

Aalto University
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Dating expectations in social media:
From profile pictures to a date and beyond

Master's Thesis

Helsinki, January 18, 2017

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ABSTRACT OF
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<p>Computer-mediated communication (CMC) has widely been seen as inferior to face-to-face (FtF) communication because of for example the lack of immediate feedback and nonverbal cues. However, the social information processing theory sees CMC as equal to FtF communication because people want to build social relationships also in CMC. The hyperpersonal theory goes even further by stating that the reduced cues in CMC foster more affection and emotion compared with FtF communication. This thesis aimed to explore this field further from the view of singles seeking a romantic life partner online.</p> <p>The study was conducted by interviewing 13 current and former Tinder users with semi-structured interviews. Some of them also provided their Tinder profiles and/or conversation histories for further analysis. The subjects were young adults with no children, living in the Helsinki metropolitan area of Finland, and most of them had or were pursuing a university degree. They were seeking a life partner rather than one-night stands.</p> <p>In this study it was noticed that there are various expectations related to online dating and social media. Subjects made a lot of expectations from profiles, especially from profile pictures in Tinder and other social media services. These expectations were verified or proved inaccurate on the first date. Spending time together in person on dates is the most important thing for a couple. However, social media also support emotional and social intimacy. Social media are important in helping a couple stay in touch between dates by supporting continuous communication. Especially sent pictures enhance intimacy by allowing one to share their reality with their date.</p>	
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<p>Tietokonevälitteistä viestintää on laajalti pidetty kasvokkaista viestintää huonompana vaihtoehtona esimerkiksi välittömän palautteen ja nonverbaalisten vihjeiden puutteen vuoksi. Sosiaalisen informaation prosessointi -teorian (Social Information Processing theory) mukaan tietokonevälitteinen viestintä on kuitenkin yhtä hyvää kuin kasvokkainen viestintä, koska ihmiset haluavat luoda sosiaalisia suhteita myös tietokonevälitteisesti. Hyperpersoonallisen teorian mukaan tietokonevälitteinen viestintä on jopa parempaa kuin kasvokkainen viestintä, sillä nonverbaalisten vihjeiden puute tietokonevälitteisessä viestinnässä edistää tunteiden ilmaisua ja kiintymystä. Tässä opinnäytetyössä pyrittiin edistämään tätä tutkimusalaa tutkimalla aihetta romanttista elämänumppania etsivien sinkkujen näkökulmasta.</p> <p>Tutkimus tehtiin haastattelemalla 13 nykyistä ja entistä Tinderin käyttäjää puolistrukturoiduilla haastatteluilla. Osa haastatteluista myös antoi Tinder-profiilinsa ja/tai viestittelyhistoriansa analysointia varten. Tutkittavat olivat Suomen pääkaupunkiseudulla asuvia nuoria aikuisia, joilla ei ollut lapsia. Suurimmalla osalla heistä oli yliopistotutkinto tai he opiskelivat yliopistossa. He etsivät elämänumppania yhden illan juttujen sijaan.</p> <p>Tässä tutkimuksessa tuli ilmi, että nettideittailuun ja sosiaalisen median käyttöön liittyy paljon odotuksia. Tutkittavat tekivät monia olettamuksia profiileista, erityisesti profiilikuvista Tinderissä ja muissa sosiaalisen median palveluissa. Nämä odotukset todettiin oikeiksi tai vääriksi ensimmäisillä treffeillä. Toisen kanssa treffeillä oleminen on kaikista tärkeintä uudelle parille. Myös sosiaalinen media kuitenkin tukee emotionaalista ja sosiaalista läheisyyttä. Sosiaalinen media on tärkeä, sillä se auttaa paria pysymään yhteydessä treffien välillä tarjoamalla mahdollisuuden jatkuvaan viestittelyyn. Erityisesti lähetetyt kuvat edistävät läheisyyttä mahdollistaen todellisuuden jakamisen treffikumppanin kanssa.</p>		
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Helsinki, January 18, 2017

Annikka Jänkälä

ACRONYMS

CMC	Computer-mediated communication
DIFA	Digital Face
FtF	Face-to-face
SIPT	Social information processing theory

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1 INTRODUCTION

On the bus, many passengers are using their smartphones. They may use these devices for example to read the local newspaper or message their acquaintances. On the bus, there may not be much else to do. However, the use of smartphones may not be restricted to the situations where people are alone. Some people are unable to break away from their smartphones in social situations and can talk online with people who are not present, instead of focusing their attention to the ones who they are actually with in person. Are we really “*alone together*,” as Turkle (2011) encapsulates it: Constantly available through smartphones but simultaneously not fully present because we do not concentrate on one ongoing social interaction at a time?

Computer-mediated communication (CMC) is a part of many people’s daily lives and a much used channel for communication with acquaintances. In addition to the possibility of keeping in touch, CMC allows meeting new people online, for example through dating sites. Since the majority of people wish to find someone to share their life with, various dating sites and software are popular in searching for that special someone nowadays. One of these dating software is Tinder, conveniently located in one’s smartphone, easy to use anytime throughout the day.

As the other person is not physically present in online dating, photographs have the potential of bringing people closer to each other. Many social media sites support image sharing and image-based communication and “*personal photographs have become a means of rapid, although often short-term, communication with friends*” (Van House, 2011b, p. 128). Via Tinder, users search for interesting people based on a few photographs, and pictures on social media services deployed after meeting on Tinder help in getting to know the other person better. Not just photographs, but other pictures as well, such as memes, can also be used in interacting. All these various pictures can be shared on social media or sent using instant messaging services to share feelings, interests and experienced moments. As technology substitutes and augments the real world, pictures may have a great impact in building a relationship and developing intimacy.

There are various online dating sites which have different functionalities and thus only one online dating site was chosen as a starting point for dating in this study. Due to its popularity, Tinder was chosen as the starting point. According to Bosker (2013), Tinder co-founder Justin

Mateen stated in 2013 that Tinder was downloaded 10,000 to 20,000 times a day, with 60% of users checking the app daily, with many using it five to six times a day. Tinder has also inspired new similar applications, such as JSwipe, a Jewish dating app (Grigoriadis, 2014; David & Cambre, 2016). Not to mention the popularity Tinder has gained in social media: The “*Tinder Nightmares*” Instagram account, which has 1.7 million followers, shares awkward and funny initial Tinder conversations that have also been published as a book, and in the popular discussion forum Reddit, self-proclaimed as the front page of the Internet, there is a sub-forum about Tinder with over 252,000 subscribers sharing awkward and funny conversations and user profiles, and asking for help in putting up one’s own profile. Tinder is widely used also in Finland, and there is a site “*Tinderin parhaat*” (“best of Tinder”) on Facebook and Instagram for the best and most awful Finnish pickup lines on Tinder. Moreover, in the study of Nurminen (2015b), 80 percent of Finnish Tinder users were hoping to find a long-term romantic relationship via Tinder. This is an advantage as in this research people searching for a romantic partner for life are studied.

Previously, face-to-face (FtF) interaction was considered superior compared to CMC. In the cues-filtered-out theories FtF interaction is seen as the richest form of interacting due to immediate feedback and nonverbal communication (Daft & Lengel, 1983; Rice & Love, 1987; Walther, 1996). However, according to the social information processing theory (SIPT), people adapt to CMC and thus CMC is as good as FtF communication (Rice & Love, 1987; Walther, 1996). The hyperpersonal theory goes even further by claiming that CMC is better than FtF interaction for example due to the lack of nonverbal cues and the possibility to present oneself in a more positive light than might be possible FtF (Rice & Love, 1987; Walther, 1996). These theories are explained in more detail in chapter 2.2.1, and the results of this thesis will contribute to the dispute between these theories by studying the use of CMC in the online dating context. The results of this study can also be useful for people designing social media services and people using these services, as they may find out new strategies and reasons for using social media services.

1.1 DIGITAL FACE PROJECT

This master’s thesis is part of the Digital Face (DIFA) project which is part of the Digital Humanities research program, funded by the Academy of Finland for years 2016-2019. The aim of the project is to find out how social identity is constructed, maintained, and managed in digital environments. The project team studies both the face as a medium for interaction

and the face in its metaphorical use with wide connotations and cultural meanings. “*Face*” does not mean only the physical human face. As Goffman (1967) points out, face is actually “*an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes*” (p. 5). The DIFA project studies further the meanings of face and digital face.

The face has a huge role when trying to find a romantic partner. People who use online dating services spend time wondering which photographs they should show in their dating profiles of themselves to draw the attention of other users. Correspondingly, when browsing other users’ profiles, initial attraction is substantially based on others’ photographs of themselves. Photographs in a profile are the first thing drawing a viewer’s attention, creating first impressions that are difficult to alter. Choosing the proper photographs to an online dating profile is essentially construction of one’s social identity in a digital environment, studied in the DIFA project.

Instead of focusing solely on the construction of one’s online profile and self-presentation, the DIFA project is most interested in the elements that uphold and maintain social interaction in digital environments. By studying dating, it is possible to clarify the differences between various social media services and to find out how intimacy can be constructed with pictures by using all these different services. At the same time, the importance of the face and the maintenance and management of social identity in all the different phases of a relationship and in all used social media services is unraveled.

In addition to human faces, the DIFA project studies digital interfaces. Humans have learned to express and react to affects and emotions mainly by their physical faces. Human-computer interfaces can be seen transforming and modifying what we are able to express. In this thesis, one goal is also to understand how interfaces restrain our expressions and which kind of interfaces dating people find useful in different phases of their relationships.

1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objective of this thesis is to examine the kind of expectations people have on social media while building intimacy with a date. To study this research field, it should be investigated which social media Tinder users utilize in the different phases of dating, why they use these specific media and ultimately, what they expect from others and the social media while dating. The research objective of this thesis can be encapsulated as the following main research question:

RQ1. *What kind of expectations do people have in social media while building intimacy with a date?*

This main research question consists of two main components: social media and building intimacy. Following secondary research questions are drawn from these components and they support and clarify the main research question (Figure 1):

RQ2. *What do people expect from social media while dating?*

a. *Why do people start using certain social media services with their dates?*

b. *Is social media enabling or hindering intimacy building with a date?*

RQ3. *Do people draw expectations from social media profiles?*

RQ4. *What do people expect to see in profile pictures?*

RQ5. *What are the different ways of building intimacy with pictures?*

RQ6. *What is the significance of meeting a date face-to-face?*

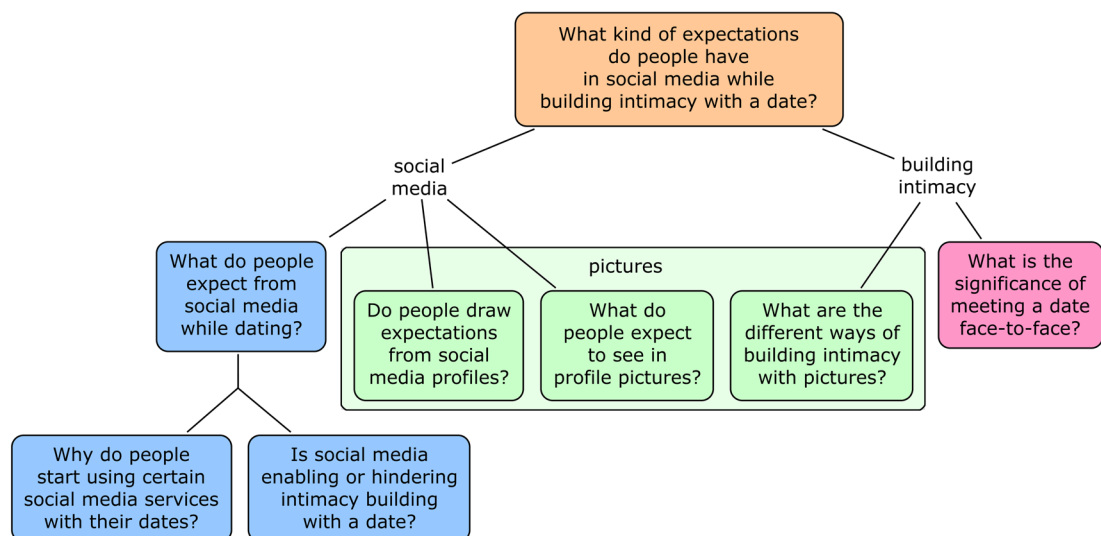


Figure 1. Illustration of the connections between research questions.

In the research questions, there are three questions related to pictures. On Tinder, profile pictures are at the center of attention, placing a lot of significance on them. This thesis will study social media and intimacy building but the significance of pictures is also considered in the online dating context. Thus, pictures provide a different point of view to this research.

Research is conducted by interviewing subjects with semi-structured questions. In addition to interviewing, social media use can be studied further by asking the subjects for the permission to examine their profile pictures as well as the conversation histories they have had with their dates. Observing pictures and conversation histories will provide additional and different data to this thesis.

There are four initial hypotheses for this thesis, introduced next. More hypotheses are added in the end of the literature review, based on previous research, whereas these hypotheses are based on personal hunches and early casual discussions with Tinder users.

H1. People replace Tinder quickly with other social media services.

Tinder is replaced quickly after getting a match. It is replaced soon after meeting in person or even before going on a date to make it easier for people to find each other. People do not want to use Tinder with a match forever because it is seen as a service for finding interesting people and thus it does not really support the kind of interaction that people would like to have when getting to know each other more. Also, chatting on Tinder is not fluent enough for long conversations and it does not support sending pictures.

H2. People soon meet face-to-face after a match.

After meeting on Tinder, people soon want to meet each other face-to-face, because mediated interaction cannot provide the kind of information that is readily available when meeting face-to-face. Physical co-presence enables the kind of chemistry and feeling of attraction that is not available on social media, and seeing if this “spark” exists, drives people to meet in person soon after matching on Tinder. After all, people do not want to waste time chatting with someone whom there eventually is no chemistry with.

H3. Profile pictures lose their importance gradually.

When choosing whom to interact with on Tinder, profile pictures are extremely important. They are still very important when starting to use new social media services together, as new aspects of the other person, for example previously unknown hobbies or whom they spend time with, can be seen by looking at their pictures. However, these pictures lose their importance gradually, as two people get to know each other more. Especially photographs showing solely what the other person looks like lose their importance after people have met in person.

H4. Social media

- a. help people find potential romantic partners,*
- b. make it easier for people to get to know each other, and*
- c. make it easier for people to stay in touch.*

Social media affect how we communicate with others. Tinder makes it easier to find potential romantic partners, because people do not need to physically be in the same place to meet

each other. People can easily see the other person's social network and hobbies by looking at their pictures on social media services and social media also help people in building intimacy by allowing them to be in touch frequently by chatting or sending pictures.

1.3 EXPLANATION OF MAIN CONCEPTS

Intimacy is one of the main concepts in this thesis. Researchers have used different terms to talk about the scale of intimacy, including acquaintance, tie strength and closeness. Acquaintance is the degree of familiarity with someone or the amount of knowledge one has about another person (Starzyk, et al., 2006). According to Haythornthwaite (2002), a tie exists between people when they share information. There are different levels of ties, ranging from strong to weak, and even to latent ties, which are ties where connection is technically available but it has not yet been activated by interaction (Haythornthwaite, 2002). Marsden and Campbell (1984) study tie strength and conclude that the measure of *closeness* best indicates tie strength. They specify closeness as a measure of the intensity of a relationship. The difference between closeness and intimacy is poorly researched and understood. However, the term *intimacy* has been used more in previous research and is thus used here as well. Intimacy is explained in detail in chapter 2.1.

This thesis studies the use of **social media**. Social media enable CMC via devices connected to the Internet such as computers, laptops, tablets, and smartphones. Social media constitute various kinds of services including social networking services such as Facebook and Instagram, but also instant messaging services such as WhatsApp and Telegram. In this thesis the interest lies in how different social media services affect human interaction and relationship development. Social media are gone through in more detail in chapter 2.2.

While analyzing the interviews (findings are gone through in chapter 4), it could be seen that there are a lot of **expectations** related to the online dating behavior and social media use of subjects. Expectations thus emerged as the concept that ties together all of the most important research findings. Most importantly, these expectations refer to 1) expectations towards other people's social media profiles, 2) impressions formed from these profiles, 3) impression management in subjects' own profiles, 4) expectations towards the first date, and 5) expectations towards social media such as the notion that subjects want to be able to send pictures in social media services.

1.4 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

This thesis is divided into six chapters. Chapter 1, the introduction, explained the motivation for the study, presented the research objectives and initial hypotheses, and introduced the main concepts of intimacy, social media and expectations used in this thesis. Chapter 2 consists of the literature review or theoretical background of the thesis. As this thesis is part of the multidisciplinary Digital Face project, the literature review also takes a multidisciplinary approach. In the literature section, previous findings on intimacy, CMC compared with FtF communication, social media, online dating, and using pictures are reviewed. A research framework is also formulated from previous literature, providing a model of intimacy used in this thesis, summarizing the cues-filtered-out perspective, SIPT and hyperpersonal theory, and declaring the final hypotheses for this study.

Chapter 3 explains the methodology used in the research part of this thesis. The data gathering methods are explained in detail, ethical guidelines related to these methods are considered, research subjects are introduced and the analysis procedure is explained. Chapter 4 will present the findings gained from analyzing the gathered data. Chapter 5 discusses these findings further by comparing them with earlier literature reviewed in chapter 2. Chapter 6 concludes this thesis by summarizing the main findings of the research, considering limitations in the results, and giving suggestions for future research.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter constitutes the literature review, introducing previous findings on intimacy, social media and online dating, and the use of pictures. Based on the literature, a research framework is formed.

2.1 INTIMACY

Intimacy has been researched but there does not exist a widely acknowledged definition for the concept. Instead, various definitions exist for intimacy. Moreover, the distinction between closeness and intimacy is poorly researched and understood. Intimacy and closeness are also related to the concepts of tie strength and acquaintance. The purpose of this chapter is to give an idea of the concept of intimacy.

According to Sullivan (Feist & Feist, 2008), intimacy can exist only between two people of relatively equal status. However, the attitude towards intimacy stems from the mother-infant relationship since experiences in early childhood can lead to approach and avoidance tendencies in adulthood (Reis & Shaver, 1988). Despite being affected by childhood experiences, the desire for intimacy is not constant but specific changing desires, fears and goals can affect it (Duck & Sants, 1983; Reis & Shaver, 1988). It should also be noted that intimacy is not a state that can be achieved but a process occurring over time (Schaefer & Olson, 1981; Duck & Sants, 1983). Duck and Sants (1983) argue that the sense of continuity over time is important in distinguishing a relationship from a mere series of interactions. Thus, they point out that people expect their relationships to grow and may wish to end them if they do not.

Various researchers have formed a framework for intimacy, describing the different aspects of intimacy. Helgeson, Shaver and Dyer (1987) say how there are some differences in what men and women feel are important aspects of intimacy, but they conclude that experiences of intimacy are more similar than different between men and women. Therefore, possible gender differences in the aspects of intimacy are not considered in this thesis. Some of the frameworks for intimacy are introduced next, in order of publication. The first framework introduced in this thesis comes from Schaefer and Olson (1981), who identify five types of intimacy: 1) emotional intimacy: experiencing a closeness of feelings, 2) social intimacy: the experience of having common friends and similarities in social networks, 3) intellectual intimacy: the experience of sharing ideas, 4) sexual intimacy: the experience of sharing

general affection and/or sexual activity, and 5) recreational intimacy: shared experiences of interests in hobbies and mutual participation in sporting events. Schaefer and Olson develop the PAIR (Personal Assessment of Intimacy in Relationships) Inventory primarily to be used as a method of information gathering for dyadic heterosexual relationships from friends to married couples and their therapists.

Tolstedt and Stokes (1983) identify three types of intimacy that affect marital satisfaction. These types they call 1) verbal intimacy: disclosure of facts and of emotions, judgements and opinions, 2) affective intimacy: feelings of closeness and emotional bonding, and 3) physical intimacy: sex and other physical expressions of love. Helgeson, Shaver and Dyer (1987) study both same-sex and opposite-sex relationships and also explain that three components of intimacy could be found from earlier literature: 1) self-disclosure, 2) affection or sexuality, and 3) expressiveness. Schaefer and Olson (1981) warn that although self-disclosure is closely related to intimacy, it is also often confused with it. Similarly, Helgeson, Shaver and Dyer (1987) argue that self-disclosure is a prototypical feature of intimacy but not its necessary feature. Moore, McCabe and Stockdale (1998) study heterosexual couples and end up falsifying Schaefer and Olson's (1981) PAIR. They form their own definition for intimacy, including in it the three intimacy aspects of 1) engagement, 2) communication and 3) shared friendships. Engagement they define as the basic level of intimacy and shared friendships as the final level of intimacy.

The definition for intimacy made by Vetere, et al. (2005) differs from previously introduced definitions in that they do not explain only the types of intimacy but instead they define antecedents, constituents and yields of intimacy. As antecedents of intimacy they include self-disclosure, commitment and trust. According to them, the yields of intimate acts are feelings of "*presence-in-absence*" and a relationship that is "*strong yet vulnerable.*" Most comparable to other definitions of intimacy are however the constituents of intimacy, or themes of intimate acts, which include: 1) emotional intimacy, 2) reciprocity, depicting how intimate expressions need to be answered in like terms, 3) expressive acts such as nonverbal exchanges of playfulness and even ambiguity, 4) physical intimacy such as stroking, patting and sexual relations, and the aspect of 5) public and private, which consists of the idea that intimate acts are typically private but intimacy also includes public declarations of commitment such as marriage, as well as publicly showing affection by for example kissing in a public place.

The final definition considered in this study comes from Starzyk, et al. (2006), who talk about acquaintance, not intimacy. However, they still bring forth some notable points that should be considered in the definition of intimacy. Starzyk, et al., suggest that there are six dimensions defining acquaintance, forming the Personal Acquaintance Measure (PAM). These dimensions they call 1) duration: the time persons have known each other, 2) frequency of interaction: how often the persons interact with each other, 3) knowledge of goals, 4) physical intimacy, 5) self-disclosure, and 6) social network familiarity. Time is needed to get acquainted with someone but the frequency and duration of a relationship cannot fully explain acquaintance (Starzyk, et al., 2006), for example because relatives have usually known each other for a long time and neighbors see each other often but neither necessarily have a strong relationship (Marsden & Campbell, 1984). Similarly, when studying people who have met on Tinder and who are seeking a long-term relationship, the frequency and duration of contact between two persons can predict how close they are to each other, but cannot indicate it, since people can be attracted to each other in the beginning but lose interest later when finding out what the other person is truly like.

As can be seen from the previous research introduced here, the definitions of intimacy are quite different. Moreover, many of the considered definitions are designed also for non-romantic relationships. For this thesis, a definition of intimacy is constructed based on previous research, as described later in the research framework section. A unanimous idea for the definition of intimacy has yet to be declared but what seems to be clear is that hopes for intimacy stem from earlier experiences and that intimacy is a process rather than a state that could be reached.

2.2 SOCIAL MEDIA

Face-to-face interaction can be seen as the standard form of interaction, and interacting on social media is thus often compared with it. That is why this chapter will begin by comparing theories on interaction in face-to-face situations and mediated situations such as social media. Next, different social media services are introduced. Online dating sites are also considered by giving a short history of online dating, introducing different online dating services, and explaining how Tinder is used.

2.2.1 Face-to-face communication compared with mediated interaction

Turkle (2011) draws a sad picture where people are constantly connected to each other via social media but simultaneously the *“relationships can be reduced to mere connections”* (p.

16), lacking intimacy, as people do not have each other's full attention despite continual connection. Turkle depicts how people are not communicating in public places in person anymore, but are connected to distant others using mobile devices. Thus, is intimacy on social media a mere expectation instead of being the reality? Various researchers have tried to identify the differences between CMC and FtF communication, and although FtF interaction was previously assumed superior compared to CMC, there are actually advantages to CMC. Walther (1996) divides CMC theories into impersonal, interpersonal and hyperpersonal theories.

Cues-filtered-out theories

Daft and Lengel's (1983, 1986) media richness theory is an impersonal theory, or a "*cues-filtered-out*" theory. "*Information richness is defined as the ability of information to change understanding within a time interval,*" (p. 560) and when richness is low, communication requires a long time to enable understanding, or different perspectives cannot be overcome at all (Daft & Lengel, 1986). In the media richness theory, FtF interaction is seen as the richest form of interaction due to immediate feedback, multiple cues (such as body language, facial expression and tone of voice) and natural language (Daft & Lengel, 1983; 1986). The previously much supported cues-filtered-out theories state that due to the lack of audio or visual cues in CMC, all CMC is more impersonal and provides less socioemotional content than FtF interaction (Rice & Love, 1987; Walther, 1996).

Collins (2004) talks about interaction rituals which produce solidarity and symbols of social relationship. These interaction rituals are a result of group assembly, barrier to outsiders, mutual focus of attention and shared mood. Based on Turkle (2011), mutual focus of attention and barrier to outsiders may be lacking in CMC as people may be talking to several others simultaneously. What is most obviously different in online and offline contexts, however, is the lack of group assembly, or bodily co-presence. To Collins, the more CMC resembles FtF communication, the more likely it is to support interaction rituals. However, Collins finds it unlikely that CMC could ever provide strong feelings of solidarity or collectively significant symbols.

There are differing ideas on the authenticity and intimacy of phone calls. Turkle (2011) supports the cues-filtered-out perspective by saying that telephone allows better communication than e-mails and texts. Some subjects in the dissertation of Long (2010) feel that phone calls help them get information they cannot glean online. However, Vlahovic, Roberts and Dunbar (2012) discover that communication duration does not affect happiness

when using Skype or phone calls. Therefore, they believe that regardless of the synchronicity of Skype and phone calls, subtle nonverbal facial and bodily cues are needed to achieve the sense of connection present in FtF communication. This conclusion does not support the idea that the use of richer media results in more synchronous communication but that FtF communication is superior compared to all other communication methods.

According to Daft and Lengel (1983), CMC does have its place in an organization, but only as a channel to communicate routine activities, whereas FtF interaction is needed to reach a shared interpretation. Turkle (2011) and Finkel, et al. (2012) also feel that due to the lack of cues online, people are reduced to their profile displays, failing to capture their whole being in person. The subjects in the study of Puranen (2016) similarly felt that nonverbal communication methods in offline environments are an advantage in dating. According to the cues-filtered-out perspective, the lack of immediate feedback is seen as a disadvantage of CMC (Daft & Lengel, 1983). Immediate feedback is provided by eye-contact (Argyle & Dean, 1965). Myllyneva and Hietanen (2015) report how eye contact results in autonomic and brain responses. Collins (2004) also feels that bodily co-presence is needed for human nervous systems to become mutually attuned so that people can share emotions and signal a common focus of attention. These reports suggest that CMC is not able to reach the intimacy of FtF interaction.

Social information processing theory

The cues-filtered-out theories were previously highly supported (Walther, 1996). However, early results of CMC studies were mainly based on one-time-only time-limited CMC groups, and when constraints on interaction time were removed, interpersonal development was similar to FtF interaction, albeit slower (Walther, 1996). Walther's (1996) social information processing theory is an interpersonal communication theory which explains how people can develop relationships also in CMC. According to SIPT, people using CMC wish to develop social relationships just as in FtF communication (Walther, 1996). People can adapt to the communication provided by CMC (Rice & Love, 1987) and thus CMC is equally good compared to FtF communication when people expect to have a long-term association (Walther, 1996). However, as single exchanges in CMC are not able to transmit as much information as in FtF communication, reaching the same relational level is slower in CMC compared to FtF communication (Walther, 1990).

Pollet, Roberts and Dunbar (2011) found in their study that social media did not increase intimacy. However, they did not study romantic relationships where a lot of the time spent

on social media is probably spent with a date and the desire to build a lasting relationship probably increases self-disclosure and thus intimacy. In the cues-filtered-out perspective, CMC is seen as task oriented, but according to Walther (1990), CMC can actually be more socially oriented than FtF interaction. As Haythornthwaite (2002) says, the relationship between people defines how they communicate, rather than whether they communicate online or offline. Moreover, if people in an online community trust that the place is to be used for task oriented communication, intimate relationships are not likely to develop (Rice & Love, 1987).

Some of the results in the study of Vlahovic, Roberts and Dunbar (2012) support SIPT because both real and symbolic laughter enhanced happiness, suggesting that people can express emotions such as laughter even in text-based CMC. This successful expression of laughter suggests that the shared mood aspect of Collins' (2004) interaction rituals can be achieved in CMC. Based on their results, Hu, et al. (2004) explain how instant messaging is beneficial in building intimacy. In their study, talking online actually encouraged friends to meet each other offline.

SIPT talks about how people develop relationships with others online, making it not completely applicable to online dating, where communication online is simply done to form a romantic offline relationship (Long, 2010). However, especially as SIPT predicts that impressions are formed based on textual information (Walther, 1996), the perspective can be adapted to the online dating environment as well. People form strong impressions from the minimal cues that are available, even in a text-based virtual community from one's pseudonym, description of one's virtual character and the way one talks (Jacobson, 1999). In Kambara's (2005) study, subjects say that they used to make mistakes in impression formation but through experience, they are now better at it. Verbal cues alone are enough for people to form impressions (Walther, 1990) and such information as message timing, length and grammar are also observed (Ellison, Heino & Gibbs, 2006). Impressions can also be formed from photographs. In fact, Finkel, et al. (2012) say that accurate impressions can be formed from photographs alone. According to Willis and Todorov (2006), a tenth of a second is enough to form an impression from facial appearance, suggesting that impressions are formed before conscious thinking.

As people try to present themselves in a favorable light, Goffman (1959) says that others form impressions based on the expressions that people *give*, being expressions that can be shaped knowingly, and the expressions that they *give off*, being expressions that people

cannot easily control, therefore providing actual information from which impressions should be formed. In CMC, people are able to formulate their comments with great detail, but for example misspellings can be seen as something that the person *gives off*, suggesting lack of interest or education (Ellison, Heino & Gibbs, 2006).

Hyperpersonal theory

Even exceedingly intimate communication is possible in CMC (Rice & Love, 1987). In fact, Walther's (1996) hyperpersonal theory states that CMC can become hyperpersonal, exceeding FtF interpersonal communication. According to this theory, CMC can be more socially desirable than FtF communication and there may be more affection and emotion in CMC than in FtF communication (Walther, 1996). The reduced cues in CMC can actually be an advantage: *"The lack of nonverbal cues about physical appearance, authority, status, and turn-taking allow users to participate more equally and with more extreme affect on CMC systems than in many face-to-face interaction"* (Rice & Love, 1987, p. 89). Nonverbal cues are in Goffman's (1959) terms the expressions that the person *gives off*, considerably affecting impression formation. As these cues are not available in CMC, people can manage the first impressions they give and selective self-presentation used in FtF communication is much more extreme in CMC: *"Nowhere is there a better illustration of Goffman's [1959] definition of self-presentation in which 'an individual accentuates certain matters and conceals others'"* (Walther, 1996, p. 22). Especially negative nonverbal cues have the potential of seriously hindering intimacy building, making CMC more desirable than FtF communication (Walther, 1990; 1992).

