

# Cheddar Dating App Concept

## Overview

Cheddar is envisioned as a new kind of dating app that balances membership capacity through pricing rather than algorithms. Traditional dating apps use complex matching algorithms to sort profiles and recommend partners <sup>1</sup>. Cheddar instead adjusts a paid membership fee based on current demand and gender balance, encouraging a sustainable ratio of active users. This supply-and-demand approach effectively **limits overcrowding** and ensures a higher quality experience. For example, when interest exceeds availability on one gender, the platform would raise that side's fee to slow sign-ups, then lower it when the ratio stabilizes. Importantly, these fees are presented transparently as a *membership price*, not as premium tier gimmicks, and users are informed the model is meant to keep the community "serious and balanced." The app is aimed at *verified, intentional daters* – similar to how apps like Tinder and Bumble have introduced ID and selfie verification to ensure authenticity <sup>2</sup> – but Cheddar's differentiator is that it *stabilizes the market through pricing* rather than secretive ranking algorithms.

## Core Mechanics

- **Capacity management:** Cheddar continuously tracks the male-to-female and overall gender balance and adjusts membership pricing to maintain an active equilibrium. Fees rise or fall in real time based on how many users of each gender are queued. Crucially, these adjustments are *not disclosed* as "gender pricing" and users are not explicitly told why their price changed. This avoids any direct reference to protected categories or the appearance of favoritism. (In other words, rather than saying "women join free," Cheddar says "membership fee is \$X – join now!".) This demand-based pricing is akin to surge pricing in other industries and is carefully framed as a neutrality tool to keep wait times low and matches fresh. In practice, it means the app operates a **fixed-size pool** of members (e.g. the first 2,500 sign-ups in a city) and uses price to throttle new entries. Because no matchmaking algorithm is used, Cheddar relies on simple pool liquidity; once users are matched and leave, new slots open up and prices adjust again. (By contrast, most dating apps use algorithmic filters to rank compatibility <sup>1</sup>; Cheddar deliberately omits that complexity, reducing development and hosting costs.)
- **Verification process:** Every user must prove they are real and over 18 via government ID and a live photo. Cheddar requires a camera-only capture (no uploading old selfies) and a live video or flash check to verify liveness. This is similar to features Tinder and Bumble have adopted: for instance, Tinder now asks California users for a short selfie-video to create an encrypted face map, and Bumble offers optional ID+photo checks <sup>2</sup>. All personal verification data (ID scans, photos, videos) is handled by a trusted third-party processor. Importantly, any biometric data (like face geometry from video) is treated carefully: Cheddar's policy will explicitly state what data is collected, how long it's kept, and when it will be deleted (as required under laws like Illinois BIPA and GDPR) <sup>3</sup> <sup>4</sup>. In practice, Cheddar would not retain facial templates beyond the one-time verification: IDs and photos are encrypted, stored briefly, and destroyed on a tight schedule to minimize risk <sup>3</sup> <sup>5</sup>. This design

maximizes trust and safety (ensuring accounts correspond to real, single people) while complying with privacy rules.

- **Subscription pricing:** Cheddar uses a dynamic membership fee model. Instead of static subscription tiers, prices vary by location, time, and gender demand. For example, if many more men than women are waiting, the app raises the men's subscription fee while lowering women's, and vice versa. Crucially, this is always presented as a "membership membership cost" rather than a targeted discount. (Tinder famously tested dynamic pricing – charging older straight men more – which drew scrutiny <sup>6</sup> <sup>7</sup> ; Cheddar will learn from this by avoiding any public mention of protected attributes.) The price displayed to each user reflects the current "market-clearing" fee for their gender in that city. Users pre-pay for membership (e.g. 1 month) to gain access. The app never shows lists of profiles or "matches" – instead, all members of the pool see each other by default (no swiping or recommendations). The outcome is that *who you meet* depends solely on who else has paid to be there at the same time, and on your own effort to message – there's no hidden ranking or algorithmic favoritism.
- **Platform simplicity:** By eschewing recommendation engines and machine learning, Cheddar keeps the system straightforward. All members have the same view of potential partners (profiles are browsable alphabetically or by small filters like distance), so no complex matching logic is needed. This minimal architecture means lower hosting costs and less development overhead. Essentially, Cheddar is a *living members roster* with chat/messaging. Since the app isn't running AI or heavy personalization, it can be lean and stable. The focus is on **quality over quantity of features**: verified profiles, manual user choice of contacts, and straightforward messaging. This simplicity also aligns with the brand message of "no games – just people."

