

“Liquid love? Dating apps, sex, relationships and the digital transformation of intimacy”

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[...] Tinder was designed to ‘take the stress out of dating’, being a type of ‘game’ that requires less time and emotional investment to play (Stampler, 2014). This design philosophy is reflected in the features of the software, where people’s profiles are similar to a deck of playing cards, and love, sex and intimacy are the stakes of the game. [...] Bauman (2003) specifically identifies online dating as symptomatic of what he calls ‘liquid love’, arguing that it has transformed romance and courtship into a type of entertainment where users can date ‘secure in the knowledge they can always return to the marketplace for another bout of shopping’ (2003: 65)

[...] This study’s participants felt they have more romantic and relationship possibilities than previous generations, and that the technologies give them greater agency with regard to pursuing and meeting potential lovers and companions.

[...] For those living in urban areas, their smartphones are allowing them access to an extensive network of romantic possibilities. Only with time will we see whether this seductive network of romantic possibility has a gradual cultural influence on people’s desire to commit to long-term monogamous relationships – an area for future longitudinal research.

[...] These networks of romantic possibility enhance a person’s capacity to find a partner with whom to build a mutually fulfilling relationship and continue the trend towards the ‘pure relationship’ (Giddens, 1991). Networked intimacy is, then, about flirting, courtship and the ongoing search for love and fulfillment via dating apps and smartphones. It brings new freedoms, opportunities and pleasures, as well as old and new anxieties about risk, self-image and love.

Source: Hobbs M, Owen S, Gerber L. *Liquid love? Dating apps, sex, relationships and the digital transformation of intimacy*. Journal of Sociology. 2017;53(2):271-284.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1440783316662718>