According to Godwin (1994), when reading the text someone has written, *"everything you see is a product of that person's mind,"* whereas in FtF situations a person cannot fully concentrate in the personality of the other person, as nonverbal cues take too much of our attention. Godwin talks about how people could fall in love online but the love of these soulmates can be destroyed in a FtF meeting by visual distractions such as a weight problem. Ramirez and Zhang (2007) also report how staying online results in greater intimacy and attraction compared to FtF communication. Similarly, McKenna, Green and Gleason (2002) tell how people like each other more when they initially meet online instead of meeting FtF first and they still like each other more after the second FtF meeting. Their study, however, is about friendships instead of online dating.

In asynchronous CMC, taking time before responding can improve communication as ideas are more thoughtful and better formulated (Walther, 1992; 1996; Harasim, 1993). With the

lack of time constraints, people can engage in interpersonal communication even in a task-oriented setting, which is not desirable in a FtF meeting because it would prevent people from finishing the task and leaving the meeting (Walther, 1992). Due to reduced cues in CMC, people overcompensate their uncertainty with increased playfulness, affection and depth (Walther, 1990; 1992). Furthermore, the inhibition that exists FtF does not exist in CMC, making it more comfortable for people to talk directly and honestly (Birnholtz, et al., 2015). Reid (1991) points out that the tendency for people to be uninhibited in CMC may foster romantic relationships. Gibbs, Ellison and Heino (2006) argue that information in CMC is provided differently depending on the goals of the interaction participants, suggesting that people seeking a romantic relationship consciously disclose more personal information. SIPT suggests that CMC can reach the same relational level as FtF communication when people expect to have a long-term association, but Jiang, Bazarova and Hancock (2010) actually conclude in their study that even when not expecting future interaction, CMC participants disclose more and with greater intimacy than participants of FtF interaction, supporting the hyperpersonal theory.

Hancock, Toma and Ellison (2007) support the idea of selective self-presentation in CMC by concluding that most online dating site users are lying in their profiles. They observe that 81 percent of their participants have intentional inaccuracies in their profiles, although the deceptions are usually so small that it would be difficult to notice them FtF. Even though the amount of deception is usually small, a few extreme lies, such as an 11-year lie about age may have caused the idea that deception is common in online dating because extreme lies are salient when encountered, they are memorable, and they are probably discussed with others (Toma, Hancock & Ellison, 2008).

Deception, however, is not always intentional. In Goffman's (1959) terms, a person is in this case "*sincere*," believing one's own performance. Ellison, Heino and Gibbs (2006) introduce the term "*foggy mirror*" to describe "*the gap between self-perceptions and the assessments made by others*" (p. 428). This gap can result from viewing one's ideal self as the reality, whereas others perceive the person's current self (Ellison, Heino & Gibbs, 2006). As Turkle (2011) says, people never stop working on their identity, and social media profiles give new ways to explore one's identity, often resulting in presenting "*the fantasy of who we want to be*" (p. 153). However, according to Goffman (1959), the person we would like to be is actually our truer self and eventually this fantasy is included as part of our personality. This can concretely be seen in how Ellison, Heino and Gibbs (2006) mention how one of their

participants misrepresented her weight but then lost some weight to achieve her ideal, previously misrepresented weight. Nevertheless, in order to not unintentionally deceive in their online profiles, some users ask friends and family to read their profile descriptions (Ellison, Heino & Gibbs, 2006; Whitty, 2008).

When does selective self-presentation become deception? According to Goffman (1959), intentionally providing misinformation is deceitful. Goffman (1959; 1967) also says that people believe in the other person's performance and expect them to behave in a consistent manner. To Turkle (2011), this is a problem because a social media profile is a simplification, pressuring people to behave according to this simplified representation. Ellison, Hancock and Toma (2011) research online dating and come to the conclusion that people accept flexibility in creating one's profile, agreeing that it is all right to include one's past, present and future in the profile. They name this the "*profile as promise*" framework. According to this framework, an intentional misrepresentation is not deceitful, but a promise of one's future self. Still, the other person is believed to be fundamentally the person in the profile, just not exactly identical (Ellison, Hancock & Toma, 2011). Goffman (1959) agrees that people "*treat the others present on the basis of the impression they give now about the past and the future*" (p. 249).

2.2.2 Social media services

The World Wide Web, or simply Web, has been usable for 25 years and nowadays this technology is an integral part of our lives (Brügger, 2016). The Web is an information space in which items have global identifiers (for a definition of the Web, see W3C, 2004). Last year in Finland, 87 percent of people aged 16-89 had used the Internet in the past 3 months, and 90 percent of people aged under 45 used Internet several times a day (Statistics Finland, 2015). Brügger (2016) identifies three general waves of development in the Web, social media and mobile media: First social media services, such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and YouTube were developed to be used in web browsers on desktop computers, whereas the next social media used mobile devices, particularly smartphones and touch screens, and the newest social media, such as Instagram, Snapchat and Tinder, are only app-based, created solely for mobile devices.

Technology is evolving so quickly that it is difficult to even define what social media are (Obar & Wildman, 2015). However, Obar and Wildman (2015) identify several aspects of social media from previous literature. They conclude that 1) social media are Web 2.0 Internet-based applications, allowing everyone to create as well as to consume content, 2) content

created by users is what keeps social media existing, 3) users create profiles within the boundaries of the social media service, and 4) profiles are connected to each other to create social networks. There are various kinds of social media services which Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) classify based on the amount of self-presentation and media richness in them. They define six different groupings of social media: collaborative projects (e.g., Wikipedia), blogs, content communities (e.g., YouTube), social networking sites (e.g., Facebook), virtual game worlds (e.g., World of Warcraft), and virtual social worlds (e.g., Second Life). Boyd and Ellison (2007) talk about the history of social networking sites and provide a timeline of the launch dates of many major social networking sites.

The history, definition and classification of social media has been introduced but is not gone through in more detail in this thesis. It is noteworthy that many of the social media services discussed in earlier research have been deserted since they are not used by many people, supporting the idea of Obar and Wildman (2015), that *“user-generated content is the lifeblood of social media”* (p. 6). Moreover, some social media sites are not used in Finland and they thus are not important for this study. In Finland, the most used social media services among people aged 15-55 are in order of popularity: YouTube, Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Tumblr, Snapchat, Kik, Wordpress, and Vine (MTV, Kurio & Laurea ammattikorkeakoulu, 2015). Some reasons for starting to use some social media services are pressure from friends (Van House, 2007), social connectivity, and curiosity (Quan-Haase & Young, 2010).

The design of a social media service affects what people do in the service. Subjects in the study by Van House (2011a) posted different kinds of pictures on different sites, and Duguay (2016b) says that a site design can encourage for example aesthetics or creativity. The popular social media services WhatsApp and Kik are instant messaging applications for smartphones (Table 1). When compared to text messages, WhatsApp messages are more frequent, more conversational, used more within closer social circles and for group-based communication, all in all supporting more immediate communication (Church & de Oliveira, 2013). Other instant messaging applications besides WhatsApp and Kik are for example Telegram and Facebook Messenger. Snapchat is an instant messaging application centered around pictures. Facebook and Instagram are both social networking services but Facebook works on all devices connected to the Internet whereas Instagram is a photo-sharing application designed for smartphones.

Table 1: Some free social media services meaningful in today's online dating culture in Finland. The platform column lists the platforms experienced by the user.

Service	Type	Platform	Contacts	Other
Facebook	Social networking service	Website and smartphone application	Users should appear with their real names	Features: Chat, public messages which can be commented on, picture album, events, and more
Facebook Messenger	Instant messaging service	Smartphone	Automatically from Facebook or via phone numbers	
Instagram	Social networking service for sharing photographs and videos	Smartphone, usable also on other platforms with limited features	Can be added automatically from Facebook; users appear with a username	
Kik	Instant messaging service	Smartphone	Usable with a username, no phone number required	
Skype	Instant messaging service with video chat	Cross-platform	Users appear and are added with a username	
Snapchat	Instant messaging service for sharing photographs and videos	Smartphone	For example, via usernames or phone contacts; users appear with a username	Shared images and videos delete automatically after a specified time
Telegram	Instant messaging service	Cross-platform	Via phone numbers or voluntary usernames	
WhatsApp	Instant messaging service	Cross-platform	Automatically from phone's contacts with phone numbers	

2.2.3 Online dating

Online dating simply refers to searching for a partner using dating sites, with dating continuing offline after a potential partner has been found (Long, 2010; Finkel, et al., 2012). Compared to offline dating, online dating averts the awkwardness of being rejected face-to-face by someone (Zytka, Grandhi & Jones, 2015). Van House (2011a) points out that many social media sites have begun with a focus on dating, as can still be seen from such profile options as being able to choose one's relationship status on Facebook.

There are cultural differences in dating and thus people should be careful in applying findings from American research to describe Finnish relationships (Poutiainen, 2009). However, according to Long (2010), media is a source of dating scripts. As American movies and TV-series are shown abundantly in the Finnish television, it is possible that the American dating culture has been adopted by some Finns. At least Walther's SIPT has received support even in a non-Western culture, as Farrer and Gavin (2009) conclude that SIPT is applicable to Japanese online daters despite some cultural differences. Nevertheless, cultural differences should be taken into account when studying something as culturally constructed as dating. Differences in dating and romantic relationships have been reported for example also between Americans and Chinese (Gao, 2001), and Americans and Czechs (Havlicek, et al., 2008).

Finkel, et al. (2012) provide a look at the history of online dating, saying that it began with Match in 1995, was appended with algorithm-based matchmaking sites in 2000 and then moved to smartphones in 2008. Before online dating, romantic partners could be searched for using for example personal advertisements in newspapers (Long, 2010). These advertisements were never widely socially acceptable and the stigma related to them initially extended also to online dating (Finkel, et al., 2012). Nowadays, however, online dating is very popular (Ellison, Heino & Gibbs, 2006; Long, 2010). People with certain characteristics use online dating more than others (for a review, see Finkel, et al., 2012) but online dating users no longer feel that the sites are for desperate people incapable of finding partners offline (James, 2015). In fact, Finkel, et al. (2012) conclude that online dating site users and people who do not use online dating sites are more similar than different. Some research on online dating talks about how it is centered upon casual encounters (Birnholtz, et al., 2015) but it should be noted that online daters often have multiple, simultaneous dating goals from casual sex to finding a life partner (Kambara, 2005; Gibbs, Ellison & Heino, 2006; Zytka, Grandhi & Jones, 2015; Puranen, 2016).

There are various types of online dating sites. Finkel, et al. (2012) provide a fairly comprehensive list of different online dating sites although the landscape of these sites is constantly changing. They identify 14 different categories of online dating sites, including for example general (e.g., Match, PlentyOfFish, OkCupid) and niche self-selection sites (e.g., JDate for Jews), virtual dating sites (e.g., OmniDate), matching sites using self-reports (e.g., eHarmony, PerfectMatch) and not using self-reports (e.g., GenePartner, ScientificMatch), smartphone apps (e.g., Grindr), sex or hookup sites (e.g., GetItOn), and infidelity sites (e.g., AshleyMadison). For a clear idea on the use of eHarmony, PlentyOfFish and Match, see Long (2010).

When people feel the need to lie their age to not seem old because everybody else is also lying (Ellison, Heino & Gibbs, 2006) and the need to stand out from the crowd by being humorous (David & Cambre, 2016), it seems that online dating profiles may express the characteristics of the context more than the characteristics of the person, as is often the case when giving a performance, according to Goffman (1959). Frost, et al. (2008) introduce *Virtual Dates* which provides a simulation of a first date. They receive positive results in testing it, suggesting that such simulations could allow people to more easily validate whether another person should be met FtF and to present themselves without the need to adjust to the form encouraged by online dating sites.

Due to spending a lot of time and effort in online dating and still experiencing disappointments, some people do not enjoy online dating (Frost, et al., 2008). In Finland, experiences of online dating exhaustion were recently called for in the local newspaper and over 180 people reported their frustrations towards online dating (Rissanen, 2016). According to Nurminen (2015a), dating exhaustion is similar to a burnout, causing physical and mental symptoms. This exhaustion can however be overcome by taking a break from online dating (Nurminen, 2015a; Rissanen, 2016). Online dating applications enable users to meet others quickly one after the other and thus disappointments are also common (Rissanen, 2016). These disappointments are again causing more prejudice, as due to experiences people trust that others are misrepresenting themselves online (Whitty, 2008; Zytka, Grandhi & Jones, 2014).

Algorithm-based matchmaking sites are based on the idea that algorithms increase the chance of users finding a person who is actually suitable to them, as users may not be capable or motivated enough to find someone compatible themselves (Finkel, et al., 2012). However, as Finkel, et al. (2012) say, there is no evidence that matchmaking sites actually work. They

also make an interesting point by saying that dating sites which require a fee want to keep most of the site users single in order to not lose paying customers.

Tinder is a location-based online dating application for smartphones. After its launch in 2012, Tinder has been written about quite a lot in research but there is still more research about older and more traditional online dating sites than about Tinder. The design of Tinder is quite different from more traditional online dating sites. Many traditional dating sites allow users to specify multiple characteristics that another user has to meet whereas Tinder users can only choose 1) an age range, 2) whether they are searching for men, women or both, and 3) a search distance, specifying the distance radius within which shown profile owners should be located from the user. When looking at profiles in Tinder, a user can first see a person's first profile picture, their name, age and possibly their education and work information (Figure 2). The first profile picture needs to be tapped to see the rest of the profile. In a Tinder profile, there can be a total of six profile pictures. A Tinder profile also has a text field where users can write anything with a maximum length of 500 letters. When looking at someone's profile, possible mutual Facebook page likes and mutual Facebook friends and friends of friends can be seen. Tinder users can also connect their Instagram account to Tinder, and show their favorite artists by linking Spotify to the Tinder profile.

In order to see another Tinder profile, a user must react to the profile shown to them. The user has to either 1) dislike the profile by swiping left on the picture or tapping the red X icon, 2) like the profile by swiping right or tapping the heart icon, or 3) "*super like*" the profile by swiping up or tapping the star icon. When in a profile, users can only tap the buttons, and swiping lets them go through all the profile pictures. After disliking a profile, the user simply sees another Tinder profile. If two people both like each other's profiles, an "*It's a match!*" message appears and these users are able to message each other. When two people like each other, the other person is referred to as a *match*. With a super like, the super liked user can instantly see that the other person has liked their profile, whereas there is no way of knowing whether a person has liked one's profile before getting a match. On many online dating sites, users can contact anyone on the site, causing more desirable people to receive so many first-contact e-mails that they may decide to leave the site (Finkel, et al., 2012). On Tinder, this is not an issue as users can contact each other only after they have both liked each other and have thus matched. Tinder is free but the amount of times a user can like other Tinder profiles is limited without paying for *Tinder Plus*, which also provides other additional features

besides unlimited likes such as *Rewind* which lets one cancel an accidental left swipe (Tinder Team, 2015b).



Figure 2: Tinder design. On the left, a Tinder profile (Tinder Team, 2015c). On the right, the message which is shown after two people have liked each other (Tinder Team, 2015a).

2.3 PICTURES

The use of photographs has changed a lot in the past few decades (for a history of photography, see Sarvas & Frohlich, 2011). Digital photographs are here compared with film photographs and the different uses that photographs serve are introduced.

Digital photography began in the 1990s for consumers (Sarvas & Frohlich, 2011). With such technological advances as affordable PCs, digital cameras, the World Wide Web, scanners, printers, photo editing and management software, photo sharing and publishing websites, camera phones, social networking sites and digital photo frames, digital photography has become easy and common for consumers (Sarvas & Frohlich, 2011). With digitization, picture quality has improved considerably due to, for example, increased functionality, instant

feedback and photo editing software (Van House, 2011b). Due to advances in technology, photographs have become a greater part of people's lives (Van House, 2011b) and they are used in abundance online (Van House, 2011a).

More than film photographs, digital photographs "*carry activity across space and time*" (Van House, 2011b, p. 126). This means that pictures can be shared with others immediately after capture by uploading them online or sending them with mobile phones (Sarvas & Frohlich, 2011; Van House, 2011b). Photographs can be taken spontaneously anytime and anywhere (Van House, 2011b). While the photographer can immediately share a picture, others do not have to view it immediately but they can view it whenever they want, not being restricted to view the picture at the same time with the photographer, or to be in the same location with them (Sarvas & Frohlich, 2011). Van House (2007) calls this "*distant closeness*," staying close to someone with mediated, asynchronous interaction.

While digital photographs can be characterized with immediacy, film photographs have the advantage of being durable (Van House, 2011b). Data loss of digital photographs is widely discussed in previous research (Prieto Blanco, 2016). While paper photographs can be retrieved decades later, technological storage systems and online image hosting sites may fail, causing pictures to be deleted, making them unretrievable (Van House, 2011b). Moreover, pictures have to be transferred from previous storage systems to new ones and participants in the study by Van House (2011b) expected that no one would search their computers for photographs after they die, causing digital photographs to eventually be lost with technology.

As Van House (2011a) says, photographs do not only show what one looks like, but also a wide range of other things such as what one has been doing, what kind of possession and friends they have, and what they consider photo-worthy. Photographs have a number of different uses and Van House, et al., (2005) list five different uses for camera phone photographs: creating and maintaining social relationships, personal and group memory, self-expression, self-presentation, and functional: self and others. Photographs have the ability to create and maintain relationships as important acquaintances often appear in photographs and photographs are shared with them (Van House, 2011b). Personal and group memory refers to how photographs serve as reminders of experiences and these experiences can be shared with others by showing these pictures (Van House, et al., 2005). Although memory is important with film photographs, according to Sarvas and Frohlich (2011), communication is a more important use of digital photographs. The use of photographs for

self-expression refers to taking pictures which serve a primary function of being aesthetic or humorous (Van House, 2011b). Self-expression is related to the use of photographs for self-presentation to influence how others view oneself (Van House, et al., 2005). Especially photographs taken with a camera phone serve also a functional use, with pictures being used in place of writing, copying or scanning (Van House, et al., 2005).

2.4 RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

This chapter concludes the literature review. First, a definition of intimacy is formulated, and then theories about the amount of intimacy in CMC and FtF interaction are summarized. Finally, initial hypotheses are expanded by adding new hypotheses and clarifying the initial ones.

As said in the intimacy section, some researchers have formulated what constitutes intimacy. The formulations of intimacy in previous research are often quite different as aspects of intimacy have different names and different descriptions. There are also many overlapping definitions. All the types of intimacy in previous research could be categorized in three distinct and researchable types of intimacy: emotional intimacy, social intimacy, and physical intimacy (Table 2).

Table 2: Types of intimacy identified in previous research, in order of publication. The intimacy types named in the research are italicized and these types have been categorized to emotional, social and physical intimacy based on their descriptions.

Authors	Emotional intimacy	Social intimacy	Physical intimacy
Schaefer & Olson, 1981	<i>Emotional</i> : closeness of feelings; <i>Intellectual</i> : sharing ideas; <i>Recreational</i> : shared interests in hobbies, mutual participation in sporting events	<i>Social</i> : common friends and similarities in social networks	<i>Sexual</i> : sharing general affection and/or sexual activity
Tolstedt & Stokes, 1983	<i>Verbal</i> : disclosure of facts and of emotions, judgement and opinions;		<i>Physical</i> : sex and other physical expressions of love

	<i>Affective</i> : feelings of closeness and emotional bonding		
Helgeson, Shaver & Dyer, 1987	<i>Self-disclosure</i> : verbal sharing of intimate topics and experiences; <i>Expressiveness</i>		<i>Affection or sexuality</i> : proximity, sex
Moore, McCabe & Stockdale, 1998	<i>Engagement and communication</i> : e.g., serious conversations, common thoughts, mutual interests	<i>Shared friendships</i> : common friends	<i>Engagement</i> : sexual interest
Vetere, et al., 2005	<i>Emotional</i> ; <i>Expressive</i> : non-verbal, flirting & playful; <i>Reciprocity</i>	<i>Public (from public and private)</i> : presenting to the world their status as a couple, touching and kissing in public, marriage	<i>Physical</i> : stroking and patting, sexual relations
Starzyk, et al., 2006	<i>Knowledge of goals</i> ; <i>Self-disclosure</i>	<i>Social network familiarity</i>	<i>Physical</i>

Various aspects of intimacy in previous research were included in the emotional intimacy aspect in this framework, including both nonverbal feelings of closeness and verbal disclosure. Emotional intimacy is here defined as self-disclosure, shared interests, and feelings of closeness and attraction (Figure 3). The aspect of social intimacy does not exist in two of the previous studies but it was nevertheless distinct and was chosen as its own separate aspect of intimacy. Social intimacy is here defined as knowledge of the other person's social networks and similarities in these networks. Drawing from the definition of "public and private" intimacy by Vetere, et al. (2005), social intimacy can also be studied here as public expressions of affection such as kissing or touching in public places, presenting the couple's relationship status on social media, and sharing pictures taken together on social media. Finally, physical intimacy is included in every attempt to define intimacy, and it is thus its own intimacy type in this study as well. Physical intimacy is here defined as kissing, sexual interest and sex, physical proximity and touching.

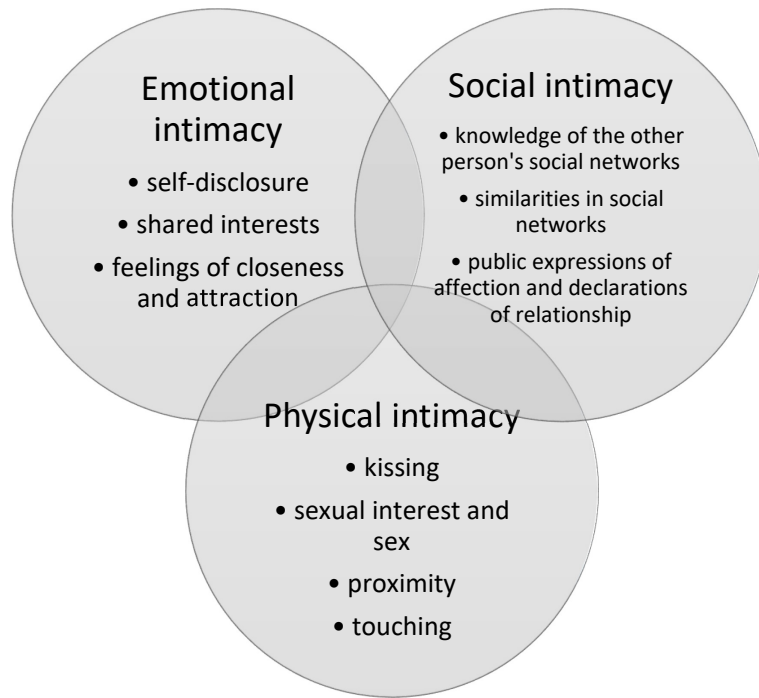


Figure 3: Types of intimacy and their descriptions in this thesis.

To conclude this research framework and the literature review chapter, theories of the amount of intimacy in face-to-face and computer-mediated communication are summarized. These three main perspectives are the cues-filtered-out, social information processing and hyperpersonal theories (Figure 4). Cues-filtered-out theories, including the media richness theory, see CMC as more impersonal than FtF communication. SIPT argues that CMC is as interpersonal as FtF communication and the hyperpersonal theory goes even further by stating that CMC can actually be more socially desirable than FtF communication.

Cues-filtered-out perspective	Social information processing theory	Hyperpersonal theory
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rich media provide immediate feedback, multiple cues and natural language Lack of nonverbal cues in CMC All CMC is more impersonal than FtF communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People want to develop social relationships both in CMC and in FtF interaction People can adapt to the communication provided by CMC Slower exchange of messages in CMC Impressions are formed based on textual cues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CMC can be more socially desirable than FtF interaction Lack of nonverbal cues provides equality and more extreme affection In CMC, selective self-presentation is easier Asynchronicity allows more thoughtful messages

Figure 4: Theories comparing the amount of intimacy in computer-mediated communication and face-to-face communication.

There were four initial hypotheses in this thesis, explained in the introduction. The first two hypotheses were clarified based on earlier research by adding more specific timings, as according to Puranen (2016), Tinder is replaced after a few days of communication in Tinder, and as Whitty (2008) says that most participants in her study met their dates within a week or two. In addition to the four initial hypotheses, two more hypotheses were added to this thesis based on earlier research. Thus, the hypotheses for this study are as follows:

H1. People replace Tinder quickly (within a few days) with other social media services.

H2. People meet face-to-face after a match within two weeks.

H3. Profile pictures lose their importance gradually.

H4. Social media

a. help people find potential romantic partners,

b. make it easier for people to get to know each other, and

c. make it easier for people to stay in touch.

H5. Social media site design affects what people do.

H6. Computer-mediated communication can be more socially desirable than face-to-face communication.

Hypothesis 5 follows Van House (2011a) and Duguay (2016b) who claim that social media site design can affect the things that users do. Hypothesis 6 is formulated based on the social information processing and hyperpersonality theories. Especially because online daters want to build a relationship regardless of whether they initially meet on Tinder or FtF and because there are more opportunities for selective self-presentation in CMC than in FtF communication, it is hypothesized that CMC can be more socially desirable than FtF communication. Based on the hyperpersonal theory, CMC provides more opportunities for selective self-presentation and more extreme affection than FtF communication, suggesting that CMC can be more socially desirable in all phases of a relationship since it can help a person in presenting themselves on Tinder and also in sharing affection later on.

3 METHODOLOGY

In the research part of this thesis, interviews and observations are used to gather information about the utilization of social media while dating. In this chapter, these data gathering methods and the reasons for choosing these methods are explained, ethical aspects of this study are considered, the recruitment process and study subjects are introduced, and finally the analysis procedure is explained.

3.1 GATHERING DATA

There are multiple data gathering methods that would be suitable for accumulating data in this study. With questionnaires it would be fast and easy to get data from a lot of people. However, there are various disadvantages to questionnaires. When studying a concept which is as difficult to understand and explicate as intimacy, not being able to discuss complex themes or ask further questions from received answers would decrease the usefulness of the questionnaire results. When intimacy and the use of social media while dating in Finland is better understood, it would be possible to test results gained from this study by using questionnaires. In interviews, unlike in questionnaires, it is possible to ask further clarifying questions, give further details and guide conversation to the most important topics. Interviews provide rich qualitative data for analysis without being too burdensome or time-consuming for the subjects. Interviewing is also a good way to begin studying a new and unclear topic. These are the reasons why interviewing is the main method for gathering data in this thesis.

The interviews in this study are semi-structured to enable free conversation. In the interview, subjects are asked to tell about Tinder matches they have met and about the way the relationship with these people progressed (see Appendix A for interview questions). The subject can tell freely about the relationship while drawing a timeline of main events and a curve showing the subject's feelings towards the date at specific times depicted in the timeline. When simply telling how an event has happened, it is harder for people to start analyzing interview questions and their own answers. After all, analyzing should be done by the researcher, who knows what the research objective is and what the concepts related to the research are. A problem with any kind of method when studying people is that the subjects may answer questions in a way they believe the researcher would like them to be answered. This pleasing behavior is also reduced when asking the subjects to tell about what

has actually happened. Furthermore, the timeline can help people remember what has happened when answering further questions.

A productive method of studying in this thesis would be analyzing the chat and sharing history from all the social media subjects are using. This would bring unbiased data from which sent and shared pictures and the level of intimacy in messages could be analyzed. However, the majority of people wish to protect their privacy and keep their messages to themselves. Reading chat messages would take a lot of time and understanding messages would also require interviewing, unless face-to-face meetings with subjects and their partners would be recorded as well, requiring even more tolerance from subjects. The subjects could also keep diaries to help in understanding messages but this would require a lot of work from the subjects and external factors affecting diary notes might still remain unknown. However, even though analyzing the chat and sharing histories would be difficult to execute, this research method can still be utilized along with interviewing. Thus, the subjects are asked for a permission to see and analyze their conversation histories with sent pictures. Their Tinder profiles are also analyzed where approved of.

The two dominant forms of qualitative data analysis are *content analysis*, where content is identified in terms of units, and *discourse analysis*, where analysis is more inductive and not based on measurements (David & Sutton, 2011). Content analysis and discourse analysis require each other and are combined in all forms of qualitative data analysis (David & Sutton, 2011). *Grounded theory* is one such combination. In grounded theory, “*data collection and data analysis often fold into each other,*” (p. 320) as each round of data collection is reflected upon (David & Sutton, 2011). This is beneficial in this thesis, because the research field is not well studied and it is not known how people will answer questions. Thus, the asked questions can be modified from one interview to the next, to gain valuable information. In accordance with the grounded theory, the amount of interviews is not set out beforehand, but interviewing is ceased as saturation is reached when “*data collection no longer generates new and significant challenges to the explanatory capacity of the emergent theory*” (David & Sutton, 2011, p. 197).

There is a tension in research between *internal* and *external validity* (David & Sutton, 2011). When a study has internal validity, the gathered data expresses the realities of the study participants, and when a study has external validity, the results can be generalized to the wider population, not *every* human, but to the population from which the data sample was selected (David & Sutton, 2011). This study will aim to achieve internal validity with

interviews and observation, and external validity by choosing the subjects wisely. Semi-structured interviews and observations are a great way of gaining internal validity since a lot of information is gained from the subjects with the possibility to ask questions which clarify unclear information. As David and Sutton (2011) say, a well-chosen smaller sample is better for external validity than a poorly chosen large sample. Therefore, the subjects in this study should fill certain requirements set beforehand, to provide a sample of participants which would be representative of the larger population which they are a part of.

3.2 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is not possible to give clear ethical instructions that could be applied to all kinds of research but ethical guidelines do exist and they should be followed with contextual judgement (Markham & Buchanan, 2012). Ethical guidelines state that research should 1) maximize benefits and minimize harms, 2) ensure that research participation is informed, rationale and voluntary and 3) ensure that benefits and burdens are distributed across populations (Fisher & Anushko, 2008). This research is rather harmless to participants, not placing them in any physical or mental danger and not leading to any major benefits or burdens, as long as privacy and anonymity are preserved. However, it should be ensured that participation in this study is informed and voluntary.

When studying humans, the participants should provide their *informed consent*, meaning that all information that could influence their willingness to participate should be provided to them (Fisher & Anushko, 2008). Fisher and Anushko (2008) list information that should be provided to the study participants before research. From their list, five points which are more relevant to this study are considered next. 1) The study purpose, duration and procedures should be told to participants. Already in the recruitment announcement it is informed that the study is for a master's thesis, it will last approximately an hour and it will include an interview which will be recorded. 2) Incentives for participation should be explained and this is also done in the recruitment announcement. 3) Participants should be given the right to decline or withdraw from participation and thus the subjects are told in the beginning of the interview that they have the right to not answer questions they do not wish to answer, and that they have the right to withdraw their participation even after the interview is over, in which case all gathered data will be erased without further questions or any consequences.

In the beginning of the interview session, the participants will sign a study agreement in which the participants will give their consent to being interviewed and recorded. The

identities of subjects are disguised and the study material will be handled confidentially. This is explained in the beginning of the interview as well as in the study agreement. The study agreement is sent to the participants beforehand so that they have time to read it through. The participants will also receive a copy of the agreement in the interview session. 4) The subjects should be given information on whom to contact if they have questions and this contact information is given in the study agreement. 5) Finally, the subjects should be given the opportunity to ask questions. This opportunity is given especially in the beginning of the interview session, after introductions and telling what the research is, what it is for and what are the rights of the subject, as well as after the interview is finished.