## Brand Positioning

- **Tone and values:** Cheddar's public voice is *direct, transparent, results-driven, and privacy-first*. All marketing copy will avoid fluff or hype. It will speak plainly: for example, taglines like "Real people. Real connections." or "Serious dating, straightforward rules" emphasize honesty and intent. Users see Cheddar as a place for no-nonsense dating, not casual browsing. Communications always stress *clarity and trust*. Behind the scenes, the internal jargon might include terms like "supply-side pricing," but customer-facing language stays clear of algorithmic or gendered terms.
- **Inclusive messaging:** Care is taken to avoid any discriminatory language. Per app-store rules, Cheddar will not target or exclude any gender or age group in its ads or descriptions <sup>8</sup> . For example, it won't claim "ladies join free" or "men pay more" – that would violate guidelines about personal info and discrimination <sup>8</sup> <sup>9</sup> . Instead, all promotional taglines focus on *user quality and transparency*: e.g. "Join an exclusive community of verified singles," "Your membership funds a better dating pool," or "We keep dating honest and equal." Feature highlights might read: "Balanced community (pricing adjusts to keep things fair)" or "Full identity checks for safety and sincerity." The branding leverages positive terms like "elite," "committed," and "authentic" without implying any protected characteristic. (For instance, Cheddar might say "for singles serious about meeting someone," which is allowed – it never says "for serious men" or uses gendered calls to action.)
- **Taglines and descriptors:** Taglines emphasize value and clarity. Examples: "*Cheddar: Love without the games*", "*Premium pool, level playing field*", "*Dating by demand. Quality by design.*" Feature blurbs

highlight what the user gets: “Verified profiles only (no bots),” “Transparent pricing, no surprises,” “Focused on connections, not on endless swiping.” Every message underlines that Cheddar is different from other apps – it’s *fair, simple, and privacy-minded*. Testimonials or PR might quote outcomes (“found love efficiently,” “felt safer knowing everyone was verified”) rather than bragging about algorithmic magic. All content is carefully vetted to ensure it never implies prejudice or makes protected class promises – instead it promises a *better process for everyone*.

