

Are you a Tinder or a Bumble type of person? The clichés of 'big dating'

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From the way we count our steps to the measures we take to get noticed online, Silicon Valley has transformed the everyday life of the average American. How and what platform we choose to date hasn't escaped this reality.

Users of online dating apps, stemming from websites that became less socially acceptable among younger generations, are at the mercy of "swipes" to find love, a casual encounter or simply to boost their egos.

But which app daters use may lead to unintentional assumptions—clichés, even—about why they chose a particular matchmaking platform, ranging from how they present themselves on their profiles to what kind of connection they are seeking.

Where the singles are

Almost half of U.S. online users have met or know someone who has met a romantic partner on a dating website or app. Tinder is currently the leader among online dating services, according to one study of 1,000 adults. Half of the app's members are part of Gen Z, whose ages range between 18 and 25.

The practice of online dating found its mainstream acceptance with websites such as Match.com and eHarmony, marketed as an alternative way for singles to meet their significant other by matching preferences such as ethnicity, location and hobbies.

When love began with a swipe right

Swiping to find a date or a mate came into the cultural lexicon when Tinder launched in 2012 and revolutionized the online dating scene, as computers went from living on desks to traveling with us in our pockets

and purses.

Once users open the app, they can adjust their settings to view people around their set area. As soon as someone's picture shows up, the online dater has only two options: Swipe right if you're interested, swipe left if you're not.

"It's a game, it's fire and it's fun," said online dating consultant Mark Brooks about Tinder.

Brooks said the app can skew toward audiences looking for a "casual" encounter, whereas other apps, like Hinge, tend to build more "meaningful" relationships.

Match Group owns both Tinder and Hinge, as well as other popular dating services like Match.com, OkCupid and Plenty of Fish.

"Since (Match Group) bought Hinge, they positioned Hinge as 'long-term' and Tinder as 'casual,'" Brooks says.

Another popular dating app is Bumble, with 75 million registered users, according to a Bumble representative. The app's model is intended to make women feel more empowered and "challenge outdated heterosexual norms," according to its website, since Bumble requires men to wait for their potential match to make the first move.

Most dating apps include a section where you can include a description of yourself in just a few characters. Although Tinder has millions of users, some of these biographies tend to get a little repetitive.

Reddit has a specific online community dedicated to posting Tinder success, failure and humorous stories, and one thread even compiled some of the most stereotypical descriptions they've seen on the app.

Apparently, it's not rare to see men incessantly boast about the fish they catch.

The clichés have become so ubiquitous that even Bumble started posting self-deprecating jokes. The company shared on Twitter a Bumble bingo card with squares representing frequently seen profile elements from blurry headshots and Snapchat filters to personality-defining Myers Briggs letters and elephants from Thailand.

As with Tinder, "someone holding a fish" makes an appearance.

Which app did you click with?

Of course, as anyone who's dated can tell you, not every outing's a winner.

"I always regret going on a date from Tinder," said 28-year-old Justyna Kedra, a frequent user of Hinge, Bumble and, sometimes, Tinder. "I feel that people are very transactional. There's no depth."

Her worst date? Meeting a guy for drinks in Brooklyn that she said shifted within a few minutes into an unsolicited invitation to his apartment. That was from Tinder.

"I'm not looking to get married right now, but I'm looking to connect with people of substance," Kedra says. She spends most of her dating app energy on Hinge and Bumble.

"Bumble is that middle hit-or-miss. In Hinge, I've had the most amazing conversations. It lets you present yourself as a person the most."

Early on, many people also had different conceptions regarding the dating apps available during the early 2000s. Family therapist Joree Rose

remembers when she started using dating apps after her divorce.

"I started off on apps like OkCupid and Match because they seemed most respectable in my mind, like they'd be where the well-educated, mature people were who were looking for a partner," says Rose. She eventually found her future husband on Tinder. (And, no, there was no picture of him holding a fish on his profile.)

Playing the field

It's not rare for online daters to use these apps simultaneously.

"My research indicates that the vast majority of individuals on average are in two or three dating apps at a time," said Jessica Carbino, who served as sociologist for Tinder and Bumble. "People who are dating online tend to have a portfolio approach to dating."

Although many users like to boost their chances by downloading multiple apps, can we still see a difference between the types of people they match with?

Users of these popular matchmaking apps have taken it upon themselves to jokingly vent about their encounters in some of the platforms.

According to one Instagram user, on Tinder, you will most likely find someone who's "only in town for a few days," while on Bumble you might have better chances of matching with someone "in a mediocre indie band."

Since Hinge tries to cater to people who are looking for more long-term relationships, its approach tends to focus more on getting to know someone based on their politics and religion. According to Hinge's global head of communications Jean-Marie McGrath, 99% of the app's users

are college-educated.

The app gained recognition when 2020 presidential candidate Pete Buttigieg publicly said that he met his partner on Hinge.

Is dating like this actually bad for you?

Some have been highly skeptical of these apps.

A CBSN documentary called "Dating Apps" features psychologists criticizing the ways in which the tech industry attracts customers, claiming they are dehumanizing and are detrimental to a user's mental health.

Similarly, the HBO documentary "Swiped: Hooking Up in the Digital Age" analyzes how these apps have negatively changed the ways people date and challenge intimacy. It also emphasizes how people could face different types of discrimination and harassment once they become a user.

According to the documentary's creator, Nancy Jo Sales, looking through a seemingly endless stack of pictures could affect one's general psychology.

"These [stereotypes](#) that we're laboring under are the stereotypes of the marketing of big dating," Sales said. "It's big business, and they're all trying to do the same exact thing."

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