

# Infatuation or digital deception? Courting through dating apps



By Alejandro Navarrete and Melissa Garza

**Swipe left or swipe right.** Do it once, do it again, do it again. **Next, see if there's a match.** Then, see whether **there might be the chance of a relationship.**

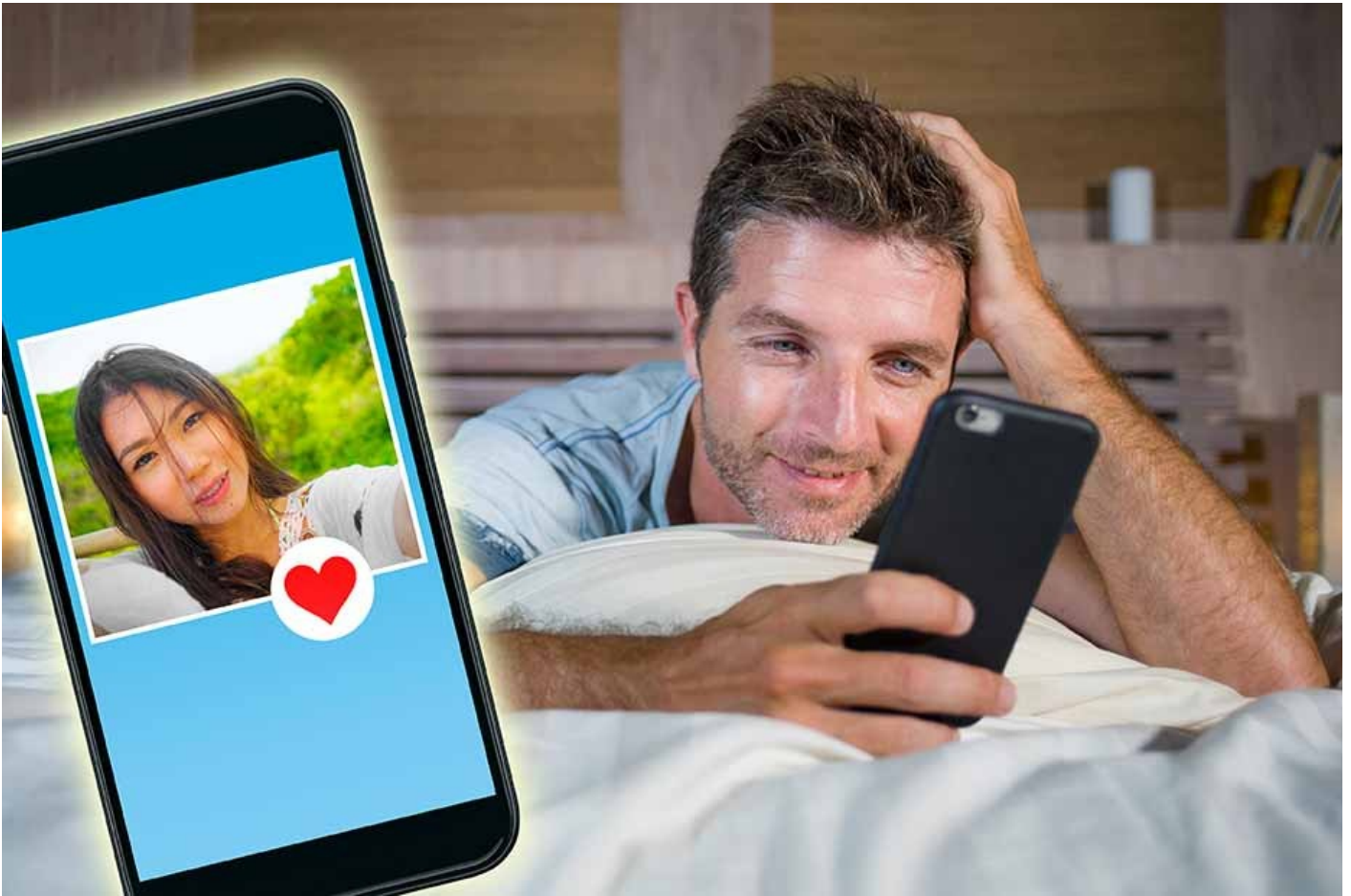
**For some, this is already the most normal thing possible. For others, it's weird and risky.** Welcome to the world of courting through **dating apps**, a market that, according to PRNewswire, will be worth 8.4 billion dollars in 4 years' time.

Currently, **nearly 1 in 3 internet users** and **1 in 2** of those **between the ages of 18 and 29** have **downloaded an app** like this, according to the [Pew Research Center](#).

**But not everyone is convinced**, and according to a previous study by Pew itself, **20 percent still consider** them to be for **"desperate" people.**

On this **February 14**, **CONECTA** talks to members of the **university community** at the Tec to see what their **experience of digital courting has been like.**

We also speak to **experts on cybersecurity and psychology** from [Tec de Monterrey](#) and [Tecnilenio](#) to hear their views and learn some tips to share with you.



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### “MY HEART WAS BROKEN”

*“My heart was broken. I fell in love with a boy, but the boy didn’t fall in love with me,”* says Fátima (19), to **CONECTA**.

