married women. I've been doing it for 16 years almost exclusively. They are the best lovers in the world. Sometimes it took a little work to seduce her, but with most it only took a little attention. Guys, if you think your wife won't cheat, think again. Out of approximately 25 attempts, only 5 married women turned me down, for various reasons."

"I have lost my job, my family doesn't know, they will at end of the month when there's no money. I'm looking but no luck."

"I hate my Mother, I really do. I can't help it and I feel guilty for feeling it but I can't stand her. We only see each other once a year or so but that's already too much."

She rarely smiles, and when she does it's because she's laughing at her own un-PC/racist jokes. □I really wish I could cut off all contact with her but would be guilt-tripped by the rest of my family.”

“I once slept on my friends sofa and woke up at about six o'clock in the morning to find my friends Dad getting changed for work, putting on stockings under his work jeans. My friends dad is a steel fixer and very masculine. I didn't move an inch and pretended I was asleep! I was very shocked but it was funny. I never told my friend about what I'd seen.”

“My life with a drug addiction: Every morning I awake and its the first thing on my mind, I moan and pull my body out of bed so I can have my first 'hit' for the day, I know its the first of many and the feeling it gives me is pure ecstasy. The world goes from being a blur to actually making sense, the shakes go away and I can sit there in solitude. I stir after a few silent minutes and proceed to the office. Not an hour after I begin work do I start to get the cravings.”

“More than 10 yrs ago i got victimized by a paedophile and it still haunts me, the darkest yr of my life undoubtedly. I have always kept it to myself of the disgraceful acts he did to me, i wish i could have told you dad/mum about him but i simply didn't had the courage.”

“I confess to flirting with a married woman at work. She is Polish and in her early thirties. we started sending flirty email message to each other. She often wears tight trousers and low cut tops that show her lovely cleavage. She looks at me with inviting eyes and stays late when I do and her manner seems to be offering much more than a chat. ”

“Gym attraction. She is just so so sexy - the way that toweling tracksuit hugs her rounded derriere, those pert sexy breasts - I see her every morning, diligently working on the stair climber. She smiles so sweetly when we are next to each other on the exercise mats. What is it about gym that heightens your awareness of the opposite sex? I would just love to touch her, and I think she would like that too. But she's married, so I can't. Or could I...?”

**- Ends -**

**For more information or case studies please contact the Gumtree press office at Lexis Public Relations on 020 7908 6589 or email [gumtree@lexispr.com](mailto:gumtree@lexispr.com)**

#### **Notes to Editor**

- Research carried out among 1,965 adults by YouGov, November 2007

#### **Gumtree's tips to confessing online**

**Don't hide the truth**, the more secrets you have and have to battle against spilling

for example in a drunken blurt or Freudian slip. When going online to confess, make sure you only hide your name, email address and those in your story (if any) to protect their identity...

**Know the difference between privacy and secrecy**, because there are a lot of things that don't need revealing. It is important to confess only those things that break a moral code or that trigger shame or concealment for no good reason.

If any of the following statements describe you, confession is a must:

- I am keeping a secret to protect someone
- My secret makes me feel constantly ashamed
- I conceal the truth because telling it might make someone angry
- I would not want to associate with anyone who has the same secret I do
- I'm sure I'll be rejected by anyone who learns this secret
- My secret is so awful, I can't stand to think about it, let alone talk about it
- This secret makes me pull away from people I want to trust and love
- I'd rather end a relationship than tell another person my secret
- I'm doing something that violates my own moral code

**Confessions can make dark secrets bright.** Try it. Post an ad on the confessions section of Gumtree.com and see how you feel. You never know, someone might offer you some advice, help or counsel

### **About Gumtree.com**

- Gumtree.com was created in London in March 2000 and now covers 60 cities across 6 countries - the UK, and US Ireland, Poland, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa
- It is the UK's biggest website for local community classifieds including flat share, flat rentals and jobs
- Some Fast Facts
  - 20,000 new ads in a day
  - 100,000 new ads in a week
  - Half a million new ads in a month
  - One million ads live on the site at any one time
  - 150 million page impressions every month
  - Around 6 million visitors a month

- Gumtree.com users spend 5,360,000 minutes on the website each month
- Gumtree is your local community online. Home to all the things you'd expect from your local community; a place to find and advertise rooms, flats and houses, a notice board for selling and buying stuff, somewhere to find job or a date even just to chat with friends