When using interviewing as a study method, it is clear that interviewees agree to participate in the study if they arrive to the interview. Likewise, it is clear that the participants approve that their profile pictures or conversation histories are examined if they send them. In this study, the subjects' written informed consent is also requested, to make it more evident that they agree to participate. However, the same is not applied to the people the participants have dated. In interviews the participants may mention the names of their dates and in mediated conversation histories names, private conversations and even pictures may be seen, without the consent of the dates. It is, however, quite difficult to not hear any information about the people the subjects are talking about in interviews. In observation, especially ethnography, this is even more impossible as people who are not observed may suddenly appear and be seen. Thus, examining the conversation histories of study subjects is here judged to be acceptable. The decision of providing conversation histories as study material for this thesis lays on the participants and they are to decide whether the conversations are too intimate to be shown to outsiders. Nothing is said about the study of conversation histories at any point before the interview, and the study participants receive their participation reward before the conversations are asked for. It is made very clear that sending these conversation histories is voluntary.

The privacy, confidentiality and anonymity of the study participants should be respected (David & Sutton, 2011) and as much as possible in this study is done to protect these rights. I am the only one to know the names of the subjects as in this thesis pseudonyms are used. When storing interview recordings and study transcripts, they are stored in an external storage, not on a computer with access to the Internet. The names of the subjects do not appear in the transcripts but numerical codenames are used with the real names stored elsewhere, on paper. The pseudonyms used in this thesis are yet additional codenames not

existing elsewhere. The recordings are destroyed after this thesis is done, whereas the transcripts are kept to be used by the DIFA project, and where approved of by the subjects, they are archived anonymized in the Finnish Social Science Data Archive.

3.3 SUBJECTS AND RECRUITMENT

Research subjects were adult Tinder users living in the Helsinki metropolitan area in Finland and wishing for a serious relationship. There were also some former Tinder users, who were in a serious relationship with someone, providing different data and enriching the results. The recruitment process is explained here and afterwards the study subjects are introduced.

The subjects were recruited by making a Facebook page of the research and distributing this page on Facebook (Figure 5). I distributed the page by posting it on my Facebook wall and on the wall of Aalto University's Information Networks programme, which I am a student of. I also told about the Facebook page to my family and friends and it is not known how much the page has been talked about in person or shared to other Facebook groups. A couple of the subjects came to know about this study through snowball sampling as they mentioned hearing about it from a friend who had already participated. Before actual recruitment, two friends of mine with Tinder experience helped in testing the interview questions.



Figure 5: The home page of the Facebook page made for finding study subjects. The shown profile and cover pictures were downloaded from pixabay.com, a site sharing images and videos that can freely be used anywhere.

The Facebook page name was “*Searching for interviewees for a research on dating.*” All the interviews were held within two months after publishing the Facebook page. According to Facebook, during this time 687 unique Facebook users saw some content associated with the recruitment page, with 593 of these users seeing the content within two days after publishing. The Facebook page shortly explained that the study was about building intimacy using social media while dating (see Appendix B for the Facebook announcement).

It is better for external validity to have a well-chosen and relatively small sample than to have a badly chosen large sample which cannot be generalized to the wider population (David & Sutton, 2011). Thus, the sample should be carefully chosen and therefore there were three main requirements that the hired subjects were supposed to meet: 1) They were seeking or they had been seeking a romantic life partner 2) using Tinder, and 3) they had prior experience in this due to meeting some of their Tinder matches FtF. Also, mostly for practical reasons, the subjects had to be at least 18 years old and they had to live in the Helsinki metropolitan area. As a reward for taking part in this study, the subjects received movie tickets. However, it was made clear in the interview that the tickets were not a reward for answering questions. In fact, the subjects could choose to discontinue taking part in this study anytime, they had the right to have the data already gathered of them to be destroyed, and they had the right to not answer any questions they found too personal.

There were 13 subjects in this study, with 9 being female and 4 being male (Table 3). The subjects' age ranged from 23 to 42, with an average of 29.5, a mode of 35 and a median of 27. Based on whether the subjects were searching for men, women or both on Tinder, one of the subjects was bisexual and the rest were straight. 9 of the subjects were single and 4 were in a relationship, with 2 being in a long-distance relationship and one dating someone not met in Tinder. None of the subjects mentioned they have any children. The far majority of the subjects had a university degree or were pursuing one. The subjects are introduced next.

Table 3: List of the subjects sorted by age in ascending order. The names have been changed to protect the privacy of subjects. Duration of dating and using Tinder are rough estimates. Duration of dating refers to the time spent dating the person talked about in the interview. The people have not necessarily been in a relationship.

Name	Sex	Age	Duration of dating	Use of Tinder
Larry	male	23	2-3 months, ongoing	1-2 years
Kevin	male	23	over a year, ongoing	2+ years
Rachel	female	25	4-5 months	2+ years
Mary	female	26	over a year, ongoing	1-2 years
Jason	male	26	4-5 months, ongoing	2+ years
Holly	female	27	less than a month, ongoing	less than 1 month
Nancy	female	27	4-5 months	less than 1 year
Betty	female	29	1-2 months	less than 1 year
Emily	female	30	over a year	1-2 years
Annie	female	35	over a year	1-2 years
Carol	female	35	less than a month, ongoing	1 year
David	male	35	2-3 months	2+ years
Sarah	female	42	2-3 months	less than 1 year

Larry, 23, was single for four years before meeting the woman he is seeing now. He has had some shorter relationships during these years, though. He has met 5-6 of his Tinder matches but his enthusiasm towards Tinder has decreased and his current girlfriend was actually the only match he messaged during the past year. Now he has taken down his profile and uninstalled Tinder.

The last time Kevin, 23, used Tinder was a year ago. He began using Tinder in 2014 and used it daily before finding his current girlfriend through Tinder over a year ago while travelling in Europe. He is now in a long-distance relationship. He talks a lot about Tinder dating scripts (how people are supposed to behave) and finds the idea of using text messages instead of instant messaging services simply impossible.

Rachel, 25, installed Tinder almost instantly after it was launched. She thinks that people were more excited about Tinder in the beginning whereas now it is more difficult to have proper conversations on Tinder. During these past few years she has dated some men seriously and has thus uninstalled Tinder a few times. Sometimes she is frustrated with Tinder and not being able to find a suitable partner.

Mary, 26, found her boyfriend from Tinder approximately a year ago, after using Tinder for 1.5 years. Their relationship began rather slowly as they communicated on WhatsApp and Tinder for a month before meeting in person. Mary was frustrated as she had not met the other person even after extensive instant messaging but as they finally met, the person was as lovely as she had anticipated.

Jason, 26, has used Tinder for almost three years now and has met dozens of people via Tinder. He enjoys tinding and has Tinder Plus. In the past few years, he has been seeing some Tinder matches for varying periods of time, some for several months. Currently he is not in a relationship with anyone but he talks about a Tinder match he has been dating for a few months now. He wishes for a long-term relationship but has a relaxed attitude towards Tinder: He believes that a partner can be found via Tinder but he does not place major expectations on any particular dates.

From the subjects, Holly, 27, has used Tinder for the shortest amount of time, less than a month. However, she has already been on six or seven Tinder dates. She has a university degree and would prefer her match to have one as well. She arrives to the interview during her lunch hour and strongly identifies herself through her education and work. She has a rescued dog whose picture she draws in the timeline paper while answering a question.

Nancy, 27, is the only bisexual subject in this study. She is also different from the other subjects in that she has stopped using Tinder even though she is still single. She sees Tinder more as a game and a way to pass time rather than a good way to find a life partner although she met some people via Tinder whom she dated for several months. In the end of her tinding, she used Tinder more as an ego booster than a way to find potential singles.

Betty, 29, became single in November 2015 after a long-term relationship. Since then, she has used Tinder and has met seven of her Tinder matches. She talks about her interest towards research and is excited to get to talk about one of her Tinder matches. She had very fond feelings toward this match and she talks very openly about her emotions towards him and the breakup.

Emily, 30, has just been finishing her own master's thesis, which she is going to return the same evening, as she arrives to the interview. She first installed Tinder over 1.5 years ago but has not used it all this time. She is rather skeptical towards Tinder but has still met someone she dated for over a year, making her believe that it is possible to find someone via Tinder.

Annie, 35, used Tinder a lot for 1-1.5 years. For her, it was easy to go on dates after a short conversation on Tinder and thus she met dozens of matches face-to-face. She was not looking only for a long-term relationship from Tinder. Now she is dating someone she met outside Tinder. Although some of her relatives and friends have found life partners in Tinder, she believes that she would find someone more probably through friends or in a bar.

Carol, 35, has used Tinder for a year, with some breaks during this time when she has been dating someone found via Tinder or outside it. She finds Tinder handy and better than some other online dating sites she has used. She thinks that it is more probable to find a life partner from Tinder than from a bar because a lot of people in bars are seeking one-night stands. She talks about her concerns with online privacy and safety when meeting people offline.

David, 35, has used Tinder almost as long as it has been available. He talks about it as an "*apps*" because when he started using it, he thought there was still some kind of a stigma related to online dating although there no longer is one, at least not as strongly. He is the only one of the subjects who prefers Facebook for most of the communication he has online.

Sarah, 42, has been using Tinder for half a year now. She has met four Tinder matches face-to-face and dated one of the matches for two months. She used to have negative feelings towards Tinder because of its focus on pictures but decided to give it a try. She does not use Tinder on a daily basis and does not take it too seriously but she enjoys using it. She used to

be married and now finds it rather difficult to find someone new. She still believes that it is equally likely to find someone from Tinder as from somewhere else.

3.4 ANALYSIS PROCEDURE

This study follows grounded theory where data gathering and analysis are intertwined. As interview questions were thought through and often modified after each interview, the interviews that were held later provided more usable data than the first interviews, which were valuable for getting familiar with the thoughts related to online dating. The interview recordings were transcribed by outsiders and the transcriptions were read through. Quotations used in this thesis were still verified by listening to the recordings. The analysis procedure of the transcriptions had multiple stages including grounded theory coding, explained in this chapter.

As I had not used Tinder before interviewing the subjects, the material gained from interviews originated from the subjects instead of being affected by my own Tinder observations. Some initial hypotheses were formed by discussing with friends and reading Tinder related research. However, in the analysis *inductive coding* was used instead of *deductive coding*, meaning that codes were not generated before the collection of data but after it (David & Sutton, 2011). After initial interviews, the data gathered was examined for relevant emerging themes and interesting observations. The information from interviews was structured in Excel for a coherent idea of most important themes. However, these important themes were quite different from the final most significant codes.

After all the interviews, there was an idea about initial codes which were used as headings in a text editor. Chunks of text from transcripts were added under the relevant headings. At this stage, most of the information from the transcripts were categorized but in subsequent steps more and more of the data was erased. After adding chunks of text under headings, new most important categories and subcategories emerged that acted as headings in the second phase of analysis. Due to using subcategories, there was a hierarchy in codes, meaning that *axial coding* was used (David & Sutton, 2011). The analysis process continued through a total of five analysis phases. Later in the analysis procedure, not all chunks of text were added under an important heading but only the most relevant chunks of text, those which could be used in the thesis, were included. At the same time, it was identified how many of the subjects had talked about a certain topic in order to identify the most important ideas and to reduce the possibility of researcher bias. In accordance with grounded theory, memos were

used during analysis to write down emerging ideas, hunches, and connections between codes (David Sutton, 2011).

During the analysis, the idea of dividing the findings in three different parts (from profile pictures, to a date, and beyond) emerged. The distinction was also applicable to the discussion section, and due to its significance, it was also used in the title of this thesis. All the other codes were placed under these main codes. There were a few *in vivo* codes, emerging from the language used by the subjects, but most codes were *latent*, identified by me (David & Sutton, 2011). There were a total of 124 codes (see Appendix C) which were originally mostly in Finnish because the interviews were carried out in Finnish. The highest category codes translated in English were as follows:

- From profile pictures...
 - Love-hate relationship to Tinder
 - What is expected from profiles
 - Expectations drawn from profiles
- ...To a date...
 - Want to meet soon
 - Prejudice before the first date
 - The significance of dates
- ...And beyond
 - Social media help to stay in touch
 - Sending pictures

The codes were structured in a way that would allow the writing of findings to follow the hierarchy of codes, making the writing process easier. Thus, the given codes are almost the same as headings in the following chapters. The findings gained from analysis are gone through next.

4 FINDINGS

This chapter will introduce and analyze findings of the research. The chapter is divided into three online dating phases based on the sequential nature of online dating. Online dating begins with profiles, switches to offline dating on the first date, and a couple continues to stay in touch using social media between dates. The most interesting points are highlighted in the text. As the interviews were held in Finnish, they had to be translated in English. As a lot of the original language and nuances can be lost in translation, the interview answers presented in this chapter are available in Finnish in Appendix D.

4.1 FROM PROFILE PICTURES...

The online dating process begins with Tinder profiles which focus on pictures. The ambivalent feelings subjects have towards Tinder are introduced, followed by the expectations they have towards Tinder profiles and the expectations that they form about other people based on their social media profiles.

4.1.1 Subjects expect that it is possible to find a life partner via Tinder

THE ATTITUDES THAT SUBJECTS EXPRESS TOWARDS TINDER ARE USUALLY AMBIVALENT. Emily expresses this ambivalence by having a “love-hate relationship” towards Tinder. The subjects wish to find a partner for life and **FRUSTRATIONS ARISE WHEN MOST OF THE PEOPLE ON TINDER TURN OUT TO BE SOMETHING ELSE THAN WHAT THEY ARE SEEKING.** Two of the subjects describe these frustrations in the following quotations.

And I uninstalled Tinder a few times in between. It was pretty frustrating at times. To be there when most of the interaction can be quite a waste of time. After all, you try to gather information about others based only on pictures and, you can't sort of know what the other person is like and the conversation doesn't necessarily work out at all and when there are many matches it will take quite a lot of time. (Kevin)

Of course most of the people there are disappointments, you can't help it. And I've met lots of men from there, live I mean, there are dozens, because there's time for it, within months. With most of them it was just like one coffee or, a beer and then, bye. [...] I do remember at times thinking that I'm never going back there, that I can't stand it that everyone there is an idiot.

You can't find worthy men in Tinder. At some point I did think like that. And most of them are like that. (Annie)

Despite uninstalling Tinder due to frustration, as in the previous quotes, the subjects have still reinstalled it, because they may feel that **IT IS DIFFICULT TO FIND POTENTIAL PARTNERS WITHOUT TINDER**. In the following, Emily describes her love-hate relationship towards Tinder: the frustration towards Tinder and the difficulty of finding a partner.

I don't think that it's necessarily of any use, but it's also the only, or it feels like it's the only way for singles of my age to meet each other. It's an app that you sort of hate and it feels completely useless and at times it's more of an entertainment, more than any real way to find a partner. It's a game that you play because it's fun and there are ridiculous profiles and stuff there. But in a way you kinda have to be there, if you want to be active in this sense at all. I think that partly it's just because it exists, that you notice that people don't necessarily actively search for company in public places anymore these days, but Tinder is used in these places as well. And then of course when you're at this age, your groups of friends begin to be quite established. When ten years ago you always came to know someone via someone else, now it feels a bit like you have to resort to these methods, because you don't meet people naturally the same way at this age.

There are multiple notable points in Emily's description. First of all, she describes that the difficulty of finding a partner arises from her age and the fact that there are no potential single men in her friends. In her opinion, Tinder has changed the dating culture because now that people do not have to search for a partner offline, they have transferred all of their efforts in trying to find a partner online. She also mentions that **TINDER IS MORE OF AN ENTERTAINMENT METHOD**, a game to play. This comparison was made by a few subjects, and Nancy even compared using Tinder with that of playing *Angry Birds*.

Despite their mixed feelings towards Tinder, the subjects still believe that **IT IS POSSIBLE TO FIND A ROMANTIC PARTNER FOR LIFE VIA TINDER**. Otherwise they probably would not be using it. Some of them get their spark of hope from having relatives or friends who have met their life-companion from Tinder. Annie even mentions knowing couples who found each other from Tinder and have babies now. Subjects describe how the possibility of finding a partner comes from the observation that everyone who is single seems to be on Tinder. The abundance of

fellow Tinder users in the Helsinki metropolitan area is not the only reason why Tinder is seen as a potential way of finding a life partner. Many of the subjects also feel that **TINDER AS AN APPLICATION IS CONVENIENT AND EASY TO USE**. As Tinder is compared with the bar scene, the advantage of Tinder, as Nancy says, is the notion that “people know that everybody there is looking for someone.” In the following quote, Holly brings forth some of Tinder’s advantages compared to a more traditional online dating site.

it’s fast, and sort of, encourages a sort of.. well it’s easy to contact people with it. You don’t have to scribble any terribly long letters. And it’s like, because you need to have a match, then it’s sorta clear that okay he has, seen my profile as somewhat interesting, and so.. I have at some point, okay it was a damn long time ago, I was on some online dating site, and it was a lot different, I think because we wrote long messages and such. This encourages more, chat-like communication in my opinion.

As Holly says, Tinder encourages people to chat, to talk more synchronously than more traditional online dating sites. Because Tinder requires a match to form for people to talk to each other, it is also clear that both like each other based on their profiles.

4.1.2 What subjects expect to find in Tinder profiles

Profile pictures are at the center of attention on Tinder and the subjects express several things that they expect from the profiles of other Tinder users. **APPEARANCE IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT** when searching for a partner. On Tinder, it is important that profile pictures both show what the person looks like and also that the other person is found attractive. The importance of appearance is clarified in the following quotes.

if you compare going to a bar with Tinder, it’s the same thing that you directly see from someone’s face, or her profile picture what she looks like, and does she look like someone you’d like to talk to. [...] I’d say that it’s very, very very very important, because I see myself somewhat, I think that everyone probably sees themselves as somewhat shallow, and.. it’s the same, in a bar and in Tinder looks somewhat matter because you don’t know anything about the person yet, so it’s really important and the sort of thing that catches your interest, in a way. (Jason)

even though it’s not the most important criterion that you have to be some Mr. Finland or Ms. Finland, of course not, but you do, you have to, yeah, it’s

still important for me that I find the person good-looking. But it doesn't mean that he has to be somehow perfect. (Sarah)

In these quotes, subjects tell how the other person does not need to be extremely good-looking, but appearance is important for them to become interested in the person, because other aspects about the person cannot be readily seen. Therefore, when choosing one's profile pictures, the importance of appearance is something to consider, as in fast-paced Tinder swiping subjects want to see clearly what the other person looks like. One bad example is only having pictures with friends where the viewer cannot see who the profile owner is in the pictures. Based on the interviews, to show one's appearance, **USERS SHOULD CONSIDER PUTTING UP PICTURES SHOWING BOTH THEIR FACE AND THEIR FIGURE**. Especially a photograph **SHOWING ONE'S FACE IS BY MOST SUBJECTS SEEN AS MANDATORY**. For example, Carol needs to see a person's face before meeting the person due to safety reasons. Some of the subjects mention never swiping right on a profile that is not showing a picture of the user's face, but on the other hand, a few subjects have done exactly this. However, they still wanted to see the other person's face before meeting them, as told by Sarah in the following quote.

because of his job he didn't have a picture of himself in Tinder, he only had a picture of a landscape and of a kettlebell and, I definitely found it odd at first. But then I found out that it was because of his job, which I can understand that some people have the sort of job that, they don't want to show their picture there. So that's why we began using [WhatsApp] so quickly because I was like, I seriously want to see what kind of a person I'm messaging with, it feels incredibly silly to communicate with a faceless person.

When people do not have pictures showing their faces, subjects may draw expectations from it. They feel that there is a reason why people do not want to appear in Tinder with their faces, as they may for example be in a relationship. Several female subjects mentioned drawing expectations from profile pictures where a man has no shirt on, especially when they are not showing their face in any of the pictures. In the following quotes, Sarah and Emily talk about this phenomenon.

I don't want a purely sexual relationship for example, like some people do. Some people search for it from Tinder and some search for it very openly there. So you see already from the profile picture that okay, it's only about that [laughs]. [...] It can be seen from having a profile picture showing a six

pack, that it's downwards from here [points at the top of her chest], so you sort of see. Often there's, then there's usually a short text like, "Are you longing for some hot company?" or something like that so it's kind of obvious. [...] And there are surprisingly many people, who say that they're married and want to have an affair, and I think it's really sad, that there are those. But it's also good that they're honest, in their profiles, I think that's good. And of course they also have a picture like this, because they don't want to show their faces there, of course not. But anyway there are surprisingly many of those. (Sarah)

And then not necessarily in a relationship, but they may be otherwise.. their suggestions can be so obscene, that they don't want to show their faces, even if they're single. The things that are quite openly hoped and searched for there can be very chauvinistic or seriously degrading. Those [profiles] are consistently missing the faces. I guess they know that their suggestions are somewhat obscene. (Emily)

The need for a picture showing one's face is quite obvious from these quotes when searching for a life partner, as **SUBJECTS BELIEVE THAT WHEN MEN ARE NOT SHOWING THEIR FACES, THEY ARE SEEKING ONE-NIGHT STANDS OR ARE CHAUVINISTIC. SUBJECTS ALSO HOPE THAT PEOPLE WOULD OPENLY TELL IN THEIR PROFILES WHAT THEY ARE SEEKING VIA TINDER.** From the previous quotes, some thoughts related to body pictures (pictures showing one's whole figure, not only their face) are also revealed. Overall, the subjects express differing thoughts related to body pictures. Emily does not find them necessary but rather she feels that it is more of a problem that there are "*only naked torsos or men in their underpants without the head.*" Sarah and Carol also say that they would never put up a picture of themselves in a bikini, because they think it would imply that they are seeking a one-night stand. However, Carol and Holly have noticed that men in Tinder wish to see pictures showing the full figure. Carol has noticed that she gets more matches when she has a body picture. Holly expresses her notions related to not having a body picture in the following quote.

But now I have noticed that, I don't have a body picture there, so people ask for it, in a conversation, and I've been thinking that maybe I should add a body picture here. [...] But now I've started to think that maybe it limits my chances if I don't have a body picture, that maybe people think I'm a beached

whale if I don't have one, I don't know, but I'm seriously considering [laughs] that I have to take a proper body picture of myself.

A couple of months later, when Holly sends me her Tinder profile pictures, I notice that she has added a picture showing her figure. As can be seen from these notions, the subjects' thoughts related to body pictures are quite tied between expecting to see a body picture and not requiring it. To conclude the thoughts of the subjects, **SOME MAY WISH TO SEE A BODY PICTURE, BUT IT IS NOT SEEN AS A NECESSITY**. It is more important that the viewer gets an idea of what the other person looks like, and this idea can be drawn without having a picture showing the whole figure. **A GOOD WAY OF SHOWING WHAT ONE LOOKS LIKE IS HAVING VERSATILITY IN PICTURES**. Many subjects find it important that there are different kinds of pictures because when there are only similar pictures, they do not offer much information about the person. In the next quote, Rachel ponders why she has versatile pictures in her profile.

you want to offer you know, diversely with the pictures, or from many different aspects something about yourself, a message or something [...] Somehow you want that, there's more for different kinds of people, so that if they see some photos which they dig instantly then, there are more alternatives [laughs].

As Rachel says, with versatility, others are more likely to find something interesting in the profile, increasing the probability for her to get matches. Noteworthy is also that a few subjects mention that if there are only one or two pictures, or if all the pictures are for example from the same angle, the person is trying to hide something. Showing differing photographs gives the viewer a clear idea of what one looks like. Carol is the only one who clearly says that she does not require others to have varying pictures of themselves. Because she does not have so many pictures of herself, she thinks that the lack of pictures in a man's profile is also simply because he does not have many pictures of himself. Even though most subjects expect to see multiple and versatile pictures in a Tinder profile, **THE DESIGN OF TINDER CAUSES THE FIRST PICTURE TO BE THE MOST IMPORTANT**. To see all the pictures in a profile, the user has to like the first picture enough to be intrigued to tap it and see the full profile. As Holly says, an uninteresting first picture can instantly lead to rejection:

for me to swipe right, to like someone, I do view the full profile, read the text and view all of the pictures, and then the whole profile determines whether I like him. Disliking someone I can determine directly from the [first] picture.

In some cases, the first picture may be enough to make the user swipe right on a profile, but having multiple pictures still increases the probability to get likes. **ANOTHER WAY TO SHOW WHAT ONE LOOKS LIKE BESIDES HAVING VERSATILITY IN PICTURES IS HAVING QUALITY PICTURES.** If the pictures are of too poor quality, it may be hard to see what the person looks like. In the next quote, Sarah depicts how she dislikes poor quality pictures, especially selfies taken in front of a mirror.

If they are, for example of extremely poor quality, and then those taken in front of the mirror where you can see the cellphone.. those aren't that alluring.

However, a couple of subjects mention how **PICTURES CAN HAVE TOO MUCH QUALITY,** as described by Carol here:

if the picture is too good then you start to think that maybe it's not even a real picture. Because.. people who have like a picture of a celeb on their profile come up on a daily basis there.

As Carol says, a picture with too much quality makes her wonder whether it is an actual picture of the profile owner. Carol also thinks that it is better to have a picture of poorer quality than to have a posing picture. Some other subjects also feel that **SINCERE PICTURES ARE BETTER THAN POSING PICTURES.** Having pictures taken by others, not only selfies, can make the person look more normal and sincere. It is good to have enough quality in pictures to show what one looks like but sincerity is also something to keep in mind. As Betty sends me her Tinder profile pictures through e-mail, she explains the reasons behind choosing those specific pictures. The following quote is a take from this e-mail.

In the first picture, I have no makeup on and I think I look odd and not that pretty. However, it's the most genuine me, I was happy when the picture was taken. I thought that it shows my personality better than an intentionally cute picture where I am something I WOULD LIKE to be.

This quote clearly depicts how Betty wants to have a Tinder profile that is sincere. She also talks about showing her personality, which is something that **THE FAR MAJORITY OF SUBJECTS SAY THEY WISH TO SEE IN TINDER PROFILES: PICTURES WHICH TELL SOMETHING ABOUT THE PERSON.** Having pictures of one's hobbies is a good way of bringing personality to the profile and showing one's interests. Several athletic subjects especially mention that they like seeing sporty pictures in another person's profile. Overall, subjects would like to see pictures showing

similar interests that they themselves have. In the following quote, Sarah talks about the pictures in her profile.

Well I think I have chosen them so that they are from different kinds of situations in my life and from somewhere, where I enjoy being. At least one picture was taken offshore, sailing and one is from hiking in Lapland and, one is during a city holiday. They show, the kinds of things I enjoy in life. I think there are quite many nature photos because nature is important to me. But not only nature pictures because there are other things in my life, so maybe that's the reason for having that one city holiday picture so that there are, versatile interests.. And there's also one like this, this here, this one where I'm climbing somewhere above. It shows that I'm an active person.

In her profile, Sarah wants to show her active lifestyle and the things she likes in a versatile way. Showing one's interests may also draw the attention of others who enjoy the same things. Having dissimilar hobbies is however seen as a disadvantage, as Annie describes in the following quote.

And if all of the pictures are about like, strolling around the corridors of a cruise ship drunk with drinking straws in one's nostrils then, not interested. I don't get those at all. Or being in a sauna with friends with beers, or pints, in hand, that sort of things.

Even though dissimilar hobbies may cause some users to dislike the profile, it is probably best to find out about potentially majorly conflicting lifestyles before spending too much time with someone there eventually is no future with. This is also mentioned by Annie in the following quote.

At times I even put up a picture of me and my cat even though it's a huge risk. Some people are so allergic to animal pictures. Like okay, this one has a cat, she's crazy, next [laughs]. Usually I didn't put up any cat pictures but, maybe a couple of times I did when I thought that if someone hates cats then he's not for me.

Showing personality, sincerity and distinctiveness is something to keep in mind when choosing one's own profile pictures. In the following quote, Larry talks about the distinctiveness in the profile he matched with.

in Tinder, when you, when you kind of play it more you start to notice that many people look alike somehow, it's not that you are even aware of it perhaps but maybe it's somehow, subconscious that, there are somehow only certain kinds of people, somehow it becomes homogeneous in my eyes the, so-called selection. But, maybe there was something, something a bit distinctive, in her pictures. So it was stuck in my mind.

DISTINCTIVENESS IS VERY IMPORTANT IN ORDER TO DRAW THE ATTENTION of other Tinder users. However, this is not the only reason why profile pictures should be distinctive. Starting a conversation on Tinder can sometimes be difficult, as one may not know how to begin. **PERSONAL PICTURES, PERSONALITY IN THE PROFILE TEXT OR MUTUAL FACEBOOK PAGE LIKES HELP IN STARTING A CONVERSATION**, as Emily mentions in the following quote.

I've heard from lots of men that a common problem when browsing the Tinder profiles of girls is that they may all be very pretty, but they don't have.. it's like face, face, face. It's very dull to only see pretty faces, because it's not some sort of a genetics exhibition. It'd be nice to see something from which one could start a conversation from. I've tried to choose some pictures there where I'm for example clearly abroad or something, from which it's easier also to start a conversation from.

Telling about the importance of distinctiveness is also how half of the subjects spontaneously talk about **CLICHÉS IN TINDER PROFILES**. In the following quotes some subjects talk about these clichés.

people have a lot of dullness in their pictures. For example, there's very often an extreme sports picture where one's skydiving or they're on a holiday somewhere. All those holiday pictures, people have them very often. If it's not the first picture, then it's one of the other pictures. And there are these social media trends that you pose in a certain way, this can especially be seen among the profiles of younger women, very like, somehow, I dunno. Like all the pictures look exactly the same. You can't tell the difference between these people. I think I've seen this person before even though I haven't. You categorize these people very easily as people who somehow, probably don't have much to them. (Jason)

I've categorized them so that there are men leaning on their BMWs and then there are gym selfies and then those who are presenting, a fish they've caught or, a deer they've hunted [...] But it's absolutely certain that if a guy has a motorbike then there's a picture of that bike there. And if he's into snowboarding then he has a snowboarding pic. They're a bit boring. They're actually really boring and you can't see from them, a snowboarding pic or a diving pic, I mean I hate diving pictures. You can't see what the other person looks like at all from those. (Annie)

actually in Tinder it's usually more about what one doesn't have. Like when there isn't a picture from the gym, a gym selfie, or a pic in a suit with a glass of sparkling wine in hand at Slush and the next picture next to a BMW, next pic from the golf course, next pic from a sailing boat and so on. [...] If a person is interested in sailing, sure he can have a picture of himself in a sailing boat. Nothing wrong with that. It's just that from many of them you can clearly see the purpose behind them, that the golf and sailing pics are there only to show a certain amount of wealth, and not for any other reason. It doesn't matter if it's a picture showing a man in a suit with a glass of sparkling wine in a sailing boat or wherever, if the point is to show, "Hey, I have dough." And I'm not interested in dating people who feel the need to tell you that. (Emily)

These quotes again emphasize the importance of showing what one looks like, being distinctive and showing personality. Extreme sports, sailing, golfing, cars, vacation pictures and posing are some of the clichés in pictures that subjects mention and subjects often categorize people based on these cliché pictures in profiles. Some of the subjects are quite irritated to see so many similar pictures when looking at other people's profiles. The last quote from Emily also shows how people can draw expectations from certain kinds of pictures, as she believes that many men are trying to show their wealth with for example golf, sailing and car pictures. However, sometimes **IT CAN BE HARD TO BALANCE BETWEEN BEING HONEST AND NOT BEING A CLICHÉ**, as told here by Jason:

But it was funny when I began using Tinder and, I've honestly always liked cats, since I was young, and I've liked music since I was 13 years old and so I had these things in my profile, but it was amusing when the Fiidi of Iltalehti [<http://www.iltalehti.fi/fiidifi/>] or such wrote, "Male, put these in your profile to get matches," and these same things were there. My friends were like,

“You’re pretty bad for using those kind of clichés.” But it was easy for me because I genuinely like these things, but then, the other sex thinks that, “Oh no this is one of those guys again.” And I’ve heard from many female Tinder users that there are a lot of cat guys in there. And a woman often has in her profile, “No cat guys,” or something. It’s like, I’ve been cornered, that’s why I don’t have anything about cats in my profile I think, and no cat pictures because there’s this stigma in Tinder, a kind of meta thing. So there’s nothing about these things in there.