## Legal & Compliance

- **Privacy and GDPR:** Cheddar handles personal data carefully. Any biometric processing (like face scans from the liveness check) is deemed *special-category* personal data under GDPR <sup>10</sup>, so Cheddar obtains explicit, unambiguous consent at the time of verification. The privacy policy will clearly describe what’s collected (ID photo, selfie), why it’s collected (to verify identity), how long it’s stored, and how it’s protected. A Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) is conducted before launch (required for any high-risk processing such as biometrics <sup>4</sup>). Biometric and ID data is encrypted in transit and at rest, access-limited to authorized processors, and deleted on a strict schedule (just like Illinois law requires for biometric IDs <sup>3</sup>). Cheddar also plans to work only with GDPR-compliant verification vendors (who themselves sign Data Processing Agreements). In short, the app follows the “privacy by design” principle to minimize liability: it never retains ID evidence longer than needed, anonymizes logs, and allows users to remove their data. All user rights (access, correction, erasure) can be exercised via the app, and data breach protocols are in place. This approach aligns with industry precedents: the legal consensus is that collecting face geometry without consent is unlawful <sup>3</sup>, so Cheddar’s explicit opt-in flow protects it from BIPA or GDPR penalties.
- **App store compliance:** Cheddar’s descriptions and ads comply with Apple and Google guidelines. Apple’s rules prohibit any targeted mention of gender or other personal traits (e.g. no ad can say “Single Men 18–24: Join now!” <sup>8</sup>). Consequently, Cheddar’s App Store description will use neutral phrasing (“find love” vs. “find a girlfriend”). Pricing is always described generically (e.g. “membership fee”) without implying discriminatory discounts. Because Tinder’s tiered pricing by age led to lawsuits <sup>6</sup> <sup>7</sup>, Cheddar markets its pricing as “dynamic membership” driven by “community demand,” not by personal attributes. Cheddar also follows any region-specific rules: for instance, in the Netherlands Apple now allows dating apps to use external payments, and Cheddar would apply for that entitlement if needed <sup>11</sup>. In general, the app will use Apple’s in-app purchase system for memberships (complying with store policies) and meet any invoicing or cancellation disclosure requirements. All content (photos, text) is moderated to avoid pornography or hate speech, and any ads placed on other platforms avoid sensitive categories or sensationalism (apple ads rules forbid “sensationalized headlines” and discriminatory content <sup>12</sup> <sup>9</sup>).
- **Payment processors:** Dating platforms are often treated as “high-risk” by banks due to fraud and chargebacks <sup>13</sup>. Cheddar mitigates this by being up-front on regulatory compliance. Payment providers typically require proof of age-verification processes, clear subscription terms, and anti-fraud measures <sup>13</sup>. By ensuring Cheddar’s billing system allows easy cancellation (to prevent forced chargebacks) and accurate descriptions of recurring charges, we minimize disputes. We will target payment partners experienced with dating apps. For example, Stripe’s policies allow dating services (as long as no pornographic content is involved). Cheddar will obtain PCI-compliant processing and a customer support flow for refunds, satisfying major PSP criteria. In summary, Cheddar

acknowledges that 28% of dating sites face payment rejections for compliance issues <sup>13</sup>, so it prioritizes meeting GDPR, Age 18+ checks, and transparent billing to avoid falling into that category.

## Go-to-Market Strategy

- **Stealth city-based launch:** We will roll out Cheddar one city (or small region) at a time to build density and test operations. This “hyperlocal” launch follows best practices: successful platforms often dominate a small market first <sup>14</sup>. For example, Tinder famously started on one college campus to ignite network effects. Cheddar will pick a city of single, urban professionals, launch there with limited capacity (e.g. first 1000 members) and a waitlist for others. Initial membership is invite-only or based on the waitlist rank. This exclusivity creates urgency and allows control over gender ratios from day one. As soon as critical mass is reached in that city, Cheddar opens up to the next city, applying the same model. Launch marketing is low-key (targeted local ads, PR to selected press) to gradually build buzz without mass scrutiny. Early testimonials and press will emphasize “balanced community” and “serious members only,” planting positive word-of-mouth. This strategy uses FOMO: by time-gating access and limiting seats, we create intrigue – Harvard Business Review notes exclusivity can boost retention by ~40% at launch <sup>15</sup>.
- **Referral and churn management:** Growth will be partly organic through referrals. Each member is given referral codes or one-time invites; successful referrals earn them membership extensions or perks. Incentivizing both sides boosts engagement – in fact, platforms that use structured referral rewards see ~3× higher initial engagement <sup>16</sup>. We also embrace the idea of “good churn.” If a user finds a partner (or decides to leave), we make departure feel like a win: for example, at exit Cheddar will prompt “Love found? Refer a friend and both of you get a discount.” This follows Hinge’s model, where happy exits translate into word-of-mouth growth <sup>17</sup>. The product can even flag long-term active users: as in Hinge’s case, “power users” often come back with optimal habits, so Cheddar might send returning users a special reactivation offer. The onboarding loop is kept tight and engaging (like brief profiles and progress bars) so new users quickly see potential matches. In short, Cheddar’s user acquisition relies on community building, referrals and carefully-designed rewards, not on expensive ads.
- **PR and optics:** Given the unconventional model, Cheddar will craft proactive PR talking points. We emphasize fairness, e.g. “pricing adjusts so everyone gets seen” or “no unfair advantage.” Any media narrative is steered towards user benefits (fewer bots, balanced pool). For example, if asked why women pay less, a spokesperson might say “pricing reflects current demand, not gender – it’s to *encourage* the underrepresented side” (similar to how Tinder once justified lower prices for younger users <sup>7</sup>). We will avoid technical terms like “surge pricing” in public – instead calling it “smart membership.” Negative stories (e.g. accusations of sexism) are preemptively countered with prepared statements highlighting Cheddar’s non-discrimination policy and compliance. Overall, the launch PR focuses on *differentiation and success stories* (happy couples, high match rates) while downplaying the exact inner workings. In other words, the public narrative stays on outcomes (“better dating results”) rather than the pricing mechanism itself.