She adds: *“When you go out with someone, **people take it for granted that it’s a date, and I don’t like that.**”*

Fátima also believes that it’s a **waste of time**. **You have a lot of chats with a lot of people** for a lot of time, but then nothing happens, or you don’t know if there’s any commitment.

Guillermo (22), takes it as **more of an adventure**: *“I’d recommend it (...) as **it’s an experience whether you get anything out of it or not.**”*

He says that he didn’t get much interaction until he put something less formal in his profile: *“**I tried setting it to normal status and there wasn’t much reaction. When my roomie decided to set it to troll status, there were more reactions.**”*

*“I’d be lying if I said I hadn’t used one of these apps.”* Víctor (25)

### “I DIDN’T WIN THE MATCH CONTEST”

Víctor (25) says he prefers love “*the old way*”, but he decided to try it out, egged on by his friends. **“I’d be lying if I said I hadn’t used one of those apps (but) it was just for a bit to have a laugh with my friends. I didn’t win the match contest.”**

Sofía (20) tells CONECTA that **she hasn’t plucked up the courage to use these platforms**, because she thinks they’re **unsafe**, especially for women.

However, she says that she doesn’t see it in a negative way. **“I don’t think relationships are better or worse in online dating. That’s up to you and how you behave digitally or in person.”**

Memo (also 20) is someone who **would never use them**. **“I think it’s weird to meet people over the internet. It’s like you don’t have a background where someone else can vouch for that person.”**

María also mentions a bad experience with a boy who wanted something different. **“Most people are only on it for a one-night stand, and I don’t like that so much.”**

Although she also says that, **“It makes it easier to meet more people and it increases your odds of finding what you’re looking for. You just have to be very clear about it.”**

*“I think it’s weird to meet people over the internet.” Memo (20)*

## COURTING À LA CARTE

Rubén Sillas, a psychologist from the department of **Wellbeing and Counseling at the Monterrey campus of the Tec**, explains that these **options are becoming more attractive**.

**“The hyperconnected nature of social media has provided quick solutions to overcome our age’s afflictions of the heart (...) picking and choosing the best options in the ‘love market’.”**

Adriana Villarreal, who teaches psychology at Tecmilenio and has written books on romantic relationships, agrees on the practicality they offer.

**“They provide a speed that is now what many people are looking for: the fast culture of ‘I don’t have time for this’. So, it’s easier to look at profiles.”**

Although for her, these relatively new forms are neither good or bad.

**“You have to learn how to use them. We’re at the point where we’re learning as a society how to handle relationships like these.**

**“First of all, you have to be really clear about your goals (...) I know men and women who are both types (those looking for a stable relationship or a one-night stand). Based on my personal perspective and what I see in consultations, we’re on a par (men and women).”**

**“You have to learn how to use them. We’re at the point where we’re learning as a society how to handle relationships like these.”**

## SELF-LOVE AND LIMITS

How should you look after yourself so as not to get hurt in these interactions? In Sillas' opinion, ***“We shouldn't become slaves to desire or other people's demands, whether real or virtual.”***

***“The first thing is self-love,”*** says Villarreal.

***“If you know how much you're worth, you don't need a super cool profile photo. You're not interested in people approaching you because of your photo.”***

***“Also, know how to set limits. If you don't do that, you'll get hurt or you'll hurt others,”*** she says.

***“It's also very important to learn how to recognize attacks. People get attacked a lot in personal relationships because they don't know what an attack is.”***

***“If you know how much you're worth, you don't need a super cool profile photo.”***

## THE RISK OF DEPERSONALIZATION

Looking at profile “catalogs” and trying to match up with a lot of people can also lead to **depersonalization**, warns Villarreal.

***“We can start to depersonalize people by turning profiles into an Amazon store and seeing which of them you can “buy”.”***

***“People start to reduce themselves to objects, to affordable images. With a single click, they become a consumer object,”*** agrees Sillas.

For Villarreal, there is also a richness that virtual interactions will never give you, **not even with emoji and stickers.**

***“Sharing face to face, seeing the excitement, knowing what the person you're chatting to smells like... I think so. Something gets lost. (In any event) it's the responsibility of previous generations like ours to share that, instead of being glued to the telephone ourselves all day,”*** she says, self-critically.

***“People are starting to reduce themselves to objects.”***

## DATING WITH CYBERSECURITY

**Grecia Renovato and Luis Gerardo Muciño**, from the **Cybersecurity** area of the **Tec** also share tips on **how to take care of yourself when using these and other apps:**

## Never share:

- *Your full name*
- *Your address*
- *Work information*
- *Medical conditions*
- *Academic details*

## Innocent mistakes to avoid:

- *Syncing apps with social media*
- *Syncing apps with telephone contacts*
- *Sharing private or intimate photos*
- *Giving apps permission to take your data*
- *Not setting up your profile properly and making information public*
- *Having dates in private or secluded areas*
- *Not checking an app's payment method before using it*

They also add:

***“There’s no surefire way of confirming that the person in question’s profile picture is 100% real. We recommend always having an attitude of distrust.*”**

***To protect your safety, always apply common sense in physical and virtual relationships.”***

## YOU’LL SURELY WANT TO READ THIS TOO:

<https://tec.mx/en/news/national/education/4-steps-telling-fake-news-truth>