Jason cannot show his love of cats in his Tinder profile because he believes that cat lovers are a cliché in Tinder and others would categorize him based on this interest. **A GOOD WAY TO BE DISTINCTIVE BESIDES HAVING DIFFERENT PROFILE PICTURES IS HAVING SOMETHING IN ONE’S PROFILE TEXT.** Subjects expect the profile text to support the pictures by for example stating hobbies that also appear in the pictures. A few of the subjects think that it is extremely important to have something in one’s profile text and they do not understand why some users do not utilize the profile text field. One who wishes to see a profile text is Sarah, who expects that verbal and intelligent people have something in their profile text:

It’s extremely rare that I would tap the heart icon on someone who has no text. And when I’ve done that, they’ve been the kind of Silent Sams, who cannot say anything at all, so I even more strongly believe, that there must be something, that if the person hasn’t bothered to write text there then he probably isn’t someone who would suit me at least, as a partner.

THE PROFILE TEXT DOES NOT NEED TO BE LONG BUT IT SHOULD BE UNIQUE. A few subjects mention choosing to have a short, concise profile text depicting their main interests, because they feel that others may not want to read a very long text. Examples of these concise profile texts are for example Jason’s *“I like to play the six string, drink beer and pet cats,”* and Holly’s *“coding, chow, cute animals and fungus in fall.”* From last year, Annie still recalls one of the best profile texts she has come across: *“A bucket for the first 100 matches.”* She thinks it shows humor and a funny piece of text may be enough to make her swipe right on a profile.

Just as with clichés in pictures, **THERE ARE CLICHÉS IN PROFILE TEXTS THAT MAY CAUSE SUBJECTS TO NOT LIKE THE PROFILE.** A few of the subjects say that they dislike famous quotes. Especially Marilyn Monroe citations such as, *“If you can’t handle me at my worst, then you don’t deserve me at my best,”* are a cliché that could at some point be found from numerous profiles and thus

they lost their value quickly. Some of the subjects also dislike “*criteria lists*,” stating multiple criteria that the other person should meet, and “*emoji parades*,” lists of emoji showing one’s interests, as mentioned by Jason:

Yeah or there’s a kind of an emoji parade from which one should be able to figure out the person’s whole life story from. [...] An emoji parade or there’s a, like ten emoji and you should figure out those.. I don’t even understand what all of those emoji are. I can’t know what they are and then I’m wondering, I’m anxiously trying to understand what they mean.

The profile text is something that several subjects value, but pictures are still the most important thing in a Tinder profile. Telling about their importance is the fact that the vast majority of subjects tell about pictures spontaneously. The subjects want to see what the other person looks like, but various other things can also be figured out from the pictures.

4.1.3 Expectations from profiles

When seeking a life partner, subjects wish to find certain kinds of people. Tinder profiles do not offer much clear information, so expectations are drawn from others’ Tinder profiles and other social media profiles as well. It was already mentioned that Emily thinks that some men put up some pictures (e.g., golfing and sailing) to show off their wealth. As the majority of subjects are university graduates or students, some of them also value education in others. A few of the subjects tell that **THEY ARE ABLE TO FIGURE OUT ONE’S EDUCATION LEVEL FROM THEIR PICTURES:**

You can figure out a lot already from the camera angle, from the quality of the pictures, the lighting, all these sort of things. I once had a date with a man who said, “Hey come on, are you saying that you have even accidentally had anyone who doesn’t have a university degree.” Then I was like, “Well actually I haven’t.” Then he was like, “Yeah, it’s obvious merely from the lighting of pictures whether the person has a degree or not.” It’s exactly the same with women.. it’s interesting. Then I thought it over that it’s really true, that already from certain kinds of aesthetic details you can figure out quite a lot about a person, without seeing the person. Just based on, the kind of pictures and what kind of things are in them and so on. (Emily)

Well I can give a provocative example that educated men never have a huge amount of tattoos, and they don’t have a cig between their teeth and,

wearing a Guess shirt by the campfire [laughs]. But, even if they are once a year at a summer cottage like that, they wouldn't have a picture of them taken like that, or they wouldn't put it in Tinder. (Carol)

The maximum number of pictures in Tinder is only six. From six pictures subjects cannot really draw too many expectations or a coherent idea of the person. Some Tinder users link their Instagram profile to their Tinder profile, so that other users can see more pictures of them.

FROM INSTAGRAM AND OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA PROFILES SUBJECTS ARE ABLE TO SEE MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE PERSON, AND THIS INFORMATION CAN BE USED TO VERIFY EXPECTATIONS MADE FROM THE TINDER PROFILE.

The subjects expect others to have other social media profiles besides Tinder. When these profiles are not linked to the Tinder profile, subjects search for them, stalk them. Stalking in this thesis refers to the good-natured act of searching someone's social media profile and browsing it. Stalking is done by the majority of subjects and they expect that others do the same, some even describe it as something they themselves have to do. Many subjects feel that it is easy to find a person's Facebook profile and from Facebook they get the person's full name which can be googled to find other profiles, such as a person's LinkedIn profile. Before going on a date, by stalking, subjects can find out something that makes it clear that a date is not a good idea after all:

I was there seriously in the sense that, if I thought I could meet a guy, if there was a chance to stalk him on Facebook then I did that because.. Even though it's easy and fast to meet people like I said.. when I already had had a lot of dates, I thought that I have other things to do besides going on pointless dates all the time. If I can see instantly on Facebook that he has linked, some racist article being like, "Awesome guys" then, I don't even have to go [laughs]. It started to annoy me when, when you go to, dozens of dates and, most of them are guys who I definitely don't want to see a second time so I started to wear out. I didn't think I could stand those pointless ones so much anymore, at least not many of them. (Annie)

this particular female had her Instagram username in her Tinder profile, and her Instagram had her name, and when I put her whole name to Facebook I found out that she was in a relationship. Then I backed off, went away. It was really shocking, I was like I can't believe it how I dodged a bullet here. (Jason)

As seen in the previous quotes, **FIRST DATE FRUSTRATIONS CAN LEAD SUBJECTS TO SEARCH FOR MORE INFORMATION BEFORE GOING ON A DATE**, to let them know if the other person is for example racist or already seeing someone. Despite drawing expectations from the social media profiles of other users, many subjects realize that these **PROFILES MAY NOT NECESSARILY TELL THE TRUTH** about the person, as Nancy describes after dating one of her Tinder matches for a while:

From all the sporty pictures and stuff in Tinder I got the idea that he's very athletic and so on but then I found out that he maybe wasn't, just as much into sports as me for example. A bit of a couch potato. And that's fine but I was a bit like, this wasn't what I expected. [...] You went jogging once a week or once a month and took a picture of it. And once a year you climb some mountain and, it's really cool but, in social media you can give the image that you're doing it every day.

As Nancy implies, social media pictures are often showing interesting happenings in one's life, not necessarily everyday things. Realizing that the profiles do not always tell the truth may cause some subjects to be more critical when looking at others' social media profiles, but this still does not cause them to stop stalking or not making expectations altogether because **THEY BELIEVE THAT THEY CAN STILL DRAW REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS FROM PROFILES**. However, understanding that wrong conclusions can be made from social media profiles causes some subjects to not want others to stalk their own social media profiles. That is why they also have not linked their own Instagram profiles to their Tinder profiles, as Rachel says:

And at some point I had Instagram linked to my profile but I took it off because it felt somehow like too, too many pictures. [...] contradictory but yeah, somehow I don't want to give, too many pictures.. I don't know, yes. Yeah. Yea. But then of course I don't mind looking at others' pictures and making huge analyses from them [laughs].

Similar to Rachel, many of the **SUBJECTS DO NOT WANT OTHERS TO SEE TOO MUCH INFORMATION FROM SOCIAL MEDIA ABOUT THEM ALTHOUGH THEY THEMSELVES ENJOY STALKING OTHERS**. However, a couple of the subjects avoid stalking because they find it ignoble. Some other subjects are not really proud of stalking either but they are still too hungry for the information to quit doing it.

4.2 ...TO A DATE...

The online dating process among subjects begins with Tinder profiles but the ultimate goal is to get on a date. Expectations have been drawn from social media profiles and initial conversation, leading to fantasies and prejudice before seeing the other person for the first time. Subjects also talk about the significance of meeting face-to-face.

4.2.1 Fantasies and prejudice before a date

What begins the whole Tinder dating process are the profile pictures. *“And that is kinda where, I first attach those feelings, to the first picture,”* Betty says. **THE GOAL IN TINDER IS TO GET ON A DATE, AND THAT IS WHEN TINDER CEASES TO BE IMPORTANT.** Expectations have been made from the Tinder profile and other social media profiles by stalking, and **THE FIRST DATE IS WHEN THESE EXPECTATIONS ARE VERIFIED OR PROVED INACCURATE.** Or, as Kevin says: *“Until then you only build mental images which then on a date come true or don’t come true.”* The majority of subjects feel that **IT IS BETTER TO MEET SOON THAN TO BUILD UP EXPECTATIONS AND FANTASIES WHICH MAY NEVER COME TO FRUITION,** as Emily points out:

I think it reduces the pressure. This guy who I told you about who it was so nice to talk to and then it was somehow, it felt awful when we had talked actively for like a week every day, lots, lots, lots, and it was such a disappointment when we met. It was really awkward as well. Then I had to end it at that instant. It’s better to let the reality hit soon before you start building up many expectations and pressure and imagining in your head what he’s like. But it also depends on how actively you exchange messages with someone. I’ve just now exchanged messages very infrequently with a guy for two weeks, a message every other day. You can’t similarly build up huge expectations there. But if you instantly get the feeling that this could be potential, then I want to meet pretty soon just so I wouldn’t be terribly disappointed, if it doesn’t work out. Plus, then there’s the pressure. It feels so odd to meet someone who you’ve already told everything about yourself to, but he’s still a stranger. It’s a weird situation. It’s almost easier to go out with someone who really is a stranger, instead of being like I already know everything about you but only now I meet you. I think it’s probably a bit less daunting.

Emily does not want to expect too much before going on a date and she feels that it is easier to meet someone when this person is a stranger, rather than someone who already knows a

lot about her life but whom she has not met yet. The subjects WANT TO KEEP THE INITIAL CONVERSATION IN TINDER AS SHORT AS POSSIBLE because they have experience or have heard from others that there is a likely probability that things may not work out when meeting face-to-face. In the beginning, subjects may have trusted the expectations they have made online, but THERE ARE THINGS THAT CANNOT BE PERCEIVED OR WHICH CAN BE CONCEALED IN SOCIAL MEDIA. Jason talks about the direct nature of face-to-face situations:

I think it's much better to meet someone as soon as possible instead of going for that never-ending spiral of messaging because, it's a classic thing that people easily start to build up an idea about a person based only on messages. That's why I try to meet someone as soon as possible, to see what the person is like and how she behaves and so on. In a direct conversation a person can't fake or hide things so easily, or give information which isn't true. It's much better.

Jason thinks that people cannot fake as easily in person as they can in social media. However, even though subjects realize that someone there is a connection with online might offline be someone they cannot even get along with, many of them REQUIRE SOME CONVERSATION BEFORE MEETING. Before subjects go on the first date with a match, many of them want to get some kind of confirmation that the other person might be a potential partner. "At least you know with certainty if it doesn't click, if he's a total jerk," as Annie says. Emily also wants to get the initial confirmation before meeting face-to-face with a match:

I think it's always pretty horrible to go out and meet someone new, on a blind date. I dunno. I've thought a lot about why I can't just continuously go on dates, because it doesn't take but a couple of hours of my life. But it's just that it's not so.. it's always kind of.. it's always frightening and I always stress it out and I think about it and it drains energy. At least I'm not such a skilled dater that I could just like that go on dates every day and be very casual. I think I want.. and also because nothing is as awful as not having anything to talk about. Ensuring that you have something to talk about, it brings reassurance when going on a date. So that even when there's no attraction, I still know that we have this and this and this subject to talk about if nothing else comes to mind. To have at least slightly the feeling that it's going to be okay, that I can handle this. Attraction is something you can't ensure

beforehand, but to have something to talk about, at least that can be somehow ensured.

Emily talks about her anxiety to go on, what to her are essentially, blind dates. She also feels that it is not possible to know online whether there is a connection with someone offline, but she needs a confirmation that the date is not going to be completely awkward by verifying that she has something to talk about with her date. Sarah and Carol also tell how **THERE SHOULD BE SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT**. Sarah needs to get a “good feeling from the dialogue,” the conversation “has to take off, so to speak,” and Carol has also noticed that “if the conversation doesn’t flow there, then it mystically doesn’t flow [face-to-face either].” As subjects want to find out whether there are things to talk about and soon meet offline to verify their expectations, they seem to experience prejudice before going on a date. **SOME OF THEM EXPECT THE DATE TO NOT TURN UP WELL**, as can be noticed from the next quote by Kevin.

Everything is based on impressions before meeting someone in person, to a large extent. And you can very easily be disappointed if, your expectations are too high and if you compare the reality with it then if they aren’t true and stuff

Prejudice before the first date can clearly be seen in the curves that subjects draw showing their feelings towards the match. The feelings are mildly optimistic but still reserved before the date, and feelings rise suddenly on the first date, since all the drawings were based on a date which turned out well. Telling about the expectation that the date probably is not what the subject has anticipated, is also that many of the **SUBJECTS USUALLY HAVE THEIR FIRST DATE IN A PLACE AS EASY AS POSSIBLE, WITH AS LITTLE EFFORT AS POSSIBLE**. For the subjects, by far the favorite place to have the first date is a bar or a café, as can be seen from the next two quotes.

so the first one was of the lowest possible threshold so one beer downtown and then it went on for two or three beers. (David)

usually I don’t want to do anything more than go out for a coffee and it’s fast and I can’t concentrate on the person if there’s too much activity going on, having a cup of coffee is the best. (Rachel)

What can be seen from these quotes is that a beer or a coffee is something easy which one can have quickly while being able to focus on the date, but it is still easy to continue for longer if the date turns out to be alright. Many of the subjects have had other activity on the first date as well, especially dog owners like to go for a walk, and a few have directly met someone

at the home of either person. **THE SECOND DATE, MORE OFTEN THAN THE FIRST ONE, IS ALREADY SOMETHING WITH SOME MORE ACTIVITY.** In the next quote, Mary talks about her second date.

then we met at the Helsinki Zoo, we decided to do something nice and fun with some activity included as well but not too much but some, so that if you freeze completely then it's natural to babble something like, "Oh what a cute animal," or something like that.

As Mary says, going to the Helsinki Zoo (Korkeasaari in Finnish) provides some fun and light activity where animals can be used as conversation starters in case nothing else comes to mind.

4.2.2 The significance of dates

THERE ARE THINGS THAT SUBJECTS FEEL CANNOT BE MEDIATED WHEN TALKING IN SOCIAL MEDIA. THERE ARE ALSO SOME THINGS THAT MAY BE NOTICED IN MEDIATED INTERACTION, BUT WHICH ARE MORE READILY AVAILABLE IN FACE-TO-FACE SITUATIONS, as can be seen in the next quote from Kevin.

face-to-face it's a lot faster and when you see only once you see quite a lot already, well the person's appearance you can, from pictures you can see it quite well already but then in person you see the other one and hear her voice and then all the gestures and other things. You can see if she's interested and how she behaves around you. Like does she avoid eye contact or how she talks. When you've asked a question in Tinder or somewhere the person may have answered and asked a question in return but if you can't have that kind of a conversation face-to-face where the other person could be part of the conversation at all but it's always you who asks the question and she answers then that also implies something.

Kevin talks about how new aspects of the other person's appearance can be observed face-to-face along with whether the other person is interested in him or not. When talking about things one can perceive more readily face-to-face, Holly brings up a date she had with a man with Asperger's syndrome. She thinks that she would not have noticed his syndrome as quickly online as she did when talking with the person vis-à-vis. Several subjects talk about how **IN OFFLINE SITUATIONS THEY CAN PERCEIVE A PERSON'S CONVERSATION SKILLS AND HOW THEY BEHAVE.** Many of the subjects talk about "chemistry" and how **THEY NEED TO MEET IN PERSON TO SEE WHETHER THERE IS ANY ATTRACTION** towards the date. To Sarah, attraction on a date is crucial:

for me it's the meeting in real life that counts, because no matter how good the communication is there, if I'm not interested in him physically, then I'm just not interested. It's a lot about unconscious things like how you like his scent for example. You can't know that there.

Subconscious things and physical interest are what lead to feelings of chemistry in Sarah's quote. Especially Sarah, Emily and Annie feel that they would not be able to fall for someone online, but they need to meet face-to-face, as told by Annie here:

No, there's no way. It's absolutely impossible. What it's like when the other person is there in front of you and you're physically in the same space or close to each other and stuff. It's completely impossible, to know virtually.

Many subjects talk about experiencing feelings of closeness and attraction on dates. In addition to finding out whether one feels attraction towards their date, other kinds of emotional intimacy are also experienced on dates. Not only fond feelings, but also doubts are expressed during dates, and sometimes difficult conversations about the future and purpose of the relationship are held during dates. On top of feelings of attraction and closeness, self-disclosure and shared interests are parts of emotional intimacy. As two people spend more and more time together, they discover more shared interests and they tell about themselves and their feelings more. Especially **MUTUAL INTERESTS CAN BE RECOGNIZED FROM PROFILE PICTURES AND THINGS POSTED ONLINE**. By having conversations, already on Tinder, may also lead to subjects finding mutual interests. Shared interests strengthen the relationship but they can be even more crucial because some major differences in values and ways of living can cause the couple to break up.

Feelings of closeness can be expressed in offline as well as in online environments. For Jason, telling about feelings online is as good as telling about them offline and for Rachel, telling about feelings is difficult in person and she prefers disclosing her feelings online. However, many of the subjects feel that **FEELINGS ARE DISCLOSED BETTER FACE-TO-FACE AND TELLING ABOUT FEELINGS ONLINE SIMPLY SUPPORTS THESE OFFLINE DISCLOSURES**. Feelings that are expressed online have often already been expressed in person, therefore simply adding more moments when feelings are expressed, but not adding any unique expressions of affection.

Subjects feel emotional intimacy mostly on dates but especially **PHYSICAL INTIMACY IS EXPERIENCED QUITE EXCLUSIVELY ON DATES**. On a date it is possible to be physically close to each other and show affection in nonverbal ways such as holding hands. To find out whether there

is mutual physical attraction and how the other person reacts to physical contact, a match needs to meet in person. When deciding what to do on a date, natural physical contact can be considered, as demonstrated in the activity on Emily's second date:

on our second date we went ice-skating before going to eat and drink wine. You were already naturally able to lean on the other person a bit there and such. To test how he reacts to that. And then things like when you go buy food and drinks from the bar counter, you can grab the person from the shoulders a bit and see whether he's startled by it. To test him a bit.

However, even though physical contact is only possible on a date, it is notable that **WHEN MEETING FOR THE FIRST TIME, MOST SUBJECTS STILL SAY THAT THEY HUG WHEN THEY MEET THEIR TINDER MATCH.** The next quotes depict the moment when a match meets each other for the first time.

I think it's, a kind of a light, hug. It gives a certain something, if you've exchanged messages for quite some time and then you finally meet. And it also makes it less formal. (Carol)

It's a hugging moment, yes and here as well, it's a spontaneous hug immediately and on the other ones as well, when you go on dates, it's, usually always you hug and then you may even start to laugh, both may, you're feeling amused. (Rachel)

Most subjects feel that a handshake is too formal on a first date, because it is not an introduction, but they already know each other's names and have already talked with each other online. A hug is a good way to set the tone for the date from the start, to try and loosen up the situation. In Rachel's description this is also apparent due to having a hearty laugh together.

Telling about the significance of dates is that most of the subjects feel that **INTERACTION WITH A MATCH IS MUCH MORE RELAXED AFTER THE FIRST DATE.** Several subjects talk about knowing the person's sense of humor, and how after the first date they can trust that the other person understands a joke online. Several subjects describe their feelings after the first date as more confident because they are not as nervous about whether the match turns out to be what they have expected. While the initial conversation in Tinder is rather reserved and probing, the subjects are much more assured about the match after the first date and therefore they can talk more freely and intimately.

At the same time, SOCIAL MEDIA PROFILES LOSE A LOT OF THEIR SIGNIFICANCE, AS PEOPLE HAVE ALREADY MET IN PERSON. David thinks that profiles lose their importance because on a date one has already verified whether expectations related to the date's appearance are accurate and the facts that could be perceived from profiles can now be learned through conversations. REMEMBRANCE IS ONE OF THE MAIN REASONS WHY PROFILE PICTURES DO NOT LOSE ALL OF THEIR IMPORTANCE ON THE FIRST DATE. While dating someone, subjects are continuously trying to figure out whether the person is someone they want to have a relationship with. Subjects recall things they have perceived of the person on a date, but to properly remember what the other person is like, they may want to look at their profile pictures, and from different pictures they may recall and perceive different aspects of the person, even after dating is over. For example, Betty has looked at one of her former date's pictures even after their breakup, to remember him and think about the reasons why the relationship ended.

4.3 ...AND BEYOND

Going on dates and spending time together offline are most important in a relationship. However, SOCIAL MEDIA HELP A COUPLE STAY IN TOUCH. It is not possible to be together all the time but since dates are still the most important thing for a couple, social media can fill the otherwise silent phases between dates. In the following quotes, Holly and Emily talk about why it is important that social media allow them to stay in touch with a date throughout the day.

by messaging often, you create the feeling that we are in each other's thoughts and, that you kind of want to share some of your life with the other person. Make them feel that they are important, by messaging somewhat continuously. Alternatively, I've never, or at least not in a long time haven't written any long e-mails to a loved one. That would be more of a thing I would take a moment to do at some point during the day, while instant messaging is usually quite light and, maybe not that thoughtful but something which is, with you sort of all the time. (Holly)

Or there must be some method of communication, whether it's WhatsApp or Messenger. So that you can keep in touch even when you don't meet in person, it strengthens the connection between the meetings and somehow develops it further. And it also deepens the association. It always, no matter how trivial the communication is, it always lets you know something about

the other person. And the sort of, “Yay, he sent me a message,” “He hasn’t answered me in an hour” belongs to it [laughs]. I think it’s all part of the hassle of a new relationship. It would be quite weird to date someone who you wouldn’t keep in touch with this way at all. (Emily)

STAYING IN TOUCH VIA SOCIAL MEDIA LETS A COUPLE KNOW THAT THEY ARE THINKING ABOUT EACH OTHER.

It is not always possible to call someone and spend time talking on the phone. For example, for Nancy it was crucial that she was able to talk with her boyfriend online, because her boyfriend was doing shift work and thus it was often impossible for them to talk on the phone because their sleeping and work schedules were different. **WITHOUT THE POSSIBILITY TO SEND TEXTUAL MESSAGES, THERE WOULD BE A LOT LESS COMMUNICATION POINTS IN A DAY.** With textual messages, one can answer the other person’s message whenever and wherever they find it convenient. **INTERACTION MAY ALSO BE EASIER ONLINE, WHEN THERE IS TIME TO THINK ABOUT HOW TO EXPRESS ONESELF.** Due to this, it can especially be easier to control feelings and express oneself in more correct ways. However, **WHEN INSTANT FEEDBACK AND NONVERBAL CUES ARE MISSING, EXPRESSING SOME FEELINGS MAY BE MORE DIFFICULT.**

4.3.1 Social media services

Due to the ease of interacting online, subjects expect that their dates are using other social media services besides Tinder. Many subjects feel that **IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO KEEP INTERACTING ON TINDER FOREVER, BECAUSE IT IS A SERVICE FOR FINDING POSSIBLE DATES,** not an instant messaging service, as depicted by Mary:

well I mostly find Tinder, a place where you encounter the person and get the conversation started and you determine whether he’s a person you’d like to meet, and then, considering the later stages I think, well if I would still talk with him on Tinder it would feel, somehow strange, or if you would talk only there for like half a year, or I think that it’s more for just searching for the person

SUBJECTS STOP USING TINDER AND SWITCH TO OTHER INSTANT MESSAGING SERVICES AROUND THE FIRST DATE, WITH SEVERAL SUBJECTS SWITCHING APPLICATIONS EVEN BEFORE THE FIRST DATE.

The reason for this is not only because Tinder is seen as an online dating service rather than anything else, but also because of **PROBLEMS WITH ITS CHAT,** which most of the subjects talk about. For example, Tinder does not send push notifications about all incoming messages, it takes time to turn Tinder on, messages may appear late or they may appear in double, and one cannot

see when the other person is typing a message. These problems cause subjects to soon replace Tinder with better applications. A couple of the subjects talk about a feature which Tinder used to have but which has been removed: seeing the last time when a match was online. In an online dating application, people do not want to show when they have been online or be intrigued to go check whether a match has been online after a few dates.

IN DAILY COMMUNICATION, THE MAJORITY OF SUBJECTS PREFER WHATSAPP over other instant messaging services. **DUE TO INSTANT MESSAGING, MANY OF THE SUBJECTS DO NOT MAKE MANY CALLS, ALTHOUGH SOME FEEL THAT PHONE CALLS WOULD BE A MORE AUTHENTIC WAY TO COMMUNICATE.** A few subjects mention using voice messages in WhatsApp. Especially Jason likes voice messages because they help him in communicating his thoughts more clearly. Some subjects talk about the importance of a person's voice, for example Betty talks about having a date with someone whose way of talking was something she was not able to tolerate.

To start using WhatsApp, people need to give their phone number to their match. Many of the subjects give their number before the first date and a few of the subjects feel that giving their phone number is easier than accepting a friend request in Facebook, because Facebook opens up a person's social network, various pictures and a lot of their history. However, several of the subjects still mention having **CONCERNS ABOUT THE NEED TO GIVE THEIR PHONE NUMBER TO A MATCH BECAUSE WITH A PHONE NUMBER THE MATCH CAN FIND OUT THEIR IDENTITY.** Annie tells how keeping the conversation on Tinder before going on a date can be a good thing:

If you don't switch to WhatsApp, then you won't exchange your phone numbers. And then when you meet someone and he's not nice at all you can remove him so that he can never contact you again. Because he doesn't have any contact information.

As told by Annie, when there are no other communication channels besides Tinder, a person who is not interesting can be unmatched on Tinder, leaving them no way to contact anymore. Despite having these concerns, the subjects are still mainly using Facebook and WhatsApp, which they consider private for different reasons. **MANY SUBJECTS MENTION USING CERTAIN SOCIAL MEDIA SERVICES DUE TO HABITS.** For example, some mention using Facebook or Telegram because they can be used on the computer, even though nowadays WhatsApp is usable on the computer as well.

ALL OF THE SUBJECTS USE FACEBOOK. Many subjects feel that **FACEBOOK IS USEFUL MAINLY FOR READING NEWS AND GETTING TO KNOW HOW ACQUAINTANCES ARE DOING. MOST OF THE SUBJECTS STILL**

EXPECT THAT A DATE IS AT SOME POINT ADDED AS A FRIEND ON FACEBOOK. There is a social pressure for adding someone as a friend and some of the subjects find the idea of not adding a date as a friend simply absurd. As Betty puts it:

Because a relationship doesn't exist if it's not on Facebook [laughs]. But there's probably a grain of truth there.

Some subjects feel that all of their acquaintances are already on Facebook so when they start dating someone, it would feel weird not adding them as a friend as well. If the date would not accept the friend request, it would seem like they have something in their profile that they do not want to show.

Social intimacy is highly present on Facebook in the narratives of subjects. **KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE ACQUAINTANCES OF A MATCH ARE FOUND OUT EVEN BEFORE THE FIRST DATE WHEN STALKING THE PERSON ON FACEBOOK.** Especially from pictures, subjects can see who are the people the match is spending most of their time with, or who they have dated before. Friends are talked about at dates as well and many subjects consider meeting a date's friends or seeing how a date gets along with one's own friends as informative. There may still be some knowledge about these friends due to social media even before meeting, as Nancy says:

I actually had a pretty good idea about his friends before I met them. It was funny that I had been able to match a face, and a name from Facebook, so, when I met them I already knew who was who.

Some of the subjects realized on social media that they have common acquaintances. Tinder shows common Facebook friends but some of the subjects have noticed that Tinder does not show them correctly, and thus they do not pay attention to Tinder's common friends. From Facebook, common friends can still be seen. **COMMON FRIENDS CAN BRING FORTH EXPECTATIONS.** As Kevin says, a common friend can cause negative feelings towards the Tinder match: *"If there's only a certain Facebook friend which I don't like that much then it can of course be a bit negative."* Annie tells about making expectations depending on why she is Facebook friends with someone:

You can infer a lot from it, a lot about what the person is like and what he's into. I have lots of different groups of friends like for example these artist, and illustrator friends. If you have those in common friends then you know, exactly why they are common. Or if there are people who like movies, then,

it's kind of, maybe linked to that. Or if there are musician friends, he's probably also a musician or someone who does something related to that.

When subjects have common trusted friends, this can generate trust towards the match as well. However, even though social intimacy includes having similarities in social networks, in this context **COMMON FRIENDS CAN BE A DISADVANTAGE AS WELL BECAUSE THERE IS THE EXPECTATION THAT ONE WILL PROBABLY NOT DATE THE PERSON FOR LONG.** Rachel talks about this in her next quote.

Well I'd say that if there's a lot of common friends, I might start thinking that.. when you know that it's probably not someone, something, that necessarily lasts for long so do I want to, you know take the chance if people start gossiping about me dating some guy a lot

Public expressions of affection are also a part of social intimacy. Affection can be expressed publicly both online and offline. Mary and Nancy talk about how public endearment does not feel natural for them but Betty talks freely about the numerous intimate moments she had with her date, kissing and cuddling in public places. On social media, there are also varying opinions about public expressions of affection. For Holly, WhatsApp is for private communication but "Facebook is also more like.. a place to show others." **FOR SEVERAL SUBJECTS, PUBLICLY SHOWING AFFECTION ON SOCIAL MEDIA IS NOT SOMETHING THAT THEY FEEL NECESSARY OR NATURAL TO DO.** Mary would like to show her relationship with her boyfriend on Facebook, but for her boyfriend the relationship status is something he does not need everyone to know about and all his dearest friends already know about it. For Sarah, it is also most important that her most important acquaintances know about the relationship:

announcing there that we're now a couple isn't necessary for me, for me it doesn't matter whether it's done or not. I think that all the most important people know who I'm in a relationship with. I don't feel the need to bring it up there, necessarily. But, well, I don't know maybe if I was deeply in love and he'd also like to, show it there then it would probably be fine to put it there. But I don't think that it's necessary.

Some subjects feel that **THERE ARE TOO MANY ACQUAINTANCES ON FACEBOOK FOR THEM TO TELL ANYTHING INTIMATE IN THEIR PROFILE. FOR SOME SUBJECTS, THIS IS WHERE INSTAGRAM COMES IN,** as they have intentionally decided to have fewer followers on Instagram than friends on Facebook. Mary also feels that she does not want to spam her Facebook with pictures and thus she would not publish as many pictures if she did not have Instagram:

maybe it has replaced Facebook a bit for me, and because there are some, more.. relatives, co-workers, such. It feels silly to put sort of unnecessary pictures there, so if I wasn't using Instagram I'd probably publish pictures even less anywhere because, it just doesn't feel relevant to put up many different pictures on Facebook even though I now only share a picture or two on Instagram a week but it's still a lot more than on Facebook so it's something that you update more actively with pictures, Facebook is maybe more for finding out how people are doing if they are compared with each other.

For Jason, Instagram is also a place to share what he is doing. He has made a division between the things he does on Facebook and on Instagram. Facebook is more for messaging and gathering information, whereas Instagram he sees as a place to like and post various pictures. On Instagram, the communication for many subjects is simply following friends and liking their pictures. It is not for messaging. However, **A COUPLE OF THE SUBJECTS ENJOY TAGGING FRIENDS IN CUTE OR SILLY PICTURES AND VIDEOS.** This can be done both on Facebook and Instagram.

Overall, **WHATSAPP, FACEBOOK AND INSTAGRAM ARE THE MOST POPULAR SOCIAL MEDIA SERVICES** among subjects, but **TELEGRAM, LINKEDIN, SKYPE, HANGOUTS AND FITBIT ARE ALSO MENTIONED.** Kevin talks with his long-distance girlfriend using Skype:

Calls in WhatsApp are really poor quality and I don't think Telegram even has, a call function, no it doesn't have. So Skype is the easiest because you can see the other person's face. And.. yes. You can see what the other person is doing and things like that so I think it's, in that sense it's the best. [...] Well it's a different kind of interaction. Or it's so much easier to talk, or to have a conversation. And being able to see the other person and seeing her facial expressions is a lot more meaningful than just reading messages. So it does have, a big role.

For Kevin, communication on Skype offers him to see his girlfriend, which he otherwise is not able to do often. Due to costs in long-distance calls, Skype offers an excellent way for Kevin to keep in touch with his girlfriend. For Holly, FitBit offers another way to socialize with friends, and she would like to compete with a date there as well. With her ex-boyfriend, she had a mutual hobby as they tried to beat a common friend by collecting steps.

Some of the subjects feel that **THERE ARE NOT MANY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN INSTANT MESSAGING APPLICATIONS AND TEXT MESSAGES** since both support textual messages. However, many of the subjects mention **SOME BENEFITS THAT INSTANT MESSAGING SERVICES HAVE, SUCH AS BEING FREE AND PROVIDING LESS FORMAL COMMUNICATION**. Many instant messaging services show when the other person is online, **SUPPORTING COMMUNICATION THAT IS MORE SYNCHRONOUS**. Text messages are thought through more before sending, whereas in instant messaging there can be multiple conversations going on in the same chat, and short messages including only a single emoji can be sent in instant messaging but is not considered appropriate in a text message. For a few subjects, especially Kevin, not having instant messaging services simply feels bizarre:

Well texting is, [laughs] so last millennium. So it's a bit, it'd be weird to have conversations by texting. It'd be so weird that it probably wouldn't work out. [...] I think text messages are.. I dunno. For many people every message would even cost money.. and so. Even if they were free.. Well then you lose the possibility of sending, pics, well then they're multimedia messages or something. I don't think it would work out.

In this quote, on top of him feeling that text messages are old-fashioned, Kevin mentions **THE BIGGEST DIFFERENCE BETWEEN INSTANT MESSAGING AND TEXT MESSAGES: THE POSSIBILITY TO EASILY SEND COUNTLESS OF PICTURES, FREE OF CHARGE**.

4.3.2 Sending pictures

The possibility and ease of sending pictures is to subjects the greatest benefit of instant messaging compared to text messages. **THE POSSIBILITY TO SEND PICTURES IS ALSO ONE OF THE REASONS TO STOP USING TINDER** and switch to another social media service with a match because Tinder does not support the sending of pictures. Jason feels that it is actually beneficial that Tinder does not support sending pictures:

I'd say that it's definitely a shortfall but I think that it's a good thing because the service is not for.. sending pictures. I think it's a good thing. I really think it's a great thing, and it's one of the best things if, this is a classic example that if you've had a conversation with someone on Tinder, then like, "Oh man.." I have for example a.. like a cat. I use the cat example, because it's so good, so for example like, "Oh man, I was at a friend's place and there was a lovely cat there and I took some pictures of it and blah blah blah. But it's a

shame you can't send pictures on Tinder." "Well how about WhatsApp?" "Well okay this is my number." So you can use it as an excuse, very often, so it's pretty good. But I think it's also a bit.. I think it's good that there's no function for sending pictures. Because there are other services for that where you can switch to logically and naturally.

As Jason says, not being able to send pictures is a natural reason to switch Tinder to a different instant messaging service. Sending pictures is especially present in Snapchat. Kevin and Larry enjoy using Snapchat for sending pictures. For Larry, Snapchat is a light, easy and fast way to share pictures and videos because the sent media is not saved on the service. For Kevin, Snapchat is another way to communicate with a date, but he points out that communication would not be possible using only Snapchat because the messages disappear after a while. Kevin and Larry are the only subjects who enjoy using Snapchat, whereas Mary and Rachel have it installed but they are not really using it. Mary simply does not understand the point of Snapchat. For Rachel, Snapchat is still a mystery but she wants to learn how to use it because many of her friends are using it. **EVEN THOUGH ALL OF THE SUBJECTS SEND PICTURES, MOST OF THEM HAVE NOT FELT THE NEED TO INSTALL SNAPCHAT FOR THIS PURPOSE SINCE PICTURES CAN BE SENT USING ANY OF THE COMMON INSTANT MESSAGING APPLICATIONS AS WELL.**

Some of the subjects claim that it would not bother them if they could not send any pictures. However, **ALL OF THE SUBJECTS SEND COUNTLESS OF PICTURES** with dates and friends on instant messaging services, with Jason probably being one of the most active picture senders: *"With one of my friends, I think we have, in one month we sent 1700 pictures. We sometimes talk solely with pictures."* Emily also says that many pictures that she sends are about things that she would otherwise not talk about: They are only expressible with pictures. Without pictures, she would only send a message when she has something important to talk about, bringing forth the idea that **PEOPLE MIGHT COMMUNICATE LESS IF THEY COULD NOT SEND PICTURES.**

Some of the subjects feel that dates would carry even more value if pictures could not be sent. Just as with social media overall, sent pictures help stay in touch between dates. **A SENT PICTURE CAN ALSO BE USED AS A CONVERSATION STARTER:** A subject might not have anything to say but they would like to talk with their date, as Kevin points out:

So you don't have to go and ask, "How are you, how's it going?" You can send a cat picture. And then kind of automatically there's a contact.

For Mary, it is difficult to say that she misses her boyfriend, and pictures help her start a conversation and express her feelings towards her boyfriend:

I'm not good at sending messages saying, that I'm missing him or somehow, expressing feelings in a message so I say those things more face-to-face and then I can send a.. a cat meme or something so that, I can't give a very good example of it but something that shows a bit how I'm feeling with a picture.

On top of Mary's difficulty to share feelings without pictures, some other things are easier to communicate with pictures as well. For example, Holly can use pictures to show an object she is talking about rather than having to describe it in detail. Holly also mentions how she sent a picture showing her facial expression to let the receiver know that she was not being serious with something she said online. Furthermore, when Holly was going on a date, she once took a picture of herself showing where she is waiting for her date. All of these examples show how **PICTURES CAN MAKE IT EASIER TO COMMUNICATE SOMETHING THAT CAN BE MORE DIFFICULT TO COMMUNICATE USING ONLY TEXT**. Some of the subjects have sent selfies, which Jason and Kevin mention as a good way to show a match what one looks like at the moment, because sometimes people feel anxious about whether a person actually looks like they do in their Tinder pictures. However, **SITUATIONAL PICTURES ARE SENT MORE THAN SELFIES. THE MAIN BENEFIT AND PURPOSE OF SITUATIONAL PICTURES IS TO "SHARE ONE'S REALITY" WITH THE OTHER PERSON**. In the next quote, Rachel talks about sharing her reality with a date.

Yea, you want to share that moment with that exact person, usually it's like that. It's less often anything like.. yeah, usually it's not that you want to somehow, somehow show that, "Look where I am," or something, if he's someone who I'm interested in then you send him pictures and, well you want to share the moment or you want to, show that, "Hey I like to do these sort of things," for example, like I've been gathering mushrooms and then I take a picture [laughs], "I do these sort of things," because they may not come up in conversations like, "Hey by the way do you gather mushrooms?" and then again some may find it odd but for me it's very therapeutic [laughs].

On top of sharing moments with pictures, subjects can show what they like to do, just as in Rachel's previous quote. For Emily and her date, there were certain things that they expressed only with pictures, and these pictures were only sent to this date, not to others:

for example, we had certain kinds of pictures we shared. Like we always had picture challenges, where you had to guess where the other person is. [...] And we sent lots of pictures of drinks. Okay, this is silly. It probably started when we had been drinking on our first date, and then the next day we sent pictures like, "I'm recovering here," pictures of pints. And it kind of remained that we didn't have to specifically tell each other that, "I'm going to a bar with my friends again," but you could just send a picture of a pint. Then the other person is like, "Ah, you're there again." It brought a kind of cohesion to the relationship, that it was very important for both of us that we had our own friends who we spend a lot of time with and we both like beer. So it wasn't anything like.. It was a common interest. And another one was pizza. We usually ate pizza together on Sundays while having a hangover, but we also sent each other pictures of pizzas. Like, "Are you envious?"

For Emily, sharing common interests with pictures brought the couple closer. **SHARING ORDINARY MOMENTS IN ONE'S LIFE WITH PICTURES IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT WHEN THE COUPLE IS IN A LONG-DISTANCE RELATIONSHIP**, as has been experienced by especially Annie and Sarah. Sarah does not feel that sending pictures is very important but in her long-distance relationship, especially with a man who did not enjoy talking on the phone, sending pictures was a way to share everyday moments and tell the other person what she has been doing.

4.4 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The most interesting discoveries from analysis were highlighted in the text of this chapter. These main findings from the research are summarized here (Table 4).

Table 4: Main findings of the study.

From profile pictures...	Feelings towards Tinder	There are ambivalent feelings towards Tinder
		Most people on Tinder are disappointments
		It is difficult to find potential partners without Tinder
		Tinder is a game
		It is possible to find a life partner via Tinder
		Tinder is convenient and easy to use
	Expectations towards profiles	Appearance is extremely important
		Face pictures are mandatory for most subjects
		Men not showing their faces are probably seeking one-night stands or are chauvinistic
		It is good to have versatility in pictures

		Pictures should be of reasonable quality	
		Sincere pictures are better than posing pictures	
		Pictures should tell something about the person	
		Distinctiveness in a profile draws attention and helps in starting a conversation	
	Expectations from profiles	Other social media profiles are viewed to verify expectations made from Tinder profiles	
		First date frustrations can cause subjects to search for more information from social media	
		Social media profiles may not necessarily tell the truth	
		Subjects believe that they can draw accurate information from profiles	
		Subjects enjoy stalking others but do not want others to see too much information about them	
	...To a date...	Fantasies and prejudice before a date	Expectations are verified or proved inaccurate on the first date
It is better to meet soon instead of building up fantasies which may not be true			
Subjects expect the date to not turn up well			
First dates are often held in a place as easy as possible, such as a café or a bar			
The significance of dates		Some things can be noticed more easily FtF than on social media	
		Meeting is necessary to realize whether there is any attraction towards the date	
		Feelings are disclosed better FtF but talking about feelings online supports offline disclosures	
		Physical intimacy is possible only on dates	
		Interaction is more relaxed after the date	
		Social media profiles lose a lot of their significance after meeting in person	
		Profile pictures help in remembering a person	
...And beyond		Social media	Social media help a couple stay in touch
			Interaction may be easier online when there is time to think about how to express oneself
	Expressing some feelings may be more difficult without instant feedback and nonverbal cues		
	Social media services	Tinder is a service for finding possible dates and it is not possible to keep interacting in Tinder forever	
		Subjects switch Tinder to other instant messaging services around the first date	

		Most subjects do not make many calls due to instant messaging although some subjects feel that calling is more authentic
		There are concerns about the need to share one’s phone number in order to use instant messaging services
		Subjects expect that a date is at some point added as a friend on Facebook
		Common friends can bring forth expectations
		The biggest difference between instant messaging and text messaging is the ease of sending pictures
	Sending pictures	Subjects might communicate less if they could not send pictures
		A sent picture can be a conversation starter
		Some things are more easily communicated with pictures than with text
		Pictures enable sharing one’s reality

5 DISCUSSION

In this chapter findings from the study are compared to those from earlier studies. From the narratives of subjects, it was noticed that the online dating process initiated in Tinder is sequential and can be divided to three phases: The online dating process starts from profiles, and is followed by dates and finally the use of social media to keep in touch between dates. The most interesting points which generate from comparing this study to other research are highlighted in the text, whereas the most significant findings from this study are emphasized by placing them in boxes shown on the right side of the pages.

5.1 FROM PROFILE PICTURES...

In this chapter, three kinds of expectations related to profiles are discussed. First of all, subjects have various expectations towards other people's Tinder profiles when searching for possible romantic partners. Second, they form impressions about other Tinder users based on their profiles, sometimes causing them to reject a person based on these impressions. Third, they practice selective self-presentation when creating their own profiles to manage the impressions they give to others.

5.1.1 Expectations towards Tinder profiles

As the subjects are swiping profiles on Tinder, there are certain things they wish to see in these profiles. The aspects that are looked for in a Tinder profile can be divided into appearance, personality, and distinctiveness:

The most important aspects in a Tinder profile are **appearance, personality and distinctiveness.**

- The desire for appearance means that subjects want to see what the other person looks like, and they want the person to be attractive.
- Having personality in a profile means that the profile tells something about the person, for example something about the person's personality or hobbies.
- Distinctiveness means that the person's profile should stand out positively from other profiles.

Appearance

The subjects wanted to see what the other person looks like and they were hoping to find an attractive person via Tinder. In order to show one's appearance, there should be different

kinds of photographs in the Tinder profile. Versatility can be achieved for example by having pictures showing one's face as well as one's body. Especially pictures showing one's face were mandatory for many subjects. The significance of appearance is apparent in other online dating research as well. Just as in this

Versatility in pictures shows what one looks like. **Face pictures** are mandatory for most subjects.

study, appearance is important in the study by Long (2010), even though a person does not need to be "*traditionally attractive*." As Whitty (2008) reasons, **APPEARANCE IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE THE DESIGN OF ONLINE DATING SITES EMPHASIZES PICTURES INSTEAD OF TEXT, AND BECAUSE THERE ARE SO MANY OTHER USERS THAT A PERSON CAN PURSUE THE MOST ATTRACTIVE ONES.** The design of Tinder emphasizes pictures even more greatly than any other dating site because the user initially sees only one picture of a person, placing increased significance on the first profile picture. Furthermore, other online dating sites often provide much more information about a person than a Tinder profile does.

IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THERE ARE GENDER DIFFERENCES IN THE EXPECTATIONS OF TINDER USERS. In the study by Havlicek, et al. (2008), men value visual cues more than women in sexual contexts. Their study participants, however, were only 17-19 years old, raising some suspicion whether the participants have much knowledge in romantic or sexual relationships. However, gender differences are apparent in other studies as well, as for example Hitsch, Hortaçsu and Aricly (2010) found in their study that women prefer a potential partner's income to their appearance. Conversely, none of the female participants in this study mentioned hoping to find a wealthy partner. In fact, one of the subjects clearly mentioned how she is not interested in men who feel the need to indicate their wealth through pictures. On online dating sites which allow users to define their income in a specific field, income may be more important than on Tinder. Cultural differences are other possible explainers of these differences in study results and it is also possible that the desire for income simply did not emerge in this study. Moreover, the findings of this study imply that body pictures might be more important for men than for women, supporting the idea that the appearance of a date is more important for men than for women.

Personality

According to David and Cambre (2016), the majority of users do not include text in their Tinder profile. Findings from this study indicate that to show personality in the profile, users should utilize Tinder's text field or show their hobbies in pictures. Whitty (2008) tells that her subjects also want to see the other person's personality in their profiles. They wish to see

honest profiles telling what the person is really like. However, long profile texts may not be desirable (Kambara, 2005), and showing personal information can also be seen as superficial in Tinder (Grigoriadis, 2014). In this study, many subjects also felt that sometimes it is better to not include some information in a profile since for example clichés can lead to rejection.

Distinctiveness

When showing one's appearance and personality, one should keep in mind that the profile should also be distinctive. A distinctive profile draws the viewer's attention by its uniqueness, and it has intriguing pictures or text that function as a conversation starter. The subjects talked about several kinds of dull clichés in profiles

Distinctiveness in a profile draws attention and helps in starting a conversation.

which should be avoided. Clichés have been discussed in previous research as well. In the study by Whitty (2008), enjoying walking on the beach was a cliché, and David and Cambre (2016) found out that common pictures contained smiling, smoking, and drinking faces. Iqbal (2014) mentions several Tinder clichés in pictures, including African babies, drinking, moustache on a girl, posing in weddings, group pictures, travelling pictures, and exercising pictures with abs and snowboards. Group pictures, travelling and certain exercise pictures were mentioned as clichés in this study as well, but **THERE ARE ALSO CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN STEREOTYPICAL PICTURES**. What should also be noted, is that several of the subjects in this study mentioned some clichés in profile pictures but others did not mention the same clichés. This introduces the controversy in showing one's personality and being distinctive. Some subjects may think that having pictures of certain hobbies such as sailing, extreme sports, travelling, golf or cars is a cliché, while others may simply think that they show their interests. Therefore, how subjects see profile pictures depends on their own interests.

Still, similarity in pictures seems to really irritate some subjects. **IN ORDER TO HAVE A DISTINCTIVE PROFILE, ONE CAN TALK WITH FRIENDS AND SEE WHAT THEY FIND INTRIGUING OR IRRITATING, OR ONE MAY LOOK AT OTHERS' PROFILES ON TINDER**. From Tinder's settings it is possible to change one's sex and sexual preference so that straight people may look at the profiles of their own sex, getting an idea of what others are posting in their profiles. In previous research, some study participants have been looking at others' profiles for ideas on what to include in their own profile (Kambara, 2005; Long, 2010). Whether this idea searching has resulted in similarity or distinctiveness in profiles, is not mentioned.

5.1.2 Impression formation

In a Tinder profile, there is usually not a lot of information. The ways to express oneself through six pictures, the text, and initial conversation are quite restricted, not providing much information about the person (Puranen, 2016). Furthermore, nonverbal cues, which people usually base their first impressions on (Walther, 2007), are not available on Tinder. However, **SIPT ARGUES THAT PEOPLE FORM IMPRESSIONS OF OTHERS BASED ON MINOR CUES** (Walther, 1996) and this phenomenon has been observed in this study as well as some earlier research.

Impressions are formed even from textual information (Walther, 1996; Jacobson, 1999) but on Tinder, users can imagine others based on their pictures as well, even though pictures can be seen as something that the person in Goffman's (1959) terms *gives*, being information that the person provides knowingly. When talking about the expectations that subjects draw from profile pictures, they mentioned for example these two impressions: That not having a picture of one's body suggests that the person is overweight, and that showing one's body but not the face suggests that the person is strictly looking for sex. The expectation that people who do not have body pictures are overweight is also present in the study by Ellison, Heino and Gibbs (2006). One participant in their study felt that heavier people are trying to hide their bodies by having pictures where they are sitting or leaning. In this study some subjects also mentioned that people are probably trying to hide something when all of their pictures are from the same angle.

Subjects believe that they can **draw accurate information** from profiles.

The impression that showing one's body but not the face suggests that the person is looking for sex, did not come up in earlier research. By contrast, in the study of Zytka, Grandhi and Jones (2015), subjects who are searching for casual encounters are trying to disguise it and they have problems in interpreting whether

Men not showing their faces in profile pictures can be seen as seeking one-night stands or as being chauvinistic.

others are open to these encounters. In Finland, users are annoyed when others clearly do not inform in their profile if they are searching strictly for casual encounters, and then suddenly start sending indecent suggestions (Rissanen, 2016). These indecent suggestions were also mentioned in this study and some subjects believed that there probably are a lot of people who do not tell about their sexual interests in their profiles. In this study, as well as in the studies of Zytka, Grandhi and Jones (2015) and Rissanen (2016), **SUBJECTS WOULD LIKE OTHERS TO TELL WHAT THEY WANT IN THEIR PROFILES**, even though the interest for casual

encounters was obvious for the subjects in this study when a profile shows a headless torso with a six pack.

It is apparent that people form impressions of others based on minute cues. These **IMPRESSIONS ARE, HOWEVER, NOT ALWAYS UNANIMOUS**. Already Goffman (1959) talks about how people may form different impressions than the person is trying to convey. Jacobson (1999) tells how participants in his study base their online impressions on stereotypes and people they know offline, resulting in differing expectations from the same observations. An explanatory term for this is *confirmation bias*, which refers to the phenomenon that people interpret information based on their existing beliefs and expectations (Nickerson, 1998). Some people may believe that certain conclusions are common knowledge, for example that saying that one is “*curvy*” means that they are actually fat (Ellison, Hancock and Toma, 2011). But is this supposedly common knowledge actually common knowledge? A clear difference can at least be noticed in Kambara’s (2005) study where one person thought that “*casual*” meant the person wanted to hang out and have some fun, but it actually meant interest for sex. Van House (2011b) also tells how photographs “*can convey a meaning other than the owner intended*” (p. 132). **PEOPLE FORM IMPRESSIONS FROM PICTURES BASED ON WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO THEM**. To some of the subjects in this study, education and work of the other person were important, and they felt that they could accurately predict a person’s education level from their pictures. Whether this is what the profile owner wanted to convey with the pictures and whether the predictions are always accurate, could be studied in the future.

According to Turkle (2011), people need to simplify their own representations on social media. The subjects in this study felt that it was a good thing to only be able to have six pictures on Tinder, not having to tell more about themselves. Long (2010) also tells how the subjects in her study do not want to tell everything about themselves, but want to remain a bit mysterious and conserve privacy. Even though it is possible to link one’s Instagram account to the Tinder profile, most users do not want to share that many pictures of themselves to strangers (Long, 2010; David & Cambre, 2016). As a result, subjects in this study felt that people do not have enough information in their

Subjects enjoy **stalking** others but do not want others to see too much information about them.

profiles for coherent impression formation, and thus subjects have to search for people’s other social media profiles, to stalk them. As noted in this study and in previous research (Long, 2010; Gibbs, Ellison and Lai, 2011), some people are concerned about their safety and try to reduce uncertainty by stalking. David and Cambre (2016) talk about the different ways

of how Tinder users search for additional information online, questioning the privacy and ethics of applications and profile pictures.

5.1.3 Impression management

In this study as well as in some other research (Ellison, Heino & Gibbs, 2006; Long, 2010; Rissanen, 2016), subjects want to be honest when online dating, so that they would attract people who are actually interested in them. When expecting future FtF interaction, it is better to be open and honest about oneself (Gibbs, Ellison & Heino, 2006; Hancock, Toma & Ellison, 2007; Zytka, Grandhi & Jones, 2014)

Sincerity and honesty are valued in others and aimed for in one's own profile.

since deception in one's online dating profile may result in ending the relationship when deception is realized in a FtF meeting (Whitty, 2008). This can be caused by simply believing that a person who tells a blatant lie should never again be fully trusted (Goffman, 1959). Trust is an aspect of emotional intimacy, and thus **PEOPLE LOOKING FOR AN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP SHOULD START BUILDING TRUST IN THEIR RELATIONSHIP FROM THE VERY BEGINNING BY BEING HONEST ABOUT THEMSELVES ONLINE.**

Being honest is not always as easy as it seems. As found out in this study and the study of Whitty (2008), some subjects feel that they need to balance between being honest and being distinctive. They want to be honest, but as they also need to stand out from the crowd and not be a cliché, they may not want to disclose some aspects of themselves online. Ellison, Heino and Gibbs (2006) point out that the technical design of an online dating site may encourage homogeneity, causing users problems in trying to be unique. One of the participants in their study had to shorten his messages in order to not seem desperate. In this study, Sarah enjoyed receiving long messages from men, although a long e-mail in the mentioned study is probably longer than a long Tinder chat message received by Sarah. Having to misrepresent one's age in order to not be filtered out, due to age related search parameters in online dating, also shows how the design of these sites makes people feel that they need to lie in order to be seen (Ellison, Heino & Gibbs, 2006).

It can be difficult to balance between being **honest** and being **distinctive** when interests and clichés overlap.

SELECTIVE SELF-PRESENTATION IS NOT UNIQUE TO CMC, BUT IT IS EASIER IN CMC THAN IN FT F INTERACTION, AS THE HYPERPERSONAL THEORY SUGGESTS (Walther, 1996; Krämer & Winter, 2008).

On Tinder, with a maximum of only six pictures and a text field which allows 500 letters, it is difficult to tell everything about oneself, allowing users to choose how to present themselves.

One participant in this study explained how he had tested different kinds of profiles, showing how Tinder allows selective self-presentation by providing a limited amount of space for information in a profile. A new optional Tinder feature, *Smart Photos*, can help users in impression management by showing their most attractive pictures first by testing which of the six profile pictures gets a profile most likes (Tinder Team, 2016b).

IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT IS NOT EASIER IN CMC ONLY BECAUSE OF THE LACK OF NONVERBAL CUES BUT ALSO BECAUSE THERE IS MORE TIME TO CONSTRUCT A MESSAGE IN CMC THAN IN FTF COMMUNICATION

(Walther, 1990; 1992). Asynchronicity in CMC lets people formulate their self-presentation more than synchronous messages do (Gibbs, Ellison & Heino, 2006; Hancock, Toma & Ellison, 2007), suggesting that Tinder's chat, which for example does not inform the user whether the other person is present or not, enables people to present themselves more consciously than in more synchronous instant messaging, such as WhatsApp. On the one hand, Tinder users enjoy being able to think through the message they send, but on the other hand this possibility enables deception (Puranen, 2016). Hancock, Toma and Ellison (2007) tell how online dating is often accused of deception. On Tinder, where the profile text is not as much utilized as in some other online dating sites, deception might not be as common. However, one of the participants in this study also lied about her height by 2 cm, because she was tired of meeting men who were too short.

In order to **PROVE THEIR HONESTY WHEN MISREPRESENTATIONS ARE ASSUMED**, the participants in the study by Ellison, Heino and Gibbs (2006) try to confirm their claims of themselves through stories and photographs instead of simply listing attributes. In Tinder, photographs instead of text are at the center of attention in the profile unlike in some other online dating sites. Thus, some of the subjects in this study wanted the text to support the pictures instead of the other way around. Photographs can certainly demonstrate some attributes better than text. However, photographs can also show an ideal self because pictures are often taken in unusual situations: Having a picture where one is mountain climbing might show that the person enjoys this kind of activity, but it does not prove that the person actually does it often. These kind of differences between impressions and reality were not met with joy but they were often acceptable.

Social media profiles may not necessarily tell the **truth**.

5.2 ...TO A DATE...

The dates are the most important thing for a couple. However, subjects have experience or have heard about deception in Tinder profiles, causing them to be prejudiced before the first date.

5.2.1 Prejudice before the first date

Because the subjects of this study believed that many other users misrepresent themselves in their online dating profiles, they expected to be disappointed on the first date. This prejudice caused them to usually choose the place for the first meeting with considerations of ease and safety. Thus, they usually met their

Subjects expect to be **disappointed** on the first date. Thus, first dates are held in a place **as easy as possible**.

dates for the first time in a public place such as a bar or a café. Long (2010) and Finkel, et al. (2012) also conclude that **PUBLIC PLACES INCLUDING A MEAL OR A BEVERAGE ARE THE MOST COMMON PLACES TO MEET FOR THE FIRST TIME**. Especially women are concerned of their safety (Long, 2010). This is not a surprise nor an exaggeration, since sexual assaults towards women do happen (Henry & Powell, 2016). However, in both this study and the study by Long (2010), sometimes people do feel safe enough with their online dates to arrange the first meeting at the home of either person. While the first date usually did not include a lot of activity for the participants in this study, the second date already often included more action. This can be beneficial for the relationship, as exciting activity such as a rollercoaster ride or seeing a horror movie increase feelings of affection due to physical reactions (Ervasti, 2016; Pajuriutta, 2016).

The feelings towards Tinder among subjects were mostly ambivalent. For example, one participant of this study experienced a love-hate relationship towards Tinder. Even though frustrations are common in online dating, most users are still optimistic (Rissanen, 2016). In this study and some previous research (Nurminen, 2015b), users feel that Tinder makes it easier to meet potential new partners. The subjects of this study felt that compared to for example the bar scene, finding other singles is easier via Tinder, as users know that others are looking for partners as well. Furthermore, if one does not meet a lot of new people at work or via acquaintances, it is difficult to find a partner offline. It is also easier to approach an interesting person on Tinder because a match indicates that the other person likes you back (Puranen, 2016). All in all, the subjects of this study viewed Tinder positively despite frustrations.

It can be **difficult to find** potential partners without Tinder.

Many users feel that Tinder is overly focused on looks (Nurminen, 2015b; Puranen, 2016). However, in this study subjects still felt that it is important to see what the other person looks like. **DUE TO THE DESIGN OF ONLINE DATING SITES, USERS CAN DEPERSONALIZE OTHERS.** In this study as well as in previous research (James, 2015; Duguay, 2016a; Puranen, 2016), some users feel that Tinder is like a game. The shopping metaphor is also used in dating, especially in online dating (Kambara, 2005; Long, 2010; Finkel, et al., 2012). Depersonalization and objectification can lead to poor decisions and lack of interest to commit to another person (Finkel, et al., 2012). Depersonalization can be caused by the design of online dating sites and how they force users to search for others based on “*searchable*” attributes such as income or religion instead of more important “*experiential*” attributes such as sense of humor or rapport (Frost, et al., 2008). On Tinder, users can only specify the age and gender of people they want to see, decreasing depersonalization caused by search criteria. Objectification on Tinder is thus caused more exclusively by the focus on appearance as on other online dating sites.

Tinder is an entertainment method, a **game** to play.

In this study and some previous research (Frost et al., 2008; Rissanen, 2016), despite believing that the other person is not going to be what one expects, **PEOPLE WHO ARE HOPING TO FIND A ROMANTIC LIFE PARTNER EXPERIENCE A LOT OF FRUSTRATION WHEN THEIR DATES TURN OUT TO BE DISAPPOINTMENTS.** As subjects assume that the other person is going to be a disappointment, they feel that it is better to meet soon before making too many expectations. This is also the case in a lot of previous research as well (Kambara, 2005; Finkel, et al., 2012; Zytka, Grandhi & Jones, 2015; Murtomäki, 2016). In a FtF situation, it is more difficult for people to misrepresent themselves or to interpret minor cues incorrectly. Thus, the first date is when expectations made online about the date are verified or proved inaccurate. Meeting each other soon is wise, as people benefit from initial CMC more likely the sooner they meet (Ramirez & Zhang, 2007; Finkel, et al., 2012).

It is **better to meet soon** than to build up fantasies which may not come to fruition.

Verification by meeting is important as online daters often overemphasize attributes which are insignificant in an actual relationship (Finkel, et al., 2012). As Jacobson (1999) notes, even after several years of CMC before meeting, people are still surprised when they see each other offline the first time. When

Expectations are verified or proved inaccurate on the first date.

seeking a romantic partner online, people can start to fantasize an ideal partner from minor cues (Zytka, Grandhi & Jones, 2015). As people fall in love with someone, they project their hopes and needs to the other person, thus in a way falling in love with their own fantasy (Ervasti, 2016). This phenomenon is true in offline environments as well, but it is emphasized online as people form impressions in their head based on minor cues and their own personal assumptions.

MEETING QUICKLY IS BENEFICIAL FOR THE RELATIONSHIP AND IT REDUCES DISAPPOINTMENT IF THE OTHER PERSON DOES NOT FILL INITIAL EXPECTATIONS.

In the study of Whitty (2008), before the first date, the subjects only talk online to clarify information told in their online dating profiles and to arrange the first meeting. By contrast, subjects in this study still usually need some discussion before the date, to verify that the person is interesting and that there is something to talk about on the date. The distinction can be caused by the difference in the online dating sites in these two studies. On the online dating site in Whitty's research, the profiles provide a lot of information about the person whereas on Tinder, the profiles often do not include much text and impressions have to be formed from profile pictures alone. Due to the lack of information in a Tinder profile, subjects need to gather information through self-disclosure and probing in online conversations. It is noteworthy, however, that the time spent online before the first meeting is the same in both this and Whitty's study, being one to two weeks after the initial contact online.

Subjects want to keep the **initial conversation** short but they still require some conversation before meeting.

5.2.2 The significance of dates

According to some earlier research (Godwin, 1994; Ramirez & Zhang, 2007), it would be better for intimacy if people would keep their relationship online, instead of switching to the offline environment. However, this is not an option for the subjects in this study, who want to build an offline relationship, using Tinder only to find potential partners. **EVEN THOUGH PROFILES AND CMC CAN PROVIDE A LOT OF INFORMATION, INCLUDING DEEPLY PERSONAL DISCLOSURES, THE ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP STILL DOES NOT BEGIN BEFORE MEETING FtF** (Finkel, et al., 2012). Long (2010) also concludes that CMC simply is not enough and she would therefore rather call online dating "*online date seeking*" or "*online romantic relationship initiation.*" The relationships that are initiated online but which then migrate offline, Walther and Parks (2002) call "*mixed-mode relationships.*" Even friends in the study by Hu, et al. (2004) want to meet in person after already talking online, suggesting that there is something in FtF meetings that cannot be mediated online.

Telling about the prejudice before the first date among subjects in this study is that the conversation before it is often light and short. The significance of the first date came forth as subjects told how their conversation became more relaxed after the date. Before the first date they were optimistic but reserved. Therefore, Collins (2004) and Vetere, et al. (2005) seem to be correct in saying that information technology will not substitute FtF meetings. Even though studies supporting SIPT and the hyperpersonal theory prove that it is possible to have intimacy in CMC, even more than in FtF interaction, **BODILY CO-PRESENCE IS DEFINITELY SEEN AS ESSENTIAL IN ONLINE DATING.**

Interaction online is more **relaxed** after the date.

Why is the FtF meeting so important? This is not yet fully understood, but “*gut-level feelings*” and chemistry seem to be important factors (Finkel, et al., 2012). The subjects in this study believed in the necessity of meeting FtF and some of them believed that they would never be able to fall in love online. Participants in the study of Poutiainen (2009) also felt that the main purpose for the first date is to see whether there is chemistry. Women seem to be more olfactorily oriented, emphasizing olfactory cues in their lover choices more than men (Havlicek, et al., 2008), suggesting that at least women need to meet their date FtF to be able to smell them.

Meeting is necessary to find out whether there is any **attraction** towards the date.

Finkel, et al. (2012) talk about the design of online dating sites, proposing that they are emphasizing aspects which after all are not that important in a relationship, not being able to properly convey such crucial factors as humor, rapport and interaction style. In this study, the frustration felt by subjects clearly shows how the dating partners often do not match the idea the subjects have gleaned of them online. Talkativeness is one thing that can vary depending on whether communicating in an online or an offline environment (Jacobson, 1999). Some participants of this study also talked about the importance of the way someone talks or sounds. Sending voice messages or talking on the phone could let a person know about voice related issues before going on a date.

Finkel, et al. (2012) talk about a matchmaking site, ScientificMatch, which claims to be able to find perfect matches based on users’ DNA and immune systems. Maybe with DNA matching it would be possible to meet a romantic partner online, not having to meet them FtF to trust that there is chemistry. However, other scientists cannot validate whether ScientificMatch’s method works because they will not share their

Physical intimacy is experienced quite exclusively on dates.

algorithms (Finkel, et al., 2012). By the time of making this thesis, ScientificMatch.com is not accessible anymore but there are other similar sites. Even if these kind of genetic matchmaking sites would be possible, they still would not overcome the fact that people need to meet in person in order to fully experience physical intimacy.

Emotional intimacy and social intimacy, on the other hand, are possible both on dates and on social media. From the findings of this study it seems that subjects are experiencing emotional intimacy on social media in differing amounts. Some are comfortable in expressing a lot of emotional intimacy on social media, even more than FtF, while others prefer to disclose their feelings offline. It seems that most of the subjects feel that CMC supports offline emotional intimacy and things that have already been said in person, suggesting that CMC helps to experience emotional intimacy between dates but CMC is not able to substitute dates in this aspect either.

CMC supports
offline **emotional**
disclosures.

Social intimacy is probably the part of intimacy that can be most effectively experienced also on social media, although FtF meetings are needed to meet a date's family and friends. In this study, it was noticed that social media provide knowledge about a person's acquaintances. Especially from pictures subjects can see who the match is spending most time with, or who the person has dated before. Van House (2007) also says that the content and use of photographs is often social. Photographs show who are part of a person's group (Van House, et al., 2005). In this study, subjects also drew expectations from common Facebook friends, whether these common friends implied a match's hobbies or they caused negative feelings due to a disliked common friend or built trust towards the person when they had a common trusted friend. As a rather new discovery, it was noted that even though common friends are a part of social intimacy, already existing common friends can be a disadvantage when deciding whether to start a relationship with someone. This is due to the belief that a relationship initiated on Tinder is likely to end and people can then start gossiping about the things that were done during the relationship and the reasons why it ended. Although studying people seeking casual relationships, Birnholtz, et al. (2015) come to a similar conclusion, saying that when there are common friends, Tinder users are more hesitant to act in a way that could backfire.

5.3 ...AND BEYOND

The subjects of this study are using various social media services which, suggesting from the way they talk about them, have become an integral part of their lives. They expect their dates to have other social media besides Tinder as well, even though it may not be a requirement for dating that the other person uses social media. Despite using social media, the subjects feel the need to meet FtF because they specifically want to build an offline romantic relationship with someone. Social media are there to help them find suitable partners and keep in touch with them as well as with friends and relatives. It seems to be as Finkel, et al. (2012) say, that CMC and FtF communication complement each other. Some of the subjects of this study felt that they would be fine without social media, but from their narratives, it is clear that social media enhance intimacy.

Social media help a couple **stay in touch** between dates.

None of the subjects of this study are focusing all of their social media use on a single social media service but a few are needed instead. In previous research it has also been found that people use several communication methods to keep in touch with others. Communication on social media enhances intimacy (Haythornthwaite, 2002) and can be the next step in relationship development after meeting a person for the first time (Burke & Kraut, 2014). However, as Burke and Kraut (2014) point out, this communication can lose its importance later in a relationship when communication is frequent through other channels. They also conclude that not all kinds of CMC are equal, since broadcasting to a lot of people at the same time does not build intimacy with a single person as well as direct communication does. Different channels provide varying ways to stay in touch with others (Quan-Haase & Young, 2010). One participant in this study enjoyed socializing using FitBit. **COMMUNITY SITES RELATED TO SPORTS, GAMING OR OTHER INTERESTS CAN BE GOOD IN SHARING A COMMON INTEREST AND IN SOCIALIZING IN A DIFFERENT KIND OF ONLINE ENVIRONMENT.** Shared interests are a part of emotional intimacy and the way in which people can share a common hobby through these community sites should therefore enhance intimacy.

A few subjects mentioned how they believe that talking on the phone is more authentic than instant messaging, as the cues-filtered-out perspective would also suggest. They believed that with phone calls and voice messages they could more easily get their ideas through. However, due to the existence of social media, subjects do not make that many calls anymore because CMC is much more convenient.

Due to social media, subjects do not make many calls although some feel that calling would be more **authentic**.

Sending an instant message is possible much more often than calling since both communication participants need to be available at the same time when talking on the phone. Especially online dating is more convenient than regular offline dating (Finkel, et al., 2012). Now partner searching can happen conveniently at one's home, instead of for example at a bar, which could even lead to worse decisions due to alcohol (Puranen, 2016). However, one participant of this study was a bit concerned about her observation that due to Tinder, some people may cease seeking partners offline in public places, and instead they use Tinder in these situations as well as at home.

5.3.1 Design affects what people do

According to Van House (2011a), "*the design of [social media] sites shapes what people do and see*" (p. 424). In her study, participants posted different pictures on different sites, depending on the audience, practices and aesthetics of the site. Duguay (2016b) equally describes how the design of Instagram encourages aesthetics and Vine encourages creativity. The way site design affects what people do was also noted in this study, as subjects posted more pictures on Instagram than on Facebook, due to Instagram being a service that focuses on pictures. Furthermore, on Tinder, subjects had to capture the attention of others with an intriguing first picture, and balance between being honest and being distinctive.

Van House (2011a) talks about the profile templates on sites. She thinks that these templates determine what kind of information people can provide and learn about others, and how they can categorize themselves. Ellison, Heino and Gibbs (2006) also mention how default settings in search fields can cause users to believe that such responses are desirable. This pondering should be directed especially at online dating sites, as the profile templates force others to see things that, as Finkel, et al. (2012) remark, can make users concentrate on insignificant aspects of the other person. Based on this, **IT IS AN ADVANTAGE OF TINDER THAT THERE ARE NOT MANY TEMPLATE FIELDS THAT USERS COULD FILL AND BASE THEIR SEARCHES ON.** Tinder still does provide fields for education and work information although these data cannot be used in searches. Having these fields still suggests that the information they provide would be important for people to know about, and for some subjects of this study, they were crucial. However, Tinder does not provide many options for users to specify their gender and age. When searching for a partner on Tinder, the age range stops at 55+, bundling everyone who is aged 55 or older in the same dating pool, cheering youthfulness at the expense of elderly people (Duguay, 2016a). Moreover, when only providing the possibility to choose between male and female, transgender people are discriminated (Duguay, 2016a). The subjects in this

study did not talk about this but different results would probably be gained from interviewing LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer) people. However, the Tinder Team (2016a) recently announced that it will soon be possible to express one's gender identity accurately.

As a couple begins dating offline, they no longer use the online dating site which initiated the relationship (Long, 2010; Puranen, 2016). In this study, subjects wanted to switch from Tinder to instant messaging services as soon as possible, usually even before the first date. For example, due to messages not always appearing, receiving duplicate messages, not getting push notifications about all incoming messages, Tinder being slow to turn on, and not seeing when the other person is writing a message, Tinder's chat was considered poor and less synchronous than the chatting features provided by instant messaging services. Tinder was also seen strictly as an online dating service, a method to find other singles, supporting the idea that design affects how services are used.

Tinder is a service for **finding possible dates** and it is thus not possible to keep interacting on Tinder forever.

Based on the interviews in this study, IT IS NOT ONLY THE DESIGN OF SITES BUT ALSO THE PERSONAL NEEDS OF THE USERS THAT AFFECT HOW THE SITES ARE USED. Therefore, design is not all that matters but understanding the way people are using the services is also important. In previous research, this can be seen for example in how Long (2010) tells how participants in her study thought that online dating sites have a certain culture of members with free online dating sites being used more by casual daters. Moreover, Zytka, Grandhi and Jones (2015) say that online daters were able to choose an option saying that they are looking for casual relationships but none of the subjects did this due to the fear of being judged. This suggests that not all provided features can be utilized as intended.

The idea that it is not only the design that shapes what people do, emerged in the analysis of this thesis. Some subjects of this study posted more pictures on Instagram compared to Facebook not only because Instagram focuses on pictures, but also because they have too many friends on Facebook. The problem of too many friends on Facebook is also mentioned by Prieto Blanco (2016). The narratives that subjects in this study gave for Facebook and Instagram were quite different, with Facebook usually including a lot of people, also distant acquaintances. With everyone they know already on Facebook, they also expected that dates are at some point added as Facebook friends. As Facebook had become so filled with people, it was mainly used for reading news, to see how others are doing, and to attend events, since these subjects did not want to broadcast their

Some subjects have **too many friends** in Facebook to share anything intimate there.

lives to everyone and did not believe that everyone would be interested about their minor life events. With too many people on Facebook, Instagram could be used to fill the purpose of being able to tell about life events to all the closest friends, by including only these friends as followers. Moreover, many of the subjects did not feel that it was necessary to show one's relationship status on Facebook, although Facebook has a field for this information. However, they had thought about it, confirming what Van House (2011a) says, that users at least have to make a choice of using or not using choices that are available on social media sites.

IT IS NOT ONLY THAT SITE DESIGN OR THE NEEDS OF USERS AFFECT WHAT PEOPLE DO, BUT WHAT PEOPLE DO SHOULD ALSO AFFECT THE DESIGN. Some subjects of this study did not enjoy the Tinder feature, where Tinder let others see when a match has last been online, whereas it is a positive feature in WhatsApp, enhancing synchronicity. Having the possibility to go and see when a match has last been online tempts users to have a look at Tinder and see whether a match has been online after a date, and it worries them if the other person has been online. On other dating sites, this feature can be revealing, suggesting whether people are available or whether they are already seeing someone (Ellison, Heino and Gibbs, 2006). However, other online dating site users may also dislike this feature, just as in the study by Kambara (2005). Luckily for these subjects, this feature has been removed from Tinder, suggesting that it was widely disliked.

5.3.2 Privacy and safety concerns

Turkle (2011) says that *"an e-mail or text seems to have been always on its way to the trash,"* (p. 168) only there to fill a moment. Yet, what is said on social media is usually quite permanent. The permanence of messages causes people to really think through what they want to say, when in FtF conversation what is said is afterwards not available anymore, relying on people's memory to keep existing, and often becoming distorted due to human cognitive processes. By contrast, things that have been written online, are available for others to read later, even when the writer is asleep (Finkel, et al., 2012). It is as one participant of this study said, that what has been said is not just said but everything leaves a mark. Actually, as Kelly, et al. (2016) report, certain posts on social media can cause the person unprecedented penalties. They say that *"27 percent of all internet users live in countries where people have been arrested for publishing, sharing, or merely 'liking' content on Facebook,"* and Facebook is certainly not the only social media service that is subject to censorship. Finland was not assessed in the study, but most European countries which were assessed were free of such silencing.

One of the participants of this study was concerned about governmental snooping. However, there were several subjects who talked about other personal safety issues on social media and dating, causing them to for example usually meet their matches in public places. In previous research it has been noted that especially women have not only been sexually assaulted, but they are also more often the victims of online sexual harassment, such as revenge porn and slut-shaming (Henry & Powell, 2016; Vitis & Gilmour, 2016). Some women in this study had concerns about giving their phone number to a Tinder match, although many still gave the number before the first date, for ease of communication. Tinder has the advantage of easily being able to unmatch someone, cutting the communication with this person. However, due to problems with Tinder's chat, subjects still wanted to replace it soon with other social media. Other media cause more privacy concerns. In the study by Church and de Oliveira (2013), the biggest privacy concern for subjects on WhatsApp was that others were able to see the person's last access time. This, however, can be bypassed since the last access time can be hidden, as at least one subject of this study had done.

There are concerns related to the need to share one's **phone number** in order to use some services.

WhatsApp, the preferred instant messaging service among the participants of this study, requires people to share their phone numbers with each other. Adding as a friend on Facebook lets the other person see one's history and friend information. When **THERE ARE VARIOUS SOCIAL MEDIA SERVICES AVAILABLE WHICH DO NOT REQUIRE GIVING THIS KIND OF INFORMATION,** it is puzzling why subjects who are concerned about their privacy are not utilizing these other services. Subjects in the study by Church and de Oliveira (2013) trusted text messages more than WhatsApp for message delivery because text messages have been used longer. However, on WhatsApp it is possible to see when a message has been delivered and seen by the other person. It seems to be as Collins (2004) says, that people are not readily willing to change their routines and fully search for information, but that they tend to stick with the choices they have made. Subjects in this study wanted to have all of their acquaintances on the same social media service, often finding it a bit troublesome to have some media for only a few people. This is understandable but dating people should still consider using other methods to communicate with their matches if they want to protect their privacy. For example, Kik works with a username rather than a phone number and Telegram works with both.

5.3.3 Intimacy with pictures

In the beginning, subjects attach their feelings to a match's profile pictures, which generate expectations towards the person. After meeting a Tinder match for the first time, attraction and expectations transfer from profile pictures to thoughts about the person met on the date. At the same time, profile pictures lose some of their importance but because profile pictures can still be used to help remember the person and to gain new information from pictures on other social media services, they do not lose all of their importance. However, as instant messaging is deployed, sent pictures become much more important for subjects than profile pictures.

Profile pictures lose a lot of their significance after meeting but they still help in **recalling** the person.

Switching from Tinder's chat to another instant messaging service is done not only because Tinder is slower and more bugged but also because one cannot send pictures on Tinder, except for the GIFs that Tinder provides which none of the subjects of this study mentioned using. The majority of subjects preferred using WhatsApp for instant messaging and sending pictures. Prieto Blanco (2016) also says that when pictures are sent to a specific person, WhatsApp is used instead of more public services such as posting the picture on Facebook. Facebook's Messenger is equally good to WhatsApp for sending pictures. Snapchat is an application which focuses on sending pictures but only a couple of subjects enjoyed using it. Some others did not understand the point of it, preferring to send their pictures using general instant messaging applications.

Pictures serve a number of uses. Both profile and sent pictures can function as conversation starters. The subjects of this study used sent pictures to inspire conversation, especially when they did not really have anything to talk about but still wanted to communicate. Prieto Blanco (2016) also found that shared photographs are used to request communication. In this study, it came forth that some things would be pointless or impossible to convey with text only, suggesting that there would be less communication between a couple if they could not send pictures. Some things are also easier to communicate with pictures than using only text. As Van House (2011b) says, **PICTURES ARE MORE EFFICIENT TO BOTH POST AND ABSORB THAN TEXT.**

Subjects might **communicate less** if they could not send pictures.

Between dates, sending pictures helps a couple stay in touch and share each other's reality. Subjects in this study as well as in the study of Van House (2011b) felt that pictures are more real than text is. The subjects of this study sent instant, situational pictures from their everyday lives more than selfies. Van House (2011b) talks about how activity based on pictures is rather transitory and Sarvas and Frohlich (2011) similarly argue that pictures have no lasting value beyond their use for immediate communication. Van House, et al. (2005) tell how in their study as well, sent pictures were immediate, telling about the moment at hand, such as real-time pictures from concerts. These kind of pictures let subjects share their everyday experiences with their dates better than text would convey. The activity may be transitory but the receiver of a photograph can much more easily understand what the sender has experienced, sharing a moment more affectionately and being able to talk about it. Prieto Blanco (2016) also feels that pictures are mediators of presence, enhancing the building of intimacy. As sent pictures are used to share reality, they were especially useful for subjects in a long-distance relationship where everyday lives cannot be shared as often. Distant family members also send pictures to share experiences and keep in touch (Van House, et al., 2005; Prieto Blanco, 2016).

Pictures enable
**sharing one's
reality.**

IN ORDER TO FEEL AFFECTION AND SHARE AN INTIMATE MOMENT, A SENT PICTURE DOES NOT HAVE TO BE A UNIQUE PHOTOGRAPH. Especially one participant of this study also sent memes to express feelings of longing and some subjects mentioned how emoji help in mediating emotions as well. Prieto Blanco (2016) talks about the feelings attached to a cartoon picture sent by a participant in her study, saying that searching for the picture highlights the emotion related to it. These kind of pictures can certainly help in mediating emotions. On top of profile pictures and sent pictures, a few subjects of this study also used pictures shared by another person on Facebook or Instagram to tag their friends in the comments. This kind of image sharing is public and subjects used them to share something silly or cute with friends, mainly as jokes. This, however, shows that the other person is in one's thoughts, and this tagging can thus also help in building intimacy with someone.

Collins (2004) says that bodily co-presence is needed for interaction rituals to develop and these interaction rituals then generate collectively significant symbols. However, even the groups in the study by Walther (1990) created their own "*relational culture*" online for example by developing nicknames and using different graphics for their signatures. Moreover, in this study it came forth that sharing one's reality with photographs can help in

creating a feeling of presence even when a couple is not physically in the same place. Pictures let people build intimacy much better than they could with mere text. Subjects also talked about pictures which function as the symbols Collins is talking about. These symbols can be pictures of certain objects which serve a meaning to the couple not readily available to others if they were to see these pictures. Especially, one participant of this study sent pizza and beer pictures with her date and she felt that this activity built solidarity between the couple. Overall, the way subjects talk about sent pictures and the mere amount of sent pictures makes me argue that **SENDING PICTURES IS ONE OF THE THINGS THAT SUPPORTS BUILDING INTIMACY ONLINE BETWEEN A COUPLE THE MOST**, even though many subjects feel that they would manage fine without the possibility of sending pictures.

6 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter concludes this thesis by answering research questions and considering the correctness of hypotheses. Limitations of the research are also considered and suggestions for future research are given. Before discussing the research questions and hypotheses, the main findings from this study are summarized in the following figure (Figure 6).

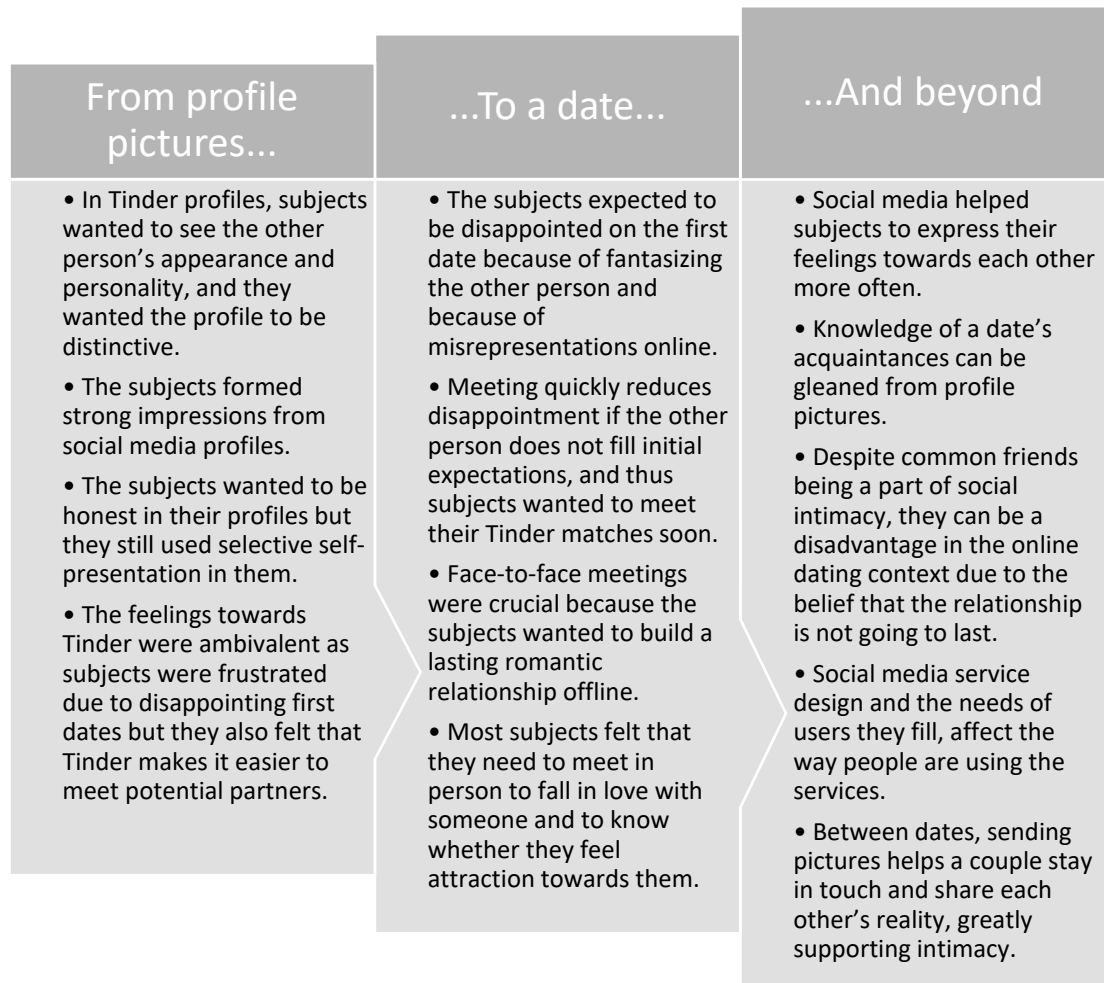


Figure 6: Summary of main findings.

6.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES

The correctness of the six hypotheses are considered here based on the findings from this study. Afterwards, the six research questions are answered. The main research question is answered last.

H1. People replace Tinder quickly (within a few days) with other social media services.

True. The subjects of this study quickly replaced Tinder with an instant messaging service. Usually, the switch was done even before the first date. The reasons for this quick switch were that 1) Tinder is seen quite strictly as an application for finding possible dates, 2) there are problems with Tinder's chat, and 3) it is not possible to send pictures on Tinder.

H2. People meet face-to-face after a match within two weeks.

True. Subjects usually met their Tinder matches within a week, although for example long distances between people and a slow pace in Tinder messaging could prolong the time before meeting. Even though a person is met quite soon after matching, subjects still mentioned usually requiring some conversation before the first date to verify that the other person is not totally unsuitable and that there is something to talk about.

H3. Profile pictures lose their importance gradually.

Partly true. Profile pictures are very important in the beginning as Tinder profiles are based mostly on pictures. Feelings can be attached to these profile pictures but after the first date they are transferred from the pictures to the thoughts about the person met on the date. Thus, instead of losing their importance gradually, profile pictures lose a lot of their importance abruptly when meeting for the first time. Still, profile pictures do not lose all of their importance after the date as subjects mentioned trying to recall people better by looking at their pictures and looking for different aspects of the person from pictures in social media profiles. Thus, after the date profile pictures still retain some of their importance which will gradually fade away due to dates and the sending of situational pictures.

H4. Social media

- a. help people find potential romantic partners,*
- b. make it easier for people to get to know each other, and*
- c. make it easier for people to stay in touch.*

All true. As hypothesized in H4a, most of the subjects felt that Tinder makes it easier to find potential partners. H4b is also true even though it is not that straightforward since in mediated communication people can form impressions about other people based on fantasies of ideal partners and the stereotypes they have formed of other people. However, self-disclosure is still common in CMC and pictures help subjects to share their reality with others, making it easier for others to get to know them. H4c is also confirmed as social media can be used more conveniently than for example phone calls where two people should be available at the same time.

H5. Social media site design affects what people do.

True. It is clear that design affects what subjects do, as for example on Tinder they had to present themselves in certain ways to draw the attention of other users. However, it is not only the design of sites which affects what people do but also what the services have become in use and the needs of users that they have become to fill. For example, some subjects mentioned using Instagram to inform friends about something instead of using Facebook because there are too many acquaintances on Facebook to tell anything more private there.

H6. Computer-mediated communication can be more socially desirable than face-to-face communication.

Difficult to say. There are certainly a lot of findings in previous research which support the social information processing and hyperpersonal theories. Furthermore, as in SIPT, the subjects of this study formed impressions of others based on minor cues, and they were able to present themselves selectively as the hyperpersonal theory suggests. However, the subjects wanted to have an offline romantic relationship and they had to meet their Tinder matches in order to know whether there is a feeling of chemistry, not being able to fall for someone based on CMC alone. The significance of dates for the subjects was obvious, suggesting that it is crucial for them to meet FtF and keep having dates, with CMC simply helping them stay in touch between dates. Thus, it is likely that CMC can offer socially desirable ways to communicate but a FtF meeting is still required in this context.

RQ2. What do people expect from social media while dating?

- a. Why do people start using certain social media services with their dates?*
- b. Is social media enabling or hindering intimacy building with a date?*

In addition to Tinder, the social media services used most by this study's subjects with their dates were WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram. As an answer to RQ2a, the subjects began using WhatsApp with their dates to be able to have more synchronous and less faulty conversations than on Tinder, and to be able to send pictures. Facebook the subjects usually began to use to get additional information about the person but also due to its instant messaging service and due to the social pressure of feeling that the other person has to be added as a Facebook friend in order to have a relationship with said person. Why the subjects of this study wanted to start using Instagram with their dates was not as clear but it was mostly because they wanted to see new pictures of their dates and have several media to communicate with them.

Considering RQ2b, it is possible that social media can sometimes cause a couple to meet less often when they can stay in touch using CMC. Whether this affects intimacy building is not certain and people who wish to have an offline romantic relationship actually meet quite often despite being able to use social media to communicate. As social media helped the subjects to stay in touch between dates, to have emotional intimacy, to experience social intimacy especially by gaining knowledge about the other person's acquaintances, and by sharing each other's reality with sent pictures, the answer to RQ2b is that social media enhance intimacy building with a date.

Finally, with the previous notions it is easier to answer RQ2. First of all, the subjects of this study expected social media services to function without bugs. They also expected social media to let them get to know other people they would otherwise be unlikely to meet and to stay in touch with their dates. Tinder was seen mostly as a way to meet other potential singles, and thus not as much was expected from its messaging functions as was expected from instant messaging services. Some of the subjects trusted that it was equally intimate to share feelings on social media as in person, although most of the subjects still felt that it was best to only express emotions already shared in FtF conversations.

RQ3. Do people draw expectations from social media profiles?

Yes, the subjects drew expectations from social media profiles and the same has been noticed in other research as well. As there is not much information in a Tinder profile, users draw expectations from minor cues. The subjects of this study made a lot of expectations from profile pictures on Tinder, such as the expectations that men who do not show their face in their profile are seeking one-night stands, are in a relationship or are chauvinistic, and that if there are pictures only taken from a certain angle, the profile owner is trying to hide something, for example a weight problem. Some subjects also thought that they are able to figure out a person's education level from pictures.

RQ4. What do people expect to see in profile pictures?

