Open letter draft

Match Group, the world’s largest dating app company, [recently announced](https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2024/dec/30/dating-apps-prepare-to-launch-ai-features-to-help-users-find-love) plans to integrate generative AI into its products.

In an early [letter to shareholders](https://s203.q4cdn.com/993464185/files/doc_financials/2023/q4/Earnings-Letter-Q4-2023-vF.pdf), the company wrote: ‘Tinder and Hinge are currently working on several ways for AI to assist in making this important first step as frictionless as possible by helping daters curate their photos and bios to better showcase who they are…We will implement generative AI to inspire more effective and authentic bios and prompts to substantially improve profile quality and drive improved user outcomes.’

This attitude is shared through the industry, with the CEO of rival company, Bumble, last year exploring the idea of a [‘digital concierge’](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/bumble-founder-ai-dating-apps-b2545136.html) where AI-bots date each other, and Grindr [announcing](https://www.wsj.com/articles/grindr-aims-to-build-the-dating-worlds-first-ai-wingman-8039e091) they are ‘testing an AI bot for gay and bi men that helps find new matches, set up dates, and even date other AI wingmen for you’.

While some of these innovations are on the horizon, third parties already offer a suite of AI services to help people use dating apps. For example:

* Help with improving your bio ([LoveGenius](https://www.lovegenius.io/))
* AI photo improvement ([RoastDating](https://roast.dating/))
* Chat analysis ([Yourmove.ai](https://www.yourmove.ai/), [Rizz](https://rizz.app/))
* Relationship coaching ([Meeno](https://meeno.com/))

Individuals can also adapt existing gen-AI to guide their search for intimacy, e.g. developer [Alexander Zhadan](https://gizmodo.com/guy-used-chatgpt-talk-5-000-women-tinder-met-his-wife-1851228179) used personalized ChatGPT bots to ‘date’ over 5000 women.

Gen-AI is often positioned as a technology which will revolutionise the search for intimacy by tackling ‘[dating fatigue](https://www.theguardian.com/wellness/2024/feb/12/dating-app-fatigue-tips)’, and help to address the [loneliness crisis](https://www.ft.com/content/ae99e1d7-d72a-48fc-baca-d68c09ed73d4).

It would be foolish to deny it may have some benefits. That said, we are writing to urge caution around use of this technology and to encourage companies and regulators to consider carefully its impact on vulnerable groups and wider society.

The main risk of hasty adoption of gen-AI, is that without adequate guardrails and education in place, it may degrade an already precarious online environment. Misrepresentation and deception are rife online, and use of gen-AI risks worsening this to the detriment of dating app users who value authentic intimacy.

Other potential risks associated with growing use of gen-AI are that it:

* Makes **manipulation** easier, and risks normalising various forms of **deception**
* Complicates our sense of who is **responsible** for content (the user, or the app)
* Contributes to **unrealistic expectations** around body-image, personality, and conversational competence in dating in connection to dating
* Reinforces algorithmic **biases** concerning gender, race, class, and disability
* Exacerbates **inequality** in the dating sphere, as some can pay to access gen-AI tools and others can not
* **Homogenises** profiles and conversations
* **Increases anxieties** around in-person dates, where gen-AI ‘wingmen’ may not be available
* Raises new worries about **data security** and **privacy** due to the personal information involved.

It may be possible to mitigate some of these concerns, but until then restraint is crucial.

We urgently need well-developed guardrails and regulatory clarity about the acceptable use of gen-AI in digital spaces where people are seeking intimacy and may be vulnerable.

Signed: