

CHEATING SITE CEO SAYS HE'S FAITHFUL: Founder, wife say they are seizing an untapped market

BY JULIE WATSON

Touting himself as the “The King of Infidelity,” the founder of the adultery site Ashley Madison built his livelihood around the unconventional philosophy that cheating is a natural part of married life — yet he says he is a devoted husband, and his wife of 12 years says she would be devastated if he was unfaithful.

Noel and Amanda Biderman say they do not practice what they preach but simply are smart entrepreneurs seizing an untapped market.

“I am printing money, I don't deny it,” Biderman told the New York Daily News in 2014. “That's what happens when you build a taboo-focused business.” Their privately held Toronto holding company, Avid Life Media Inc., grossed \$115 million in earnings last year, according to tax documents and figures shared by Biderman with Forbes.

Now divorce lawyers are preparing for a potential bonanza from the site's massive breach that released the information of its subscribers.

It's a problem the Bidermans say they have never had to confront because they are in a monogamous relationship, but they recognize others do not have that and there is money to be made from infidelity.

The couple, who have two children, say there's nothing wrong with running a site that allows married people who want to cheat to connect with others seeking an affair. Users pay a fee each time they send a message to a potential lover.

They turned down a request by The Associated Press to be interviewed for this story but have spent years appearing on TV talk shows and making other media appearances to promote their site. The company says in a statement the hackers should be judged, not Ashley Madison and its roughly 39 million customers. The hackers have accused the company of filling the site with fake profiles and extorting fees for wiping profiles that were never truly deleted.

The company has said it is working on beefing up its security protocol.

Noel Biderman has written books espousing his views on infidelity, including one published in 2011 titled: “Cheaters Prosper — How Infidelity Will Save The Modern Marriage.”

That theory may be put to its biggest test yet in the aftermath of the breach. Some lawyers predict they will be flooded with business, while New York divorce attorney Michael DiFalco says he believes there will be “a dozen clients caught by text message for every client that might get caught this way.”

Watson writes for The Associated Press.

EXPERTS: 'DELETED' DATA NEVER GOES AWAY: Web users reminded to weigh carefully risks of providing information online

BY BREE FOWLER NEW YORK

The Ashley Madison hack is a big reminder to all Web users: If you submit private data online, chances are it will never fully be deleted.

The hackers, who stole the data about a month ago and then posted it online this week, claimed in a statement that part of the reason for the theft was Ashley Madison's fraudulent promise to fully delete users' information if they paid the company a \$19 fee.

The website — whose slogan is "Life is short. Have an affair"— is marketed to people looking for extramarital relationships. It purports to have about 39 million members.

The hackers said the company failed to delete the information, even though it collected the fees. Torontobased Avid Life Media Inc., Ashley Madison's parent company, hasn't commented on the hackers' accusation.

It's virtually impossible to exist in modern society without putting at least some personal information online. Many people can't get through a day without using the Internet to shop, pay a bill, or check their credit card balance.

People have become accustomed to trusting their most precious personal information to companies. But they also need to know that all of that information is being shared more than they would expect, privacy experts say.

Before you hit "submit," stop and think before giving up your personal information to any kind of website, said Michael Kaiser, executive director of the National Cyber Security Alliance, a group that educates consumers about cybersecurity.

"Personal information is like money, and you don't just give away your money," Kaiser says. "In the environment we're in right now, you have to value it and think about protecting it everywhere you go on the Internet."

That means taking a look at a website's business to get an idea of how much they value information security and even asking them about their data retention practices.

Fowler writes for The Associated Press.