The aspects that the subjects expected to see in profile pictures were divided to appearance, personality and distinctiveness. Appearance means that they wanted to see what the other person looks like and wanted the other person to be attractive. Versatility in pictures was appreciated and many of the subjects felt that having a profile picture showing one's face is mandatory. The subjects also expected to see personality in pictures, meaning that the pictures should tell something about the person, for example something about hobbies or

personality traits. Distinctiveness in a profile caused the profile to stand out from the countless profiles on Tinder by having something unique in it.

RQ5. What are the different ways of building intimacy with pictures?

First of all, Tinder profile pictures let people know what the other person looks like and causes them to make initial expectations about the person. Emotional intimacy includes having common interests and these interests can be shown in profile pictures. Knowledge about the person's friends can be gleaned from profile pictures as well, providing social intimacy. Profile pictures can thus build intimacy but sent pictures build intimacy the most by allowing people to share their reality with situational photographs telling about the person's daily happenings. Photographs allow a person to understand the other person's experiences much better than solely verbal narratives would.

RQ6. What is the significance of meeting a date face-to-face?

Meeting a date FtF is crucial in the dating context. When online dating users want to build an offline romantic relationship with each other, they have to meet in person. Some of the subjects felt that they would not be able to fall for someone online, seeing FtF meetings as mandatory. They also felt that people can build fantasies based on online dating profiles and CMC. There is information available in a FtF meeting which can be impossible or difficult to notice in social media conversations, such as a person's direct verbal conversation skills, nonverbal behavior and sense of humor. Telling about the significance of the first date was that subjects felt a lot of prejudice before the first date, trusting that the other person is not going to be what they are expecting.

RQ1. What kind of expectations do people have in social media while building intimacy with a date?

The previously discussed research questions and hypotheses provide enough information in order to answer the main research question of this study. First of all, most of the subjects trusted that Tinder helps them meet potential partners. Based on Tinder and other social media profiles as well as initial conversations, they formed expectations about their matches and these expectations were verified or proved inaccurate on the first date. They expected the other person not to be what they have expected, causing them to experience a lot of prejudice before the first date. The subjects expected their dates to have other social media services besides Tinder. These services were deployed before and after the first date. Although most of the subjects felt that it would be possible to stay in touch without CMC,

they used social media a lot and especially enjoyed sending pictures to others. They felt that pictures were more real than text, letting them share their reality with pictures better than with only text. Some of the subjects also felt that it is possible to have deep conversations on social media as well as in person.

6.2 LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE SUGGESTIONS

David and Sutton (2011) say that a well-chosen sample is more likely to provide *external validity* than a poorly chosen larger sample. The study sample in this thesis was rather small but because it was carefully selected, the findings from this study should be generalizable to the larger population which the sample was taken from. This study can thus provide information about the social media use of young adults who do not have children, are not members of any racial or gender minorities, and who live in the metropolitan area of Helsinki in Finland. It is probable that this study has gained *internal validity*, expressing the realities of the study participants (David & Sutton, 2011), as the data was gathered with semi-structured interviews and observations. The results of this study could be studied further by making a questionnaire and having many online dating users answer it. A questionnaire would also overcome the possibility that dating and intimacy are such sensitive topics that subjects may not want to tell everything in an interview. A longitudinal study design would also be a great way to study how relationships develop in the online dating environment.

Intimacy is still a concept lacking a widely acknowledged definition. In this thesis, a new, simple and researchable definition was made. The findings from this thesis also took part in the debate between cues-filtered-out, social information processing and hyperpersonal theories from the view of online dating. In this context, FtF meetings are crucial but social media helps in building intimacy and staying in touch between dates. The modern online dating behavior in Finland has not been studied much and thus foreign theories and findings are relied on also in Finland. Interviewing and observing Tinder users in this study has provided more knowledge about online dating in Finland. Furthermore, this is the first attempt to concentrate on expectations when studying online dating and the use of social media, although selective self-presentation and impression formation have been studied before, especially in non-dating contexts.

There are limitations in this study, which are related especially to the chosen study sample. As a couple of the interviewees pointed out, it feels a lot different using Tinder and altogether trying to find a date outside the metropolitan area of Finland, because there are a lot less

inhabitants there, let alone single people. The lack of fellow Tinder users most probably affects the use of Tinder in rural areas. Thus, other social media services may be more important in rural areas than in bigger cities because there is more distance between people. To find out how mediated communication is different in less populated areas, it would be beneficial to interview single Tinder users outside the metropolitan area as well. Furthermore, a couple of the subjects mentioned that their friends who have children have more difficulties in meeting their Tinder matches FtF. When one has to find a babysitter for children and then has to travel a long distance to meet someone, the frustration is even greater when there is no chemistry with the date. Furthermore, only one of the subjects in this study was bisexual with others being straight so the results may not be applicable to sexual minority members, nor to ethnic minorities since none of the subjects belonged to any of them. Therefore, interviewing single parents, sexual minority members and singles with different ethnical backgrounds would provide additional information to the results provided here.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Before recording

- Introducing the master's thesis and the Digital Face project
- Explaining
 - Anonymity
 - Right to withdraw
 - Right to not answer questions
- Signing papers
- Are there any questions?

Warm-up

1. How old are you? – *Minkä ikäinen olet?*
2. How much have you used Tinder? – *Kuinka paljon olet käyttänyt Tinderiä?*
3. How would you describe Tinder? – *Miten kuvailisit Tinderiä?*
4. What would you like to find in Tinder? – *Mitä toivot löytäväsi Tinderistä?*
5. Are you seeking men, women or both in Tinder? – *Etsitkö Tinderistä miehiä, naisia vai molempia?*

Timeline

6. Would you like to tell me about a date you met in Tinder? Draw a timeline showing the most important events. Describe how the relationship proceeded. – *Voisitko kertoa jostain treffikumppanista, jonka tapasit Tinderissä? Piirrä aikajana, jossa oleelliset tapahtumat. Kerro, miten suhteenne eteni.*

Social media

7. Which communication services did you deploy during the relationship and when? – *Mitä vuorovaikutuspalveluita otitte käyttöön missäkin vaiheessa suhdettanne?*
 - a. How would you describe these services? – *Miten kuvailisit kyseisiä palveluita?*
 - b. Why did you deploy these services? – *Miksi otitte nämä palvelut käyttöön?*
 - c. What was the communication like in these services? – *Millaista vuorovaikutuksenne oli eri palveluissa?*
8. When did you exchange phone numbers? – *Milloin vaihdoitte puhelinnumeroita?*
 - a. Did you talk on the phone? – *Puhuitteko puhelimesta?*
9. Did you search for the date's profile from a service which you didn't use together? – *Etsitkö toisen profiilin jostain palvelusta, jota ette käyttäneet yhdessä?*
 - a. What kind of information were you looking for? – *Mitä tietoa etsit?*

10. Are there some communication services which you use with others but didn't use with your date? – *Onko joitain vuorovaikutuspalveluita, joita käytät muiden kanssa, mutta joita et ottanut käyttöön treffikumppanisi kanssa?*

Pictures

11. What drew your attention in your date's Tinder profile (pictures and text)? – *Mihin kiinnitit huomiota toisen Tinder-profiilissa (kuvat ja teksti)?*
- Did you pay attention to other pictures besides the first one? – *Kiinnititkö huomiota muihin, kuin ensimmäiseen kuvaan?*
 - Should there be certain kinds of pictures in Tinder (face, body, hobbies)? – *Pitääkö Tinderissä olla tietyntylaisia kuvia (kasvot, kokovartalo, harrastukset)?*
12. What is your own Tinder profile like (pictures and text)? – *Millainen on oma Tinder-profiilisi (kuvat ja teksti)?*
- Why did you choose these pictures? – *Miksi valitsit juuri nämä kuvat?*
 - What kind of pictures would you use if you were seeking a one-night stand? – *Millaisia kuvia laittaisit, jos etsisit vain yhden yön juttuja?*
13. What did you find out about the person when you met face-to-face? – *Mitä sait henkilöstä selville, kun tapasitte kasvotusten?*
- How did the meeting change your communication? – *Miten tapaaminen muutti vuorovaikutustanne?*
 - Is it important to meet face-to-face? – *Onko kasvotusten tapaaminen tärkeää?*
14. Did you feel that the date's pictures were important in social media? – *Koitko tarpeelliseksi treffikumppanin kuvat eri vuorovaikutuspalveluissa?*
- What did you find out from them? – *Mitä sait niistä selville?*
 - How long were the pictures meaningful? – *Kuinka kauan kuvat olivat merkityksellisiä?*
15. Did you send pictures to each other? – *Lähettelitkö kuvia toisillenne?*
- What did you want to convey with the pictures? – *Mitä halusit kuvilla viestittää?*
 - Did the sending of pictures change during the relationship? – *Muuttuiko kuvien lähettely suhteen edetessä?*

Intimacy

16. Draw a curve showing your feelings (show the subject where hot and cold are). How did you feel towards the date at different points in the relationship, compared to the timeline? – *Piirrä fiilismittari (näytä missä on kylmä ja kuuma). Millainen tunne sinulla oli treffikumppanista missäkin vaiheessa, aikajanaan verrattuna?*
17. When did you find out about the date's friends or social networks (social media, meetings)? – *Milloin sinulle selvisi hänen kaveripiirinsä tai muu sosiaalinen verkostonsa (eri vuorovaikutuspalvelut, tapaamiset)?*
- When did your date find out about your friends? – *Milloin toiselle selvisi sinun kaveripiirisi?*

18. When did you show or tell about your feelings towards each other? – *Milloin näytitte tai kerroitte toisillenne tunteistanne?*
 - a. Is it different to tell about feelings face-to-face than in social media? – *Onko tunteista kertominen mielestäsi erilaista kasvatusten kuin somessa?*
19. When did you have physical intimacy (touch, hug, kiss)? – *Milloin teillä oli fyysistä läheisyyttä (kosketus, halaus, pusu)?*
20. Did you announce your relationship somehow in social media? – *Ilmoititteko suhteestanne sosiaalisessa mediassa?*

Final questions

21. How would you compare this relationship to relationships with others you have met in Tinder? – *Miten vertaisit tapahtumien kulkua muihin, joita olet tavannut Tinderissä?*
22. Do you feel that the communication services that you use are important when building a relationship? – *Koetko käyttämäsi vuorovaikutuspalvelut tarpeellisiksi suhteen kehittymisen kannalta?*
 - a. Do you think that the relationship would have progressed differently if you had only communicated face-to-face? – *Luuletko, että suhde olisi kehittynyt eri tavalla, jos olisitte olleet vuorovaikutuksessa vain kasvatusten?*
 - b. What if you could not have sent pictures? – *Entä, jos et olisi pystynyt lähettämään kuvia?*
23. Do you have any questions or something to add? Thank you. – *Onko sinulla jotain kysyttävää tai lisättävää? Kiitos.*

APPENDIX B: RECRUITMENT ANNOUNCEMENT

Original announcement in Finnish:

Miten rakkaus ja parisuhde ovat muuttuneet tietotekniikan myötä?

Teen diplomityötä Aalto-yliopistolle siitä, miten läheisyyttä rakennetaan deittaillessa eri vuorovaikutussovellusten avulla. Tutkimus on osa Digital Face -projektia, jossa tutkitaan, miten sosiaalista identiteettiä rakennetaan ja ylläpidetään digitaalisissa ympäristöissä.

Etsin tutkimukseen 18 vuotta täyttäneitä pääkaupunkiseutulaisia haastateltavia, jotka etsivät Tinderistä itselleen elämäkumppania ja jotka ovat käyttäneet Tinderiä jo sen verran, että ovat tavanneet Tinderissä kohtaamiaan henkilöitä kasvatusten. Myös hiljattain Tinderistä itselleen kumppanin löytäneet sopisivat hyvin haastateltaviksi. Haastattelu kestää noin tunnin ja se äänitetään.

Tutkimukseen osallistuminen on hyvä keino miettiä omaa deittailukäyttäytymistä. Kaikkia tutkimustuloksia käsitellään ehdottoman luottamuksellisesti ja saat keskeyttää osallistumisesi missä vaiheessa tahansa. Kiitokseksi osallistumisestasi saat pari Finnkinon leffalippua.

Haastateltavaksi voit ilmoittautua täällä tai osoitteeseen annukka.jankala@aalto.fi. Lisäkysymykset ovat myös tervetulleita!

Kiitos mielenkiinnostasi!

Annukka Jänkälä

English translation of the announcement:

How have love and relationships changed with information technology?

I am making a master's thesis for Aalto University about how intimacy is constructed with different communication services while dating. The study is a part of the Digital Face project where it is studied how social identity is constructed and maintained in digital environments.

I am looking for interviewees who are over 18 years old, who live in the metropolitan area, who are seeking a life partner from Tinder and who have used Tinder enough to have met some their Tinder matches face-to-face. Also people who have recently found a partner from Tinder are suitable for interviewing. The interview will take approximately an hour and it will be recorded.

Participating in the study is a good way to think about one's own dating behavior. All study findings are handled with absolute confidentiality and you can discontinue your participation at any point. In return for participation, you will receive two movie tickets.

You can enroll here or to the address annukka.jankala@aalto.fi. Further questions are also welcome!

Thank you for your interest!

Annukka Jänkälä

APPENDIX C: ANALYSIS CODES

Most of the codes were originally in Finnish and these are shown inside brackets.

- From profile pictures...
 - Love-hate relationship towards Tinder (*Viha-rakkaussuhde Tinderiin*)
 - Frustrating (*Turhauttava*)
 - Must be used because not possible to meet anyone without it (*Pakko olla käytössä, koska miten muuten tapaisi ketään*)
 - Entertainment (*Viihde*)
 - Lots of users -> possibility to find someone (*Paljon käyttäjiä -> mahdollisuus löytää*)
 - Handy (*Kätevä*)
 - What is expected from profiles (*Mitä toivotaan profiileilta*)
 - Appearance (*Ulkonäkö*)
 - Face picture (*Naamakuva*)
 - Nude picture (*Alastonkuva*)
 - Body picture (*Kokovartalokuva*)
 - Variety (*Monipuolisuus*)
 - Picture quality (*Kuvien laatu*)

- Honesty/sincerity (*Rehellisyys/aitous*)
- Personality (*Persoona*)
 - Hobbies (*Harrastukset*)
 - Differences are negative (*Erot miinusta*)
 - Clichés in pictures (*Kliseet kuvissa*)
 - What one wants to signal (*Mitä itse haluaa viestittää*)
 - Modifying the profile as a result of tinding (*Profiilin muokkaaminen tinderöinnin seurauksena*)
 - Balance between being honest and not being a cliché (*Tasapainoilu, että olisi rehellinen mutta ei klisee*)
 - Conversation starter (*Keskustelunavaus*)
 - Pictures (*Kuvat*)
 - Facebook likes (*Facebook-tykkäykset*)
 - Text (*Teksti*)
- Text (*Teksti*)
 - Important to some (*Joillekin tärkeää*)
 - Supporting pictures (*Kuvien tukena*)
 - May ruin (*Voi pilata*)
 - Criteria list (*Kriteerilista*)
 - Emoji parade (*Hymiöparaati*)
 - Clichés in text (*Kliseet tekstissä*)
 - Pictures still most important (*Kuvat kuitenkin tärkeimmät*)
- Expectations drawn from profiles (*Profiileista tehdyt olettamukset*)
 - Education and work from pictures (*Koulutus ja työ kuvista*)
 - Other profiles (*Muut profiilit*)
 - Assurance (*Varmistelu*)
 - Stalking others (*Muiden stalkkaaminen*)
 - More information (*Lisää tietoa*)
 - Ease (*Helppous*)
 - Safety aspect (*Turvallisuusaspekti*)
 - A social media profile doesn't necessarily tell the truth (*Some-profiili ei välttämättä kerro totuutta*)
 - Doesn't want others to stalk (*Ei halua, että muut stalkkaa*)
 - Wouldn't like to stalk themselves (*Ei haluaisi itsekään stalkata*)
- ...To a date...
 - Want to meet soon (*Halutaan tavata pian*)
 - A short conversation in Tinder (*Lyhyt keskustelu Tinderissä*)
 - Can be prolonged (*Voi pitkittyä*)
 - Need some kind of confirmation (*Tarvitaan jonkinlainen varmistus*)
 - Conversation should take off already in Tinder (*Keskustelun pitäisi lähteä lentoon jo Tinderissä*)

- Prejudice before the first date (*Ennakkoluuloisuus ennen treffejä*)
 - First date in a bar/café (*Ekat treffit baarissa/kahvilassa*)
- The significance of dates (*Treffien merkitys*)
 - Chemistry (*Kemia*)
 - Doesn't necessarily arise instantly (*Ei välttämättä synny heti*)
 - Interaction after the date more relaxed (*Vuorovaikutus treffien jälkeen rennompaa*)
 - Profiles lose importance after the date (*Profiilit menettävät merkitystään treffien jälkeen*)
 - Support memory (*Muistin tukena*)
 - Showing others (*Muulle näyttäminen*)
 - Physical intimacy only on dates (*Fyysinen läheisyys vain treffeillä*)
 - But meeting is a hug occasion (*Mutta kohtaaminen on halaustilanne*)
 - Emotional intimacy also in social media but more on dates (*Emotionaalista läheisyyttä myös somessa, mutta enemmän treffeillä*)
 - Feelings towards the other person (*Tunteet toista kohtaan*)
 - Common things (*Yhteiset asiat*)
 - Differences led to break up (*Eroavuudet johtivat eroon*)
 - Self-disclosure – personal things (*Self-disclosure – henkilökohtaiset asiat*)
 - Dates are the most important thing (*Treffit oleellisin asia*)
- ...And beyond
 - Social media help to stay in touch (*Some auttaa pysymään yhteydessä*)
 - Constant contact (*Jatkuva yhteydenpito*)
 - Independent of time and place (*Ajasta ja paikasta riippumaton*)
 - Can be easier to communicate in social media (*Voi olla helpompaa keskustella somessa*)
 - Time to think (*Aikaa miettiä*)
 - Instant feedback is however missing (*Välitön palaute kuitenkin puuttuu*)
 - Expect the other to have social media services in use (*Oletetaan, että toisella some-palveluita käytössä*)
 - WhatsApp
 - Preferred by most (*Monille ensisijainen*)
 - Tinder is left soon (*Tinderistä poistutaan pian*)
 - Not just a match (*Ei pelkkä match*)
 - Bad chat (*Huono chat*)
 - When last available (*Milloin viimeksi käynyt*)
 - Voice messages (*Ääniviestit*)
 - Significance of voice (*Äänen merkitys*)

- Calling on the phone (*Puhelimella soittaminen*)
 - Safety of giving the phone number (*Puhelinnumeron antamisen turvallisuus*)
 - Telegram
 - Hangouts
 - Reason why some prefer Facebook (*Syy siihen, että jotkut preferoivat Facebookia*)
- Facebook
 - Messenger
 - Privacy (*Yksityisyys*)
 - Expect that the other person is at some point added as a friend (*Oletetaan, että lisätään jossain vaiheessa kaveriksi*)
 - Social intimacy (*Sosiaalinen läheisyys*)
 - Knowledge about close acquaintances (*Tieto läheisistä*)
 - Common acquaintances (*Yhteiset tutut*)
 - From Facebook to Tinder but it cannot be trusted (*Tinderiin Facebookista, mutta siihen ei voi luottaa*)
 - Tells about the person (*Kertoo henkilöstä*)
 - Trust (*Luottamus*)
 - Can be a disadvantage (*Voi olla haittaa*)
 - Public intimacy (*Julkinen läheisyys*)
- Instagram
 - A more limited group of friends (*Rajatumpi kaveripiiri*)
 - Only following (*Pelkkä seuraaminen*)
- Others
 - Skype
 - LinkedIn
 - FitBit
- Importance of social media (*Somen tarpeellisuus*)
 - Self-disclosure – feelings (*Self-disclosure – tunteet*)
 - Difference between instant messaging services and text messages (*Pikaviestinpalveluiden ero tekstiviesteihin*)
- Sending pictures (*Kuvien lähettäminen*)
 - A reason to get out of Tinder (*Syy poistua Tinderistä*)
 - Everybody sends pictures (*Kaikki lähettävät kuvia*)
 - If pictures could not be sent (*Jos kuvia ei voisi lähettää*)

- Conversation starter when having nothing to say (*Keskustelunavaus, kun ei ole mitään sanottavaa*)
- Telling about feelings with pictures (*Tunteista kertominen kuvilla*)
- Usually only after meeting (*Yleensä vasta tapaamisen jälkeen*)
- Sharing reality (*Todellisuuden jakaminen*)
 - Situational pictures (*Tilannekuvat*)
 - Selfies (*Selfiet*)
 - Especially important in a long-distance relationship (*Etäsuhteessa erityisen tärkeää*)
- Snapchat
 - Don't know how to use (*Ei osaa käyttää*)
- Tagging in pictures (*Kuviin tagaaminen*)

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW ANSWERS IN FINNISH

From profile pictures...

Subjects expect that it is possible to find a life partner via Tinder

Ja kylhän mä poistin Tinderin muutaman kerran siin välillä. Et oli se silleen välillä aika turhauttavaa. Just et olla siellä ja sit tavallaan kun suurin osa siitä vuorovaikutuksesta voi olla sellasta aika lailla ajan hukkaa. Ku siinä kuitenkin pelkästään kuvien perusteella yritetään tehdä päätelmiä toisista ja sitten, kun ei voi tavallaan tietää millainen se toinen ihminen on ja sit välttämättä siitä keskustelusta ei tuu mitään ja sit kuitenkin kun matcheja on useempia niin siin menee aika paljon aikaa. (Kevin)

Siellähän, siis, totta kai suurin osa on pettymyksiä, ei sille vaan voi mitään. Ja mä oon tavannu sieltä tosi monta miestä, siis livenä, niit on kymmeniä, koska kyllä sitä nyt ehtii tossa, kuukausien aikana. Siis suurimman osan kanssa on ollu vaan yhet kahvit tai, oluet ja sitte, heippa. [...] Kyl välillä mä muistan et mä olin et mä en ikinä enää mee sinne, et mä en jaksu että siellä on kaikki ihan idiootteja. Tinderistä ei vaan löydä tavottelemisen arvosia miehiä. Jossain välissä olin kyllä ihan sitä mieltä. Ja suurin osa on niitä. (Annie)

Mä en usko et siit on välttämättä hirveesti mitään hyötyä, mut se on myös ainoa, tai tuntuu olevan ainoa tapa millä mun ikäset sinkut enää tapaa toisiaan. Se on vähän semmonen et sitä vihaa ja se tuntuu aivan turhalta ja se on välillä enemmän semmonen viihde, enemmän ku mikään todellinen parin etsimiskeino. Se on peli jota pelataan siks et se on hauskaa ja siel on älyttömii profiileja ja niin edelleen. Mut toisaalta siel on vähän pakko olla, jos aikoo olla millään tavalla aktiivinen tässä mielessä. Epäilen että yks syy on ihan se et se on olemassa, niin sen huomaa et ihmiset nykysin ei enää

aktiivisesti välttämättä eti seuraa julkisissa tiloissa, vaan niissäkin tinderöidään. Ja toinen on tietenki se et ku on tän ikänen, niin kaveriporukat alkaa olla sen verran vakiintuneita. Siinä missä kymmenen vuotta sitten aina tutustu johonki jonku kautta, ni nykysin tuntuu et se on vähän pakko sitte turvautuu näihin keinoihin, et ihmisii ei enää samal taval tapaa tässä iässä ihan luontaisia reittejä. (Emily)

kaikki asennoituu sillee et siellä ollaan sillä silmällä kattelemassa (Nancy)

se on nopea, ja semmosen, kannustaa semmoseen.. tai sen kautta on helppo ottaa yhteyttä ihmisiin. Ei tarvi rustata mitään hirmu pitkii kirjeitä. Ja on silleen, koska sul tarvii tulla matchi, niin tavallaan on selvää että okei toi jossain määrin on, sen oman profiilin nähny kiinnostavana, niin silleen.. mä oon joskus, okei siitä on ihan helvetin kauan niin, jossain nettideittipalvelussa ollu, niin se oli hyvin eri tyyppistä, mun mielestä silleen että kun kirjoiteltiin pidempii viestei ja tollai. Toi sit kannustaa semmoseen enempi, chattailytyyppiseen kommunikaatioon siinä sit mun mielestä. (Holly)

What subjects expect to find in Tinder profiles

jos vertaa baarissa käymistä ja Tinderiä, ni siinä on sama juttu sä suoraan näät ihmisen kasvoista, profiilikuvasta minkälainen se on, ja näyttääks se siltä et sä haluaisit jutella sille. [...] Mä sanoisin että se on tosi, tosi tosi tosi tärkeet, koska mä koen itseni kuitenkin jossain määrin, musta tuntuu että kaikki ihmiset kokee itsensä varmaan jossain määrin pinnallisena henkilönä, että.. sama että ku, baarissa ja niinku Tinderissä ni ulkonäöllä on jossain määrin väliä et ihmisestä ku ei tiä mitään vielä, ni se on tosi tärkeetä että mikä herättää sitte tavallaan sen kipinän, tai sillä lailla. (Jason)

vaik se ei oo se tärkein kriteeri et pitää olla joku Mr. Finland tai Ms. Finland, ei tietenkään, mut siis kylhän, kyl pitää, joo, kyl se mulle kuitenkin on tärkeä asia myöski se et se ulkonäkö miellyttää. Mut se ei tarkoita se et sen tarvii olla jotenki täydellinen sen ihmisen. (Sarah)

työnsä takia sil ei ollu kuvaa itsestään siel Tinderissä, sillä oli vaan joku maisemakuva ja joku kahvakuulakuva ja, mä ihmettelin sitä todellaki aluks. Mut sit se selvis et se oli sen työn takii, minkä mä voin ymmärtää et joillaki on semmonen työ et, ei halua kuvaansa näkyviin siel. Niin sen takii me otettiin hänen kanssaan niin nopeesti se [WhatsApp] käyttöön koska mä olin sillee, mä olin et oikeesti mä haluan nähdä minkä näkösen ihmisen kaa mä viestittelen, tää tuntuu todella typerältä viestitellä kasvottoman ihmisen kanssa. (Sarah)

mä en haluu esimerkiks pelkkää seksisuhdetta, niin kun jotkut haluaa. Jotkuthan hakee sitäki Tinderistä ja jotkut hakee sitä hyvin avoimesti sielä. Sillee et näkee ihan profiilikuvastaki et okei, tää on vaan tätä [nauraa]. [...] Sen näkee siitä et sillä on semmonen profiilikuva mis näkyy sixpacki, et se on

tästä alaspäin [osoittaa rintakehän yläosaa], et tavallaan näkee. Monesti on, sit siinä on yleensä joku semmonen lyhyt teksti että, "kaipaatko kuumaa seuraa" tai jotain tällöistä niin sit se on aika obvious. [...] Ja sit on yllättävän paljon kans semmosii, jotka kertoo että ne on naimisissa ja ne haluaa vaan seksisuhteen, et se on mun mielestä hirveen surullista, et siel on semmosiiki. Toisaalt hyvä et ne on rehellisiä, siin profiilissaan, se on mun mielest hyvä. Ja niillähän tietenki on myös tällöinen kuva, koska eihän ne oo kasvoillaan, no ei tietenkään. Mut et semmosiaki on yllättävän paljon. (Sarah)

Ja sit ei välttämät suhteessa, mut saattaa olla muuten.. ehdotukset saattaa olla sen verran törkeitä, et ei haluta omalla naamalla olla, vaikka oltas sinkkuja. Ne saattaa olla sen verran sovinnisia tai ihan oikeesti alentavia juttuja mitä siellä toivotaan ja haetaan aika avoimesti. Niistä [profiileista] kyllä järjestään puuttuu aina naamat. Ehkä he itsekin tietää et nyt on jotenki törkeet ehdotukset. (Emily)

vaan alastomia torsoja tai miehiä kalsarit jalassa ilman sitä päätä (Emily)

Mut nyt mä oon huomannu että, mul ei oo siellä kokovartalokuva, et ihmiset kysyy sitä sit, keskustelussa, ja sit mä oon miettiny että pitäskö mun laittaa tänne joku kokovartalokuva. [...] Mut nyt mä oon alkanu miettiä että rajottaako se mun mahdollisuuksia jos mulla ei oo kokovartalokuva, että aatteleeks ihmiset et mä oon joku himmee sotanorsu jos mul ei oo, et en mä tiedä, mutta harkitsen vakavasti [naurahtaa] että pitää otattaa itsestään joku fiksu kokovartalokuva. (Holly)

haluu jotenkin antaa tiiäks, niillä kuvilla tosi monipuolisesti, niin tai siis silleen et monesta näkökulmasta itestään jonkun, viestin tai jonkun [...] Niin jotenkin sitä haluu et, sit siin on enemmän tarttumapinta-alaa niinku eri tyypeille, et jos ne löytää niist kuvist jotain mistä ne diggaa heti niin, on enemmän vaihtoehtoja [nauraa]. (Rachel)

se että mä pistäisin oikeelle, tykkäisin siitä, niin kyllä mä silloin katon sen koko profiilin, et luen sen tekstin ja katon kaikki kuvat, niin silloin tavallaan se kokonaisuus määrittää sen et tykkääns mä siitä. Sen että mä en tykkää siitä mä saatan päätellä sen [ekan] kuvan perusteella jo suoraan. (Holly)

Et jos ne on, esimerkiks ihan hirveen huonolaatuisia, ja sit just tällöiset peilin edessä otetut mis näkyy se kännykkä niin ne ei oo ehkä kauheen houkuttelevia. (Sarah)

sit sitä alkaa jo vähä miettiä jos se on liian hyvä kuva et onks tää ees aito kuva. Ku siellähän on niitäki et siellähän tulee aina, päivittäin vastaan joku semmonen et joku on vaikka jollain julkkiksen kuvalla (Carol)

Ensimmäinen kuva on sellainen, jossa mulla ei ole meikkiä ja jossa näytän mielestäni ihan oudolta ja en kovin kauniilta. Se on kuitenkin minua aidoimmillaan, olin kuvanottohetkellä onnellisella fiiliksellä. Ajattelin että se

kuvastaa luonnettani paremmin kuin jokin tahallaan söpöksi tehty kuva, jossa olisin sellainen, mikä HALUAISIN olla. (Betty)

No ne on varmaan valittu sil taval että ne on erilaisista tilanteista mun elämässä ja semmosista, missä mä viihdyn. Ainaki yks kuva on merellä otettu, purjehtimassa ja yks on just siellä Lapin vaelluksella ja, yks on siellä, kaupunkilomakohteessa. Se kertoo, minkälaisist asioist mä tykkään elämässä. Siinä on aika monta mun mielest luontokuvaa et luonto on mulle aika tärkeä asia. Mutta sit kuitenkin se et ei oo pelkästään luontokuvia että mun elämässä on muuta, et sen takii ehkä se yks kaupunkilomakuva on sitä että on, monipuolisesti intressejä.. Ja onhan tääl tämmönenkin, tämmönen, tää on taas, mä oon jossain yläilmoissa kiipeilemässä. Toi kuvaa sitä mun aktiivisuutta et mä oon aika aktiivinen ihminen. (Sarah)

Ja sitte jos kaikki kuvat on semmosia että, mennään jossain, laivan käytävällä kännissä mehupillit nenässä nii, ei kiinnosta. Mä en ymmärrä semmosia ollenkaan. Tai kavereitten kanssa saunassa kaljat, tuopit, kädessä niin, ohan näitä. (Annie)

Välillä laitoin jopa kuvan itsestäni ja kissasta vaikka se on suuri riski. Jotkut on niin allergisia eläinkuville. Siis että jaha, tällä on kissa, se on hullu, pois [naurahtaa]. Useimmiten en todellakaan laittanu mitään kissakuvaa mutta, ehkä pari kertaa laitoin. Kyl mä sitteki aattelin et jos joku vihaa kissoja nii ei oo mua varten. (Annie)

Tinderissä se, siin kyl ku, kun sitä ns. pelaa enemmän niin kyl siin alkaa huomaamaan että monet näyttää aika samoilta jotenki, ei sinänsä huomaamaan mut se ehkä vaan tulee jotenki, alitajuntaisesti sitte et, siel on aika semmosii vaan, jotenki se yksipuolistuu omissa silmissä se, ns. tarjonta. Mutta, ehkä siin oli sit jotenki, vähän semmost jotain persoonallista, sitten niissä hänen kuvissaan. Niin jäi mieleen. (Larry)

Mä oon kuullu monilta miehiltä että yleinen ongelma tyttöjen Tindereitä selatessa on se että ne on ehkä kaikki tosi nättejä, mut niis ei oo.. siis naama, naama, naama. Se on tosi tylsää kattoo vaan nättii naamaa, et ei se oo mikään genetiikkanäyttely. Siel ois kiva olla jotain mistä alottaa se keskustelu. Mä oon yrittäny valita sinne jotain kuvii mis selkeesti mä oon jossain vaikka ulkomailla tai jotain, mist voi sitte helpommin alottaa jonku jutunki. (Emily)

ihmiset käyttää kuvissa tosi paljo latteuksia. Esimerkiks siellä on, todella usein joku tällanen extreme-urheilukuva että hypätään jostain laskuvarjolla tai ollaan lomalla jossain. Kaikki lomakuvat, niit on todella paljon ihmisillä. Että jos se ei oo se ensimmäinen kuva ni se on joku toinen kuva. Tai sit on tällasia jotain sometrendejä että poseerataan tietyllä lailla, tätä näkee etenkin nuorempien naisten profiileissa, tosi sellasta, jotenki, en tiiä. Niinku ne kaikki kuvat näyttää ihan samalta. Ei pysty erottaa niitä ihmisiä toisistaan.

