**Introduction**

Tinder is an online dating and geosocial networking application. Users anonymously "swipe right" to like or "swipe left" to dislike other users' profiles, which include their photo, a short bio, and a list of their interests. Tinder uses a "double opt-in" system where both users must have "swiped right" to match before they can exchange messages.

Sean Rad founded Tinder in 2012 at a hackathon held at the start-up incubator Hatch Labs in West Hollywood. By 2014, Tinder was registering about one billion daily "swipes" and reported that users logged into the app on average 11 times a day. In 2015, Tinder was the fifth highest-grossing mobile app, and in 2019 it surpassed Netflix in annual spending. In 2020, Tinder had 6.2 million subscribers and 75 million monthly active users. As of 2021, Tinder has recorded more than 65 billion matches worldwide.

The original prototype for Tinder, called ‘Matchbox’ was built during a hackathon in February 2012 by Sean Rad and engineer Joe Munoz. The hackathon was hosted by Hatch Labs, a NY-based start-up incubator with a West Hollywood outpost. Realizing the name ‘Matchbox’ was too similar to Match.com Rad, his co-founders, and early employees renamed the company to Tinder. The company’s flame-themed logo remained consistent throughout the rebranding.

In tune with Tinder’s objective statement that advocates remembering singlehood and enjoying discovering lovers, the Tinder software enables prospective couples to fancy both and swipe directly to simply take their unique relationship forward. Usage of the app earlier in the day was only through Facebook profiles, though the product changed afterward to offering accessibility despite having a telephone amount since 2019.

Regarding Tinder’s plans to become a popular system for 18-year-olds to meet up with and spend some time with a similar mate, Tinder has been in a position to obtain it to a large extent. Typically, 1.5 million dates take place through Tinder weekly, which includes 65+ billion fits currently. Over 50% of customers have been between the age of 18-25. The application is prominent in 190 countries and is in 40+ dialects. It offers customers from up to 9 various sexual orientations and contains about 4.2 million gift ideas getting used every week.

Always profitable, the software has seen 430+ Million downloading because the day it was established. Tinder is brought by Jim Lanzone that is the President, Josh offer who’s the COO, and Tom Jacques that is the principal innovation policeman.

Whether seeking a passionate love affair, looking for a spouse or wanting a casual encounter, people have long devised methods of presenting themselves in the most attractive way to potential partners. Mediated possibilities to connect with others have evolved from newspaper advertisements to Teletext to online dating websites, and the latest offerings are matchmaking mobile applications like Tinder.

Impression management or self-presentation exists both face-to-face and in mediated forms. Before a first date, a man shaves, applies cologne, and dresses in his finest. On Tinder, a woman selects an attractive picture of herself as her main photo. In a virtual environment, as in real life, impression management starts before a face-to-face meeting or even before interpersonal communication. On Tinder, this impression management begins with choosing one’s profile photos. It continues with what Leary describes as impression monitoring: ‘For people to engage in self-presentation, they must monitor, at one level or another, how they are being perceived and evaluated by others (1995, p. 47). Tinder users do this by assessing the expectations of potential matches.

There is tremendous research regarding self-presentation and romance in the last decade (Ellison, Heino, & Gibbs, [2006](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1369118X.2016.1252412); Hall, Park, Song, & Cody, [2010](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1369118X.2016.1252412); Manning, [2014](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1369118X.2016.1252412)), examining dating websites such as Yahoo! Personals (Ellison, Hancock, & Toma, [2012](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1369118X.2016.1252412)), Match.com (Gibbs, Ellison, & Heino, [2006](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1369118X.2016.1252412)), and OkCupid (Zytko, Jones, & Grandhi, [2014](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1369118X.2016.1252412)). Recent work examines Grindr, the matchmaking app geared toward men seeking men (Birnholtz, Fitzpatrick, Handel, & Brubaker, [2014](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1369118X.2016.1252412); Blackwell, Birnholtz, & Abbott, [2015](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1369118X.2016.1252412); Brubaker, Ananny, & Crawford, [2016](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1369118X.2016.1252412); Gudelunas, [2012](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1369118X.2016.1252412)). Research is emerging on Tinder user awareness of privacy issues (Farnden, Martini, Raymond, & Choo, [2015](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1369118X.2016.1252412); Stenson, Balcells, & Chen, [2015](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1369118X.2016.1252412)). Dating apps present a novel technological environment for impression management, mainly due to issues of reduced cues and increased control, local proximity, and a reduced filtering process. These issues will be explained in more detail in the coming section. First, I provide some detail on Tinder.

Though dating websites still account for the largest market share,[1](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1369118X.2016.1252412) dating apps have increased in popularity in recent years. In comparison to dating websites, dating apps ask users to provide limited information for potential matches, namely, several photos and an optional small amount of text (Blackwell et al., [2015](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1369118X.2016.1252412); Gudelunas, [2012](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1369118X.2016.1252412)). I distinguish Tinder from dating websites because it is a location-based dating platform available only as a mobile app. Further, Tinder does not ask users to answer compatibility questions and does not allow detailed filtering techniques, features common to dating websites. On Tinder, the first impression users have of a potential match is her/his main profile photo. If a user is interested in seeing more, s/he can tap the profile, which will reveal additional photos, optional text, and shared Facebook friends and Facebook likes.[2](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1369118X.2016.1252412) Users swipe left to reject and right to accept a potential match. If the right swipe is mutual, it is a match, and Tinder allows users to chat within the app.

Tinder was launched in October 2012 and has achieved global popularity. It has more than 50 million global users in 196 countries, with 9 billion matches since its inception.[3](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1369118X.2016.1252412) Globally, Tinder users log in an average of 11 times a day and spend between 7 and 9 minutes swiping during a single session. Women browse profiles for 8.5 minutes at a time versus 7.2 for men (Bilton, [2014](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1369118X.2016.1252412)). In the Netherlands, there were an estimated 1.5 million users in 2014 (Eigenraam & Zandstra, [2014](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1369118X.2016.1252412)). Though the app itself is relatively new, the concept of meeting a romantic partner online is not. According to Statistics Netherlands, between 2008 and 2013, 13% of Dutch people met their partners online, and half of these met on dating sites.[4](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1369118X.2016.1252412)

My motivation for conducting this study, presented as a research question, is to explore: What are the pre-match impression management practices of Tinder users? For this paper, I draw on the impression management literature, keeping in mind the relevance of a technologically mediated dating environment. I first present theoretical considerations, followed by a description of the interviews I conducted with Tinder users. Interview analysis is followed by a conclusion and discussion.