Social Media Podcast Plan: The Durham Dating Dilemma

This plan outlines a podcast that explores the social media topic of online dating apps, specifically focusing on the experiences of students at Durham College. It directly applies core concepts from the *Humans R Social Media* textbook to a real-world campus setting.

**1. Podcast Name:** **The Durham Dating Dilemma: Navigating Love, Lust, and the Paradox of Choice**

* This name is memorable and relevant. It grounds the topic in the specific campus community (Durham College) while immediately referencing a core sociological concept from the textbook: the "paradox of choice."

**2. Podcast's Purpose and Goals**

* **Purpose:** To investigate how modern dating apps (like Tinder, Bumble, and Hinge) shape the romantic and social lives of students at Durham College.
* **Goals:**
  + **Educate:** To inform listeners about key sociological concepts such as the **"paradox of choice,"** **"layers of electronic intimacy,"** and the dynamic of **idealized self-presentation** online, using the provided textbook as a foundation. (Schwartz, B. (2004), Yang et al., 2014)
  + **Build Community:** To create a platform where Durham College students can hear their own experiences reflected, fostering a sense of shared understanding about the pressures and complexities of modern dating.
  + **Analyze:** To sociologically analyze the spoken and unspoken rules of dating apps on campus, moving beyond surface-level complaints to uncover deeper social patterns.

**3. Target Audience**

* **Primary:** Students at Durham College, particularly those aged 18-24 who are the most active users of online dating apps, as noted by the Pew Research cited in the textbook.
* **Secondary:** Durham College faculty (especially in sociology, psychology, and media departments), students from other colleges, and anyone interested in the intersection of technology and human relationships.

**4. Unique Topic and Format**

* **Topic:** The podcast will focus specifically on how Durham College students experience the "paradox of choice." Does the seemingly endless supply of potential partners on apps lead to greater satisfaction or to an **"air of disposability,"** as described in the chapter? We will explore themes of profile idealization, bias, burnout, and how students navigate intimacy.
* **Format:** It will be a **conversational interview and storytelling format**. Each episode will be guided by a host (me) and feature anonymous interviews with 1-2 Durham College students, sharing their real stories and perspectives. The host will connect these personal narratives back to concepts from the textbook.

**5. Compelling Content: Episode Ideas**

* **Episode 1: "More Choices, Less Satisfaction?"**
  + *Focus:* Introduce the **"paradox of choice"** (Schwartz).
  + *Content:* Interview students about feeling overwhelmed by choice on Tinder or Bumble. Do they feel less satisfied with their matches? Does it create an "air of disposability"?
* **Episode 2: "The Perfect Profile: Authenticity vs. The Algorithm"**
  + *Focus:* Idealized self-presentation and deception.
  + *Content:* Discuss the pressure students feel to create a "perfect" profile. We'll explore the chapter's point that users tend to be idealized, sometimes deceptively. Are we performing for potential partners or for the algorithm itself?
* **Episode 3: "The New Rules of Romance: From Instagram to IRL"**
  + *Focus:* **"Layers of electronic intimacy"** (Yang et al.).
  + *Content:* The chapter outlines a 2014 sequence (Facebook -> IM -> Text -> In-person). What is the 2024 sequence at Durham College? Is it a TikTok follow, an Instagram DM, sharing a Snap, and then finally a date? We'll map the new path to intimacy.
* **Episode 4: "Bias in the Swipe: Does the App Decide for You?"**
  + *Focus:* Algorithmic and cultural bias.
  + *Content:* The textbook states that bias has been found to "tip the scales... in favor of white men." We will have a frank conversation with students from diverse backgrounds (BIPOC, 2SLGBTQIA+) about their experiences on dating apps. Does the tech reflect or amplify societal biases on campus?

**6. Podcast Schedule**

* **Release Cadence:** Bi-weekly (once every two weeks). This is a manageable schedule for a student project that allows enough time to gather interviews and produce quality episodes.

**7. Promote Your Podcast**

* **Social Media:** Create an Instagram account for the podcast. Share audiograms (clips with a moving waveform), quotes from episodes, and ask engaging questions. Use hashtags like #DurhamCollege #DurhamDatingDilemma #Sociology #StudentLife.
* **On-Campus:** Design simple posters with a QR code linking to the podcast, to be placed on campus bulletin boards.
* **Collaboration:** Reach out to the Durham College student newspaper or radio station for a potential feature.

**8. Gather Feedback and Monitor Analytics**

* **Feedback:** Use the podcast's Instagram page to run polls ("Have you ever felt dating app burnout?"). Create a dedicated email address for listeners to share their stories privately.
* **Analytics:** Use the hosting platform's built-in analytics to track downloads per episode and listener demographics. This data will help determine which topics resonate most with the audience.

**9. Podcast Hosting Platform**

* **Platform:** **Spotify for Podcasters (formerly Anchor.fm)**. It is free, user-friendly, handles distribution to major platforms (Spotify, Apple Podcasts), and provides solid analytics, making it ideal for a student project.

**10. Compelling Podcast Description**

* "Welcome to The Durham Dating Dilemma, the podcast that swipes right on the sociology of modern love at Durham College. We're diving deep into the world of Tinder, Bumble, and Hinge to ask the tough questions. Does endless choice actually make us happier? How do we build real connections when we're all performing online? Join us as we connect real student stories to big ideas, exploring everything from the 'paradox of choice' to the new rules of intimacy. This isn't just about dating, it's about how technology is changing us."

**11. Cover Art and Theme Music**

* **Cover Art:** A visually striking image showing a thumb hovering between two dating profiles on a smartphone screen. In the background, slightly blurred, is a recognizable Durham College landmark.
* **Theme Music:** An upbeat, indie-pop or lo-fi instrumental track. The music should be catchy and modern, but with a slightly thoughtful undertone that reflects the "dilemma" in the podcast's title.

**Primary Textbook:**

* *Humans R Social Media*

**Academic Articles and Reports:**

* Hasinoff, A. A. (2013). *Sexting as Media Production*: [https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444812459171](https://www.google.com/url?sa=E&q=https%3A%2F%2Fdoi.org%2F10.1177%2F1461444812459171)
* Pew Research Center. (2016). *15% of American Adults Have Used Online Dating*: [https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2016/02/11/15-percent-of-american-adults-have-used-online-dating-sites-or-mobile-dating-apps/](https://www.google.com/url?sa=E&q=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.pewresearch.org%2Finternet%2F2016%2F02%2F11%2F15-percent-of-american-adults-have-used-online-dating-sites-or-mobile-dating-apps%2F)
* Sales, N. J. (2015). *Tinder and the Dawn of the “Dating Apocalypse”*: [https://www.vanityfair.com/culture/2015/08/tinder-hook-up-culture-end-of-dating](https://www.google.com/url?sa=E&q=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.vanityfair.com%2Fculture%2F2015%2F08%2Ftinder-hook-up-culture-end-of-dating)

**Book**

Schwartz, B. (2004). *The paradox of choice: Why more is less*. Ecco.

Yang, C. C., Brown, B. B., & Braun, M. T. (2014). From Facebook to Cell Calls: Layers of Electronic Intimacy in College Students' Romantic Relationships. New Media & Society, 16(1), 5-22.

*For this assignment, I used an AI assistant to help streamline my workflow. After reading the chapter, I used the AI to help summarize key sections and to formulate episode ideas that connected chapter concepts to the podcast format. I also used it to check my reference formatting. I reviewed, edited, and approved all final content to ensure its originality and accuracy.*