Mä oon nähny tän tyyppin varmaan joskus vaikka ei oiskaan. Sen mielessään kategorisoi hyvin helposti nää ihmiset semmoseen lokeroon mielessään että nää on näitä ihmisiä jotenki, että ei varmaan hirveesti oo yhtään mitään. (Jason)

Niitäkin on tullut kategorisoitua sitten et ne on justiin ne Bemareihin nojailevat miehet ja sit on ne kuntosaliselfiet ja sitte on ne jotka esittelee, metsästämänsä kalaa tai, peuraa [...] Mut se nyt on ihan varmaa et jos miehellä on prätkä nii siitä prätkästä on siellä kuva. Ja jos se harrastaa lumilautailua nii sillä on se lumilautailukuva. On ne vähän tylsiä. Nehän on tosi tylsiä eikä niistä nää, joku lumilautailukuva tai sukelluskuva, siis mä vihaan sukelluskuvia. Et sä nää siitä yhtään et minkä näkönen se tyyppi on. (Annie)

oikeestaan Tinderis menee usein niin päin et mitä ei ole. Et kun ei ole kuvaa salilta, sali-selfietä, tai kuvaa puku päällä skumppalasi kädessä Slushista ja sit seuraava kuva Bemarkin vierestä, seuraava kuva golfkentältä, seuraava kuva purjeveneeltä ja niin edelleen. [...] Jos ihminen harrastaa purjehdusta, ni voihan sillä olla kuva itsestään purjeveneessä. Ei siin mitään. Mutta kun monista niistä erottaa selkeesti sen tarkoitusperän, et ne golf- ja purjehduskuvat on laitettu ihan puhtaasti sen tietynlaisen varallisuustason ilmi tuomiseksi, eikä mistään muusta syystä. Se on ihan sama onks siinä nyt kuva pukuun sonnustautuneesta miehestä skumppalasi kädessä purjeveneestä tai mistä, jos se pointti on tuoda esiin et "hei, mul on fyffee". Ja ei mua kiinnosta tapailia ihmisiä jotka kokee sen tarpeelliseksi kertoa. (Emily)

Mut seki oli hauska juttu ku mä rupesin käyttää Tinderiä ni, ku mä oon oikeesti ollu rehellisesti aina tykänny kissoista, ihan pienestä pitäen, ja mä oon tykänny musiikista 13-vuotiaasta lähtien ni mulla profiilissa oli nää asiat, mut sitte jossain vaihees oli huvittavaa ku joku Iltalehden Fiidi [<http://www.iltalehti.fi/fiidifi/>] tai joku kirjotti siitä että "mies laita nämä profiiliisi niin saat mätsejä", ja sit siellä oli nää samat asiat. Sitte, kaverit sano että "sä oot kyllä aika paha tyyppi ku sä käytät tollasia kliseitä". Ku mulla oli se helppo juttu että ku mä oikeesti pidän näistä asioista, mut sit taas, vastakkainen sukupuoli ajattelee et "ei vitsi tää on taas näitä tyyppejä". Ja ku mä oon kuullu tosi paljo naispuolisilta Tinderin käyttäjiltä että siellä on tosi paljo kissatyyppejä ja näin. Sitte naisella lukee myös aika usein profiilissa että "ei kissamiehiä", tai näin. Sit tää on tämmönen, mä oon ajanu itteni umpikujan, sen takia nyt mulla ei lue profiilissa mitään kissoista vissiin, eikä oo mitään kissakuvaa koska siinä synty sellanen stigma Tinderin sisällä, tämmönen metajuttu. Siellä ei sitte oo mitään niistä. (Jason)

mähän äärimmäisen harvoin laitan sydämen semmoselle jolla ei oo tekstiä. Ja ne kerrat ku oon laittanu, niin ne on ollu just semmosii tuppisuita, jotka ei pysty sanomaan yhtään mitään eli siit ei oo ollu, eli vielä enemmän uskon

siihen, et siin pitää kyl joku, et jos se ihminen ei oo vaivautunu laittaa sitä tekstii siihen niin sit se luultavasti ei oo sentyyppinen joka sopis mulle ainakaan, partneriks. (Sarah)

tykkään soittaa skittaa ja juoda kaljaa ja silitellä kissoja (Jason)

softaa, safkaa ja söpöjä eläimiä ja syksyisin sienii (Holly)

sadalle ekalle matchille ämpäri (Annie)

Joo tai sitte tulee semmonen hymiöparaati mistä pitäis pystyy päättelee kaikki koko tän ihmisen elämäntarina. [...] Just joku hymiöparaati tai sit siel on joku, just joku kymmenen hymiöö ja sit niistä pitää.. ku mä en ees ymmärrä mitä ne kaikki hymiöt on. Emmä voi tietää mitä nää on ja sit mä ihmettelen, oon tuskastuneena että mitä nää tarkoittaa. (Jason)

Expectations from profiles

Ihan jo kuvakulmista, kuvien laadusta, valaistuksesta, kaikesta tällasesta pystyy päätteleen jo paljon. Kävin kerran treffeillä yhen miehen kans joka sano et "hei come on, et väitäsä et sulle ois ees ikinä tullu vahingossa ketään joka ei ois korkeakoulutettu". Sit mä olin silleen et "no ei mul kyl itse asias oo". Sit se oli et "nii, et kylhän nyt pelkästään kuvien valaistuksesta näkee että onko ihmisellä koulutusta vai ei". Että naisilla se on ihan sama et.. se on jännä. Sit mä jäin miettimään sitä et se on kyl ihan totta, et tietynlaisista esteettisistä detaljeista pystyy jo päättelemään aika paljon siit ihmisestä, näkemättä sitä ihmistä. Jo ihan et minkätyyppisiä, miltä näyttäviä kuvia ja minkälaisia juttuja niissä esiintyy ja näin. (Emily)

No mä voin antaa raflaavan esimerkin että sanotaanko että korkeesti koulutetuilla miehillä ei ikinä ole huimaa määrää tatuointeja, ja eikä niillä ole rööki hampaissa ja joku, Guessin paita päällä ja jossain notskilla [naurahtaa]. Mutta siis silleen, ei ne vaan vaikka ne esiintyis kerran vuodessa kesämökillä noin, niin ne ei otattais ittestään kuvaa silleen, tai laittas sitä Tinderiin. (Carol)

Kyllä mä nyt siel sillä tavalla vakavissani olin että, jos mä jostain tyypistä aattelin et voiskohan tän nähdä niin, jos oli mahis stalkata se Facebookista nii kyl mä sen tein koska.. Vaikka se nyt on helppoa ja nopeeta niin ku mä sanoin nii nähdä tuolla porukkaa nii sit ku niitä rupes olemaan niit treffejä takana jo useita niin, sit mä aattelin että on mulla nyt muutaki tekemistä ku aina käydä turhilla treffeillä. Jos sieltä Facebookista näkyy heti et se on linkannu jonku, rasistisen artikkelin sillee että "hyvä pojat" niin, ei tarvi ees lähtee [naurahtaa]. Kyl se rupes sitte tympimään kun oli, kun todella käy, monilla kymmenillä treffeillä ja, niistä nyt suurin osa on semmosia mitä ei halua todellakaan nähä toista kertaa nii rupes tulee semmonen turnausväsymys. Ettei ois jaksanu niitä turhia enää, hirveesti. (Annie)

tällä kyseisellä naishenkilöllä oli hänen Tinder-profiilissaan hänen Instagram-tunnus, ja hänen Instagram-tunnuksessa oli hänen nimi, ja hänen koko nimen ku laitto Facebookiin ni selvii että hän seurusteli. Sitten mä pakitin, lähdin pois. Se oli jotain ihan järkyttävää, mä olin silleen että ei voi olla totta että kylläpä väistin luodin tässä. (Jason)

Tinderistä sai helposti semmosen kuvan ku sil on kaikenlaisii sellasii urheilukuvii ja tommosii et on tosi liikunnallinen ja näin pois päin nii selvis et ei ollutkaan ehkä ihan niin, urheiluhullu kun esimerkiksi minä. Vähän sohvaperunaan menevä. Eikä siinä oo mitään vikaa mut oli vähän sillee et, tää ei ollu mitä mä oletin. [...] Yleensä sä kävit kerran viikossa lenkillä tai kuukaudessa juoksemassa ja sä otit siit kuvan sillee hehee. Ja sillee et sä käyt kerran vuodessa kiipeemäs jolleki vuorelle nii, onhan se ihan älyttömän siistiä mutta sit, sosiaaliseen mediaan se voi antaa semmosen kuvan et mä teen tätä ihan joka päivä. (Nancy)

Ja mul oli jossain vaihees se Instagram linkitettyä siihen mun profiiliin mut mä otin sen pois koska se tuntu jotenkin liian, liikaa kuvii. [...] ristiriitasta mut joo, ei jotenkaan halua antaa itestään niin, siis liikaa kuvii.. en mä tiedä, joo. Niin. Nii. Mut sit ei tietenkään just haittaa katella niitten muiden kuvia ja tehdä niistä isoi analyyseja [nauraa]. (Rachel)

...To a date...

Fantasies and prejudice before a date

Ja se on tavallaan se mihin, kiinnittää aluks niitä fiiliksiä, siihen ekaan kuvaan. (Betty)

Siihen mennessä sä vaan rakennat sellasii mielikuvia jotka sitten siin treffeillä toteutuu tai ei toteudu. (Kevin)

Se vähentää mun mielest sitä painetta. Just tää mist mä kerroin et oli ollu tosi kiva jutella et se oli jotenki, tuntu kauheelta et ku me oltiin juteltu vissiin viikko silleen todella aktiivisesti joka päivä, paljon paljon paljon, ja sit se oli niin hirvee lässähdys se ku sen näki. Se oli jotenki kauheen kiusallista myös. Sit se piti lopettaa niin ku seinään. Mieluummin sitte ennen kun liikaa kerää odotuksia ja painetta ja päässään kuvittelee sitä et millanen se ihminen on, ni se todellisuus saa tulla nopeemmin kyllä. Mut se riippuu kans siitä et miten aktiivisesti jonku kans viestittelee. Mä oon nytki viestitelly yhen tyypin kans kaks viikkoo silleen tosi epäaktiivisesti, yks viesti joka toinen päivä. Ei siinä ehdi samal taval kerätäkään mitään hurjia odotuksia. Mut sit tollasist mistä tulee heti semmonen fiilis et täs vois olla jotain, ni kyl mä haluan aika äkkii nähä ihan siks ettei sit vaan pety ihan hirveen suuresti, jos ei ookaan. Plus et sit se on se paine. Se tuntu niin oudolta mennä jonku ihmisen kans jolle on kertonu jo kaiken elämästään, mut sit se on kuitenkin vieras. Se on aika jännä tilanne. Se on melkein helpompi mennä ihmisen kans joka on sit ihan oikeesti

vieras, eikä silleen et mähän tiedän sust jo kaiken mutta nyt vasta nään. Must se on ehkä vähemmän pelottavaa. (Emily)

must on paljo parempi nähä ihminen mahollisimman nopeesti ku lähtee siihen ikuiseen viestirumbaankoska, tollanen klassinen juttu et ihminen rupee helposti rakentaa sitte mielikuvaa ihmisestä pelkkien viestien perusteella. Sen takia mä pyrin mahollisimman nopeesti näkemään ihmisen, minkälainen ihminen on ja miten se käyttäytyy ja tällä lailla. Sillon ihminen ei pysty suorassa keskustelutilanteessa niin helposti feikkaamaan tai peittelemään asioita, tai antamaan täysin toista informaatiota. Se on paljon parempi. (Jason)

ainaki sen tietää varmuudella et jos ei synkkaa, et jos se on aivan urpo (Annie)

Se on kuitenkin aina mun mielest aika hirveetä mennä tapaamaan jotain uutta ihmistä, sokkotreffeille. En mä tiä. Oon mä miettiny paljon sitä et miksei sitä vaan kävis jatkuvasti ihmisten kans treffeillä, et eihän siinä nyt mee ku pari tuntia elämästä. Mut se et ei se kuitenkaan oo niin.. se on aina tavallaan.. se pelottaa aina ja sitä jännittää ja sitä ajattelee ja se vie energiaa. En mä oo ainakaan niin harjaantunu deittailija et mä voisin vaan käydä tost noin joka päivä jollain treffeillä ja olla tosi kasuaalisti. Kyl sitä ehkä halua.. ja sit myös sen takii että mikään ei oo niin kauheeta ku se että ei oo vaik mitään puhuttavaa. Se että varmistuu siitä et on jotakin puhuttavaa toiselle, niin se tuo turvaa mennessä sinne treffeille. Et jossei oo mitään viehätystä, niin sentään mä tiedän et meil on tää ja tää ja tää aihe mistä me voidaan keksiä tikusta asiaa jos ei muuten. On vähän ees semmonen et tää menee ihan hyvin, et kyl mä täst selviin. Se viehätys on asia mitä ei voi varmistaa etukäteen, mut se et on jotain yhteistä puhuttavaa, niin sen voi edes vähän kuitenkin varmistaa. (Emily)

hyvä ja kiva fiilis siit dialogista [...] lähtee niin sanotusti vähän niin ku lentoon (Sarah)

jos ei se rullaa siinä niin se ei mystisesti rullaa sitten [kasvotustenkaan] (Carol)

Kylhän se kaikki ennen ku tapaa toisen fyysisesti niin kaikki on vaan sellast mielikuvien varassa, ollaan hyvin pitkälti. Ja sittenhän siin on tosi helppo yleensä pettyä sen takii et jos on, omat mielikuvat on sillee aina vähän jotenki yläkanttiin ja sitten todellisuus vertaa siihen niin sitten jos se ei toteudu ja tolleen (Kevin)

tosiaan tuo ensimmäinen oli semmoinen matalimman mahdollisen kynnyksen eli yhdelle oluelle keskustassa ja sitten se jatkui kahteen tai kolmeen olueeseen. (David)

yleensä mä en jaksu tehdä mitään muuta ku käydä kahvilla ja sit se on sellanen nopee ja sit jos on jotain liian aktiveettii niin sit, mä en jotenkaan pysty keskittyyn siihen henkilöön, kahvil on paras. (Rachel)

nähtiin sitte tuolla Korkeesaassa, päätettiin et tehään jotain semmosta kivaa mukavaa missä on jotain vähän toimintaakin mut ei nyt sillei isoo toimintaa mut semmost aktiveettii siinä, et jos vaik tulee täys jäätyminen niin sit ois luontevaa höpöttää jostain vaik sillei "tui tui, ihana eläin", tai jotain muuta tollasta. (Mary)

The significance of dates

kasvotusten se on paljon nopeempaa ja sillee et sä näät vaan kerran niin sä näät siinä kyllä aika hyvin, no toisen ulkonäön sä, kuvistaki pystyy jo aika hyvin kattoo mut sitte luonnossa sä näät toisen ja sit kuulet myös sen äänen ja sitten kaikki eleet ja muut vastaavat. Et siin näkee oikeesti sen et onks toinen kiinnostunu tai miten se kohtaa sut. Et, välttääks se katsekontaktia tai miten se keskustelee. Et se voi olla jopa niin että Tinderissä tai muualla niin ku sä oot kysynyt jotain niin se on vastannu ja sit on kysynyt kysymyksen itte mut sit taas tavallaan jos kasvotusten ei pysty sit käymään sellast keskusteluu jossa toinen pystyis vetämään sitä ollenkaan vaan sä aina vaan kysyt ja sit se vastaa niin tavallaan kylhän sekin kertoo. (Kevin)

mulle kuitenkin se livetapaaminen ratkasee, että se että vaikka ois kuinka hyvää viestittelyä sielä, jos mua ei kiinnosta se ihminen fyysisesti, niin sit se ei vaan kiinnosta. Sehän on tosi paljon semmosia tiedostamattomia juttuja esimerkiks se et miten toisen tuoksusta esimerkiks tykkää. Eihän sitä voi tietää tuola. (Sarah)

Ei, ei mitenkään. Se on aivan täysin mahdotonta. Se just että mitä tulee ku se toinen ihminen on tossa sun edessä ja ollaan fyysisesti samassa tilassa tai lähekkäin tai näin. Se on ihan mahdotonta, virtuaalisesti tietää. (Annie)

me tokilla treffeillä käytiin luistelemassa ennen ku mentiin syömään ja viinille. Siinä oli jo vähän sellast et pysty luontevasti vähän ottaan tukee toisesta ja sellasta. Kokeilemaan sitä et miten toinen reagoi siihen. Ja sitte semmosta että ku menee vaikka ostamaan ruokaa ja juomaa baaritiskiltä, et voi ottaa toista vähän hartioista kiinni ja kokeilla että säikähtääkse sitä. Silleen vähän kepillä jäätä. (Emily)

On se musta ihan silleen, semmonen kevyt, halaus. Se tuo tavallaan semmosta kuitenkin jotenki, jos siinä on kuitenkin viesteilty ihan pitempään ja näin et tavallaanhan siinä nyt sitte vihdoinkin tavataan. Ja tuo muutenki semmosta et ei olla niin virallisesti. (Carol)

Se on halaamistilanne, joo ja tässäki, ihan sellanen spontaani hali tulee heti kyl ja kaikis muissaki nii, ku käy treffeillä niin, siis kyl ne, siis kyl siinä yleensä

aina halataan ja sit ehkä rupee jopa naurattaan, kumpiki, on sillei huvittunu fiilis. (Rachel)

...And beyond

usein viestittelemällä toiselle tulee sitä kuvaa että olemme toistemme ajatuksissa ja sit just sitä että kuinka, tavallaan halua jakaa sitä omaa elämänsä toisen kanssa. Luoda kuvaa että se toinen on tärkeä, semmosella kohtuullisen jatkuvalla viestittelyllä, versus sit taas, en oo koskaan, tai ainakaan hyvin pitkään aikaan tehny sillee et kirjoittaisin jotain pitkiä sähköpostiviestejä vaikka rakastetulleni. Mut että se taas olis sit enempi semmonen et pysähdyn jossain kohtaa päivää tekemään sen, kun toi on taas yleensä aika kepeää ja semmosta, ei ehkä niin syvällistä mutta semmosta että, koko ajan mukana tavallaan. (Holly)

Tai joku yhteydenpitoväline pitää olla, oli se sit WhatsApp tai Messenger. Just se että pitää jonkunlaist yhteyttä vaikka ei näkis, ni se kuitenkin tiivistää sitä niiden tapaamisten välillä ja kehittää jollain tavalla eteenpäin. Ja myös syventää sitä tutustumista. Kyllä siinä aina, vaik se ois miten tyhjänpäivästä se viestittely, niin jotain käsitystä saa toisesta ihmisestä. Ja kyl se kuuluu se semmonen et "jee, se laitto mulle viestin", "se ei oo vastannu mulle tuntiin" [naurahtaa]. Kaikki tällanen kuuluu jollain tavalla siihen alkusuhteen vaiheiluun mun mielestä. Ois se aika outoo tapailla jotain ihmistä jonka kanssa ei pitäis yhteyttä näitä kautta lainkaan. (Emily)

Social media services

no Tinderin nään lähinnä just vaan sellasena, et siel törmätään siihen ihmiseen ja vähän saahaan se keskustelu alkuun ja sitte kartotetaan et onks tää nyt semmonen kenen kans haluais vaan nähä, mut sitten noin just, jatkon kannalta must, no jos mä nyt vielä juttelis Tinderis sen kans niin se tuntuis jotenki vielä, kummalliselta, tai et jos vaik puol vuottaki juttelis vaan siellä, koska se on kuitenkin ite, tai siis mä miellän sen enemmän just siihen et siellä haetaan sitä ihmistä (Mary)

Jos ei mee sinne WhatsAppiin, niin ei tuu vaihdettuu niitä numeroita. Ja sitte kun sä oot tavannu jonkun ja se ei ollutkaan yhtään kiva nii sä voit poistaa sen nii et se ei saa ikinä sua enää kiinni. Koska sille ei jää mitään kontaktia. (Annie)

Et ihmissuhdehan ei oo olemassa jos se ei oo Facebookissa [nauraa]. Mut se on varmaan oikeesti vähän totta myös. (Betty)

Mulla oli itse asias aika hyvä kuva sen ystäväistä ennen ku mä ne tapasin. Se oli itse asias hauskaa et mä olin kuitenkin jostain Facebookista pystyny yhdistään naaman, ja nimen, niin, silloin ku mä tapasin ne nii mä tiesin kuka oli kukaki. (Nancy)

jos on vaan joku tietty Facebook-kaveri josta ei silleen niin paljon tykkää niin sit se tietty voi olla enemmän sellanen vähän negatiivinen (Kevin)

Siitähän voi päätellä aivan, todella pitkälle millanen tyyppi se on ja mitä se puuhaa. Mul on paljon eri kaveriporukoita et on vaikkapa tämmöset taiteilija-, piirtäjäkaverit. Jos on yhteisissä kavereis niitä nii tietää sitte just, et miks ne on yhteisii kavereita. Tai sitte jos on vaikkapa elokuvaporukkaa, nii sitten, se on tavallaan, jotenki ehkä linkittyny siihen. Tai jos on muusikkokavereita, nii sit se on tod. näk. iteki muusikko tai jotain siellä puuhastelee. (Annie)

No sanotaan näin et jos niit on todella paljon yhteisii kavereita niin sit, mua saattaa alkaa mietityttää et.. ne et kun tietää kuitenkin et tää ei välttämättä oo mikään semmonen, juttu minkä nyt, se ei välttämättä jatku kovinkaan pitkään et haluunks mä et jos, tiäks et jos juttu liikkuu eteenpäin et on deittaillu jotain tyyppiä tosi paljon (Rachel)

Facebook sit taas on enemmän myös silleen.. paikka näyttää muille. (Holly)

se et ilmottaaks siellä että me kaks ollaan nyt pariskunta ni mun mielest välttämättä sitä, mulle nyt se olis ihan se ja sama et tekeeks sen vai ei. Mun mielest mulle tärkeet ihmiset tietää kenen kaa mä seurustelen. Ei mulla oo semmost tarvetta siellä tuoda sitä esille, välttämättä. Mut, no, en mä tiitä ehkä jos mä oisin tosi rakastunu ja se toinen ihminenki haluais, et laitetaan tänne ni varmaan ihan fine et laitetaan. Mutta mun mielest se ei ois mikään pakko. (Sarah)

ehkä se on jotenkin kans syrjäyttäny itellä sitä Facebookii vähän, ja sit koska siellä on kuitenkin jotain, enemmän.. siis sukulaisii, työkavereit, tommosii. Tuntuu hölmöltä laittaa sinne sellasia niin sanotusti turhia kuvia, että jos ei vaikka Instagramii käyttäs niin varmaan vielä vähemmän julkaisin kuvii missään siinä koska, ei Facebookiin vaan tunnu niin oleelliselt laittaa montaa erilaista kuvaa et vaik nytki on ehkä kuva tai kaks viikos mitä Instagramiin laittaa mut se on kuitenkin paljon enemmän ku Facebookiin et sitä jotenkin aktiivisemmin kuvilla päivittää sitte, Facebook on ehkä enemmän sitte kuulumisia jos niit vertaa silleen keskenään. (Mary)

WhatsApp-puhelut on tosi huonolaatuisii ja Telegramilla ei mun mielestä ees oo, puhelinomaisuutta ei sillä oo. Niin Skype on sillei helpoin koska siinä näkee toisen kasvot. Ja.. niin. Siinä näkee sillei mitä toinen tekee ja vastaavaa niin se on mun mielest, se on siinä mielessä kaikist paras. [...] No onhan se erilainen interaktio. Tai et se on niin helpompi puhua kun, tai et pystyy käymään keskustelua. Ja justiinsa se toisen näkeminen ja toisen ilmeiden näkeminen niin on se silleen paljon mielekkäämpää ku silleen et vaan lukee viestejä. Et kylhän silläkin on, sil on iso rooli. (Kevin)

Tekstarit on kyl, [naurahtaa] aika viime vuosituhat. Että se on ehkä vähän, se ois vähän outoo jos keskustelut käytäis tekstareil. Ois se niin outoo et ei se kyl ehkä toimis sit siin kohtaa. [...] Mun mielest tekstarit on kyl sellanen.. Emmä tiedä. Monellahan ne maksaiskin jokainen viesti.. ja tolleen. Vaikka ne nyt ei maksaiskaan niin.. No siin tavallaan menettää sit sen kuvien jako-, no kuvien, ne on sit jotain multimediatiedostoja. Ei se kyl ehkä toimis. (Kevin)

Sending pictures

Mä sanoisin et se on ehottomasti vaje mutta mun mielest se on hyvä juttu koska se palvelun idea ei oo.. olla kuvanlähetyspalvelu. Must se on hyvä juttu. Must se on oikeesti tosi hyvä juttu, ja se on yks parhaimpia juttuja että jos, tää on klassinen et esimerkiks jos on vaikka Tinderissä keskustellu jonku kanssa, sit joo että "ei vitsi" että.. mul on vaikka joku.. niinku kissa. Mä käytän kissaesimerkkiä, ku tää on niin hyvä, että esimerkiks että "voi vitsi että mä olin mun kaverin luona ja siel oli tosi ihana kissa ja mä otin siitä kuvan ja blaablaablaa. Mut vitsi ku Tinderissä ei voi lähettää kuvia". "No mitäs jos tohon WhatsAppiin", "no joo mun numero on tämä". Että sitä voi käyttää myös tekosyynä, hyvin usein, ni se on aika hyvä. Mutta mun mielest se on myös aika.. must se on hyvä et siinä ei oo sitä kuvanlähetystoimintoo. Koska sitä varten on sitte muut palvelut mihin voi siirtyä loogisesti ja luonnollisesti. (Jason)

Mul on yhen kaverin kanssa, ni onkohan meillä, meil on tullu jonkun kuukauden aikana 1700 lähetettyä kuvaa. Me käydään joskus keskustelua pelkästään kuvilla. (Jason)

Et sun ei tarvi mennä kysyy että "mitä kuuluu, miten menee?" Sä voit laittaa kissakuvan. Ja sitten tavallaan se automaationa tulee sitten sellanen kontakti. (Kevin)

mä oon tosi huono laittaa just semmosta viestii et no, että on vähän ikävä tai nyt jotain tommosta, tunteenilmasuu viestissä et enemmän mä sanon sit sen kasvojen niin sitte voi laittaa vaikka jonkun semmosen.. kissameemin tai jonku sillee että, en mä nyt osaa antaa siitä hirveen hyvää esimerkii mut joku semmonen mistä tulee vähän ilmi se et mitä aattelee niin sitte kuvalla semmosella. (Mary)

Nii, sä haluat jotenkin jakaa sen hetken just sille ihmiselle, yleensä ainakin se on näin. Harvemmin siinä on mitään semmosta et.. Siis niin, harvemmin siinä on mitään sellast et haluu jotenkin, jotenkin saada esiin et "mäpä oonkin täällä" tai jotain, jos se on joku ihminen jost mä oon kiinnostunu niin sä lähetät sille kuvii tai semmosii, niin sä haluat jakaa sen hetken tai sit sä haluat, näyttää et "hei et mä teen myös tällasii juttui" vaikka, tyyliin mä oon ollu jossain sienestämäs niin sit mä otan kuvan [naurahtaa], et "mä teen tällasii juttui" koska ne on ehkä sellasia et ne ei tuu keskusteluis esille, et "hei

käyt sä muuten sienimetsässä” ja sit taas jotkut saattaa pitää sitä tosi outona ja sit taas mulle se on tosi terapeutista [naurahtaa]. (Rachel)

esimerkiks meillä oli niit semmosii omii juttuja, et oli tietynlaisia kuvia just mitä jakaa. Vaik meillä oli aina kuva-arvoituksia, mis piti päätellä et missä toinen vaik on. [...] Ja sitte me läheteltiin tosi paljon kuvia juomista. Okei, tää on tyhmää. Siit se varmaan lähti alun perin et me lähetettiin kuvia jostain, ku me oltiin juotu kuitenkin meidän treffeillä, ni seuraavana päivänä sitte kuvia siitä että ”nyt täällä olen palautumassa”, kuvia tuopeista. Ja sit se jäi vähän päälle silleen että ei tarvinnu erikseen laittaa toiselle että ”mä lähen taas mun kavereiden kans baariin”, vaan lähetti vaan sen kuvan siitä tuopista. Sit toinen oli et ”aa, sä oot taas”. Semmosta yhtenäisyyttä loi siihen suhteeseen, et meille kummalleki oli tosi tärkeä se et meil on omat kaverit joiden kans vietetään paljon aikaa ja kumpiki tykkää kaljasta. Silleen et se ei ollu mikään.. se oli semmonen yhdistävä tekijä. Ja toinen oli pizza. Me syötiin yleensä aina krapulassa yhdessä pizzaa sunnuntaisin, mut sit me myös läheteltiin kuvia toisillemme pizzoista. Silleen et ”ootsä kateellinen”. (Emily)