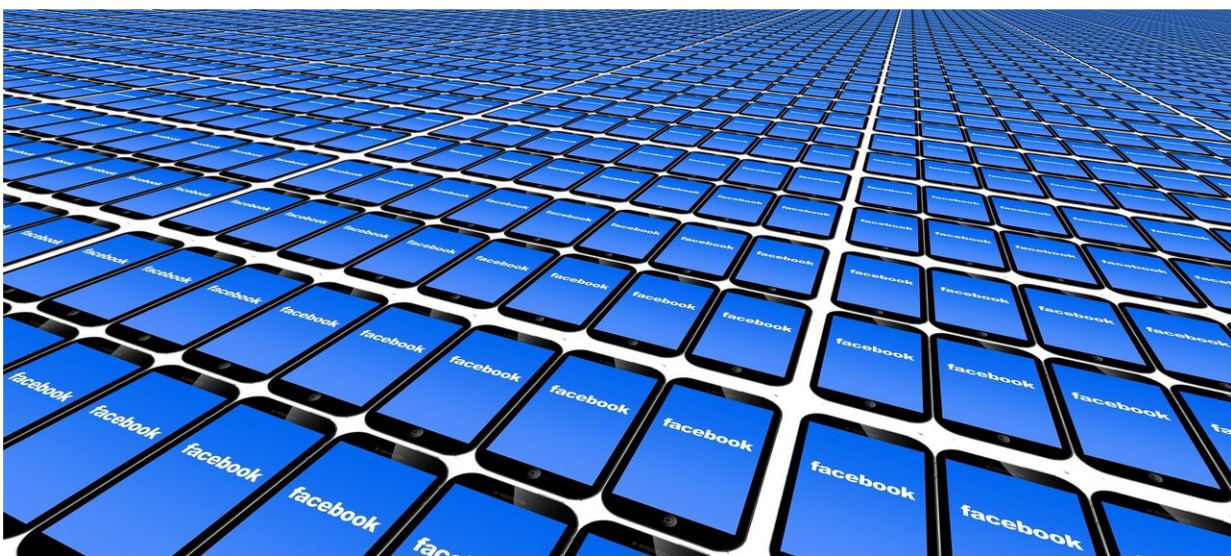


Love under lockdown: Facebook 'virtual dates' to help users find quarantine dream partner

April 28 2020, by Dalvin Brown, Usa Today



Credit: CC0 Public Domain

Facebook is bolstering its dating service to help members find love while under lockdown orders.

The tech giant has plans to enable "virtual dates" so Facebook Dating users can video chat with matches via Messenger without having to add one another as friends.

Since real-world dating is out of the question for many because of widespread stay-at-home orders, the feature could serve as an engaging alternative to back-and-forth messaging in the age of COVID-19.

The move is meant to "help people find meaningful relationships even when they can't meet in person," Facebook said in a blog post. The news was hidden at the bottom of the company's Messenger Rooms announcement that said Facebook was adding several new ways for people to connect while apart.

Virtual dates will roll out in the coming months, Facebook said in the blog post. And it'll be housed within the Dating portion of the app which launched in 2019.

People who opt into Facebook Dating can swipe through potential matches the same way they would on most other dating apps.

Once the virtual dating option goes live, users can invite matches to participate in a video call. If the recipient accepts the offer, Facebook Messenger will connect the pair. Other dating apps like eHarmony and Match also have video chatting capabilities.

Facebook's product releases often raise privacy concerns, but the world's largest social networking site has yet to disclose privacy settings associated with virtual dates.

More broadly, users of Facebook Dating must be 18 or older in order to opt-in. They have to have a Facebook profile to access the service, though Dating lives within its own dedicated space.

Dating details and matches are kept separate from your news feeds so your Friends can't see your romantic connection.

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