## Risk Mitigation

- **Discrimination accusations:** Cheddar foresees that variable pricing could be misinterpreted as unfair. We prepare clear, measured responses. For instance, if criticized for “charging men more,” the response will be: *“Cheddar’s model isn’t based on gender, but on current supply and demand. We apply the same dynamic adjustment to whichever group has fewer active members. This ensures both sides have equal opportunity for matches.”* We can cite analogous defenses: Tinder’s PR said their global pricing varies by region and subscription length, not by protected traits <sup>18</sup>. Cheddar will likewise emphasize that *no protected class is charged differently*. All marketing avoids even accidental implication (e.g. never labeling any price tier as “Men’s Plan”).
- **Internal vs. public language:** Internally, the team might discuss “male fill rate” and “female capacity,” but externally all communications use neutral terminology (“demand levels,” “membership fee”). This boundary keeps legal exposure low. For example, internal analytics can use gender labels for balancing, but UI copy says “current membership count: X/1000.” Staff will be trained not to leak the rationale that “gender A pays 20% more today.” Having a strict internal communications policy prevents controversies (as one lawsuit noted, even lack of a public retention policy can trigger litigation <sup>3</sup>). All strategic discussions about balancing are kept in planning docs, while public-facing FAQs and support scripts focus on process and benefits.
- **Ongoing compliance review:** Cheddar commits to regularly reviewing its features through a legal lens. We maintain an up-to-date log of any changes to app-store rules or privacy laws. For example, we will have responses ready if regulators question the pricing model or data use. In extreme cases, Cheddar can adjust features (e.g. suspend dynamic pricing in a region) to comply with local laws, as Tinder did in California after a lawsuit <sup>19</sup>. But because our documentation (privacy policy, terms) transparently explains each mechanism, we can show regulators that Cheddar’s practices are deliberate and defensible. In summary, by having “good answers” prepared and a conservative public stance, Cheddar minimizes legal risk while delivering its unique proposition.

**Sources:** Information adapted from industry reports and guidelines (dating-app pricing policies <sup>6</sup> <sup>7</sup>, biometric-data law <sup>3</sup> <sup>20</sup>, app store rules <sup>8</sup> <sup>9</sup>, and growth strategy analyses <sup>14</sup> <sup>17</sup>). Each feature and policy above is framed to comply with relevant regulations while highlighting user value and platform efficiency.

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<sup>1</sup> How Dating App Algorithms Work and How To Choose One for Your App

<https://getstream.io/blog/dating-app-algorithms/>

<sup>2</sup> Facial recognition turns dating apps into a new surveillance front | Biometric Update

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<sup>3</sup> Dating App Privacy Lawsuits | Facial Recognition Data Sharing

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<sup>4</sup> <sup>5</sup> <sup>10</sup> <sup>20</sup> What Is Biometric Data? Understanding Its Meaning and UK GDPR Implications for Businesses | Sprintlaw UK

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