

HCC 8510 Computing and Online Relations
Week 12 Human-Computer Interaction Design for Online Relationships
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Nowadays, long-distance relationships (LDR) have become very common due to pressure from job markets and globalization. Long-distance relationships are common among students and pre-married couples. Hence, people in LDRs cannot experience everyday experiences such as going to bed and waking up together as partners living together [2]. Designing technologies that focus on emotional and subtle communication has become necessary and essential for close relationships [1]. Designers need to develop designs that concentrate on relatedness which is important for users' psychological well-being [1]. The [1] paper presents six strategies based on 143 artifacts, which can be used to design the experience of relatedness. Similarly, [2] illustrates a system 'Bedtime Window' which can be used to connect partners in long-distance relationships in bedrooms at bed-time [2]. On the other hand, the number of people staying alone in houses has been increasing exponentially. Due to this, many individuals do not get the social support they need at home [3].

I agree with Hassenzah's argument that relatedness fulfills psychological needs and is at the heart of the positive experience with any technology. However, most of the technologies focus more on transmitting information and ignore emotional and subtle communication. [1] has provided six strategies to create the feeling of relatedness: awareness, expressivity, physicalness, gift-giving, joint action, and memories [1]. Such strategies can be used to design user-centered technology that can provide users with a feeling of relatedness. However, at the same time, I personally feel such technology cannot fully ease the loneliness and distance felt by family members and partners in LDRs. [2] discusses a system design called Bedtime Window, features such as a slow photo stream, and shared real-time linking [2]. With this system, couples in LDR can stay connected and feel the closeness of each other. I believe that Bedtime Window can provide a sense of closeness and relatedness in long-distance relationships. Furthermore, [3] discusses social connectedness and how they affect the user's experience in smart home environments. I agree with the authors that social connectedness between the user and technology can improve the social support for users living alone in houses.

I have been using Snapchat for quite a while, and I feel it provides features with which I can stay connected with my friends and family. I am curious about features provided on Snapchat that can help maintain long-distance relationships. I want to study how partners might feel connected and related by sharing snaps every day. I would also like to explore the fetures provided by Snapchat, which are helpful for partners in long-distance relationships.

References:

- [1] All You Need is Love: Current Strategies of Mediating Intimate Relationships through Technology**
- [2] Bedtime Window A Field Study Connecting Bedrooms of Long-Distance Couples Using a Slow Photo-Stream and Shared Real-Time Inking**
- [3] Companionship with smart home devices: The impact of social connectedness and interaction types on perceived social support and companionship in smart homes**