Tinder UK Newsroom

The Future of Dating is Fluid

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On Tinder where more than half of all our members across the globe are Gen Z (18 to 25 year old young adults) we were already witnessing them redefining the rules of dating before the pandemic. Then everything changed in 2020. The loss, longing and loneliness that the pandemic created in the lives of these young people has accelerated a new normal in their dating intent, to find ways to connect more, come together for more reasons and be more open on Tinder.

It's been the busiest year in our history.

And it's going to be a completely new decade of dating.

Gen Z is breaking dating completely free of traditional strongholds and taboos. Dating is no longer about the familiar chronology or of slow courtship, instead it's become fluid in terms of expectations (lets see where it goes), emotions (honest and authentic) and experiences (more activities than icebreakers, digital dating is here to stay). In true Gen Z style they effortlessly juggle contradictions - at once seeking to broaden the scope of dating while narrowing down to find people nearby to date and also bringing a strong sense of urgency to take the plunge back into dating while making time for the small moments of affection.

Future of Dating: Top Tinder Social Engagement Data

- **19%** more messages were sent per day in Feb 2021, compared to Feb 2020.
- Conversations were **32%** longer during the pandemic.
- We saw **11%** more Swipes and **42%** more matches per Tinder member.
- Gen Z also turned to video chats. **Nearly half** of Tinder had a video chat with a match during the pandemic, and **40%** plan to continue using video to get to know people even when the pandemic is over.

Future of Dating: Top Trends

#1: Daters will be more honest and authentic.

The pandemic helped many people put things in perspective. It led Tinder members to be more truthful and vulnerable about who they are, how they look, and what they're going through. Mentions of 'anxiety' and 'normalize' in bios grew during the pandemic ('anxiety' grew 31%; 'normalize' grew more than 15X). When it comes to what Gen Z (18-25 year olds) are looking for in a partner or relationship, almost half (48%) admitted they're looking for someone honest, authentic and truly themselves when with them.

#2: Boundaries will become more transparent

The pandemic brought up more discussions of personal boundaries. Tinder members used their bios to make their expectations clear: the phrase 'wear a mask' went up 100X over the course of the pandemic, 'boundaries' is being used more than ever (up 19%), and the term 'consent' rose 11%. This practice will make conversations about consent more commonplace and comfortable in the future.

#3: More people will want to "See where things go"

In a recent survey of Tinder members, the number of daters looking for 'no particular type of relationship' was up nearly 50%.

So rather than the pandemic driving a desire for marriage, the next generation of daters will seek more open-ended relationships.

#4: Digital dates will remain part of the new normal.

Rather than go out, people were more likely to meet through Tinder, then go on a date on Animal Crossing (AC mentions grew 30X) or eat takeaway meals together over Zoom (Deliveroo grew 2X; Zoom grew 30X). And while it may have started out of necessity, the digital date is here to stay. 40% of Gen Z Tinder members say they will continue to go on digital dates, even as date spots re-open.

#5: First dates will be more about activities than icebreakers.

With many bars and restaurants closed, many traditional first date venues were no longer an option. So when it came time to meet up, daters chose more creative, personal, and casual first date activities than in the past. 'TV Show-mancing' emerged as the ultimate lockdown virtual date in the UK, with 1 in 5 18-25 year old Brits virtually watching TV together as part of a first date. 'TV show-mancing' proved to be one of the most successful COVID-friendly dates, as almost a fifth (17%) of those who virtually watched TV together, bagged a second date.

#6: Small touches will have a big impact.

Members are using their bios to seek out affection like hand holding, cuddling, or someone to touch their hair: use of the word 'cuddle' grew 23%, and 'hand holding' is up 22%. After experiencing months without physical contact, daters have come to greatly appreciate the smallest moments of physical affection. So even when meet-ups become common, little physical gestures will play a more important role in people's dating lives.

#7: People will always want to date someone close by.

Tinder's geolocation, or ability to find someone nearby, was highly relevant for the pandemic moving boom. Mentions of 'moving' in bios were up 28% in 2020. So while technology continues to enable people to live or work anywhere, they are still coming to Tinder to find someone who lives close to them..

#8: A 'summer of love' could be coming.

As of Oct 2020, more than 40% of Tinder members under the age of 30 had not met a match in person. But according to Tinder bios, that might be changing; in line with the easing restrictions, which allow two people to have a coffee on a bench, 'park date' brewed up 94% more bio mentions. Looking to find a snack, mentions of 'picnic date' were also up by 110%, compared to the same time last year. Breaking neither hearts, nor rules, mentions of 'socially distanced date' also multiplied 93 timesAnd while people slowed down in-person dating in 2020 (54% of singles shared with YPulse that "Covid 19 has significantly delayed my love life"), they are ready to start getting out more as soon as vaccines (or antibodies) are in place.

Terms: All data above comes from Tinder profiles or aggregated Tinder app activity. Data was pulled from Jan 2020 - Feb 2021.

Messages is average number of messages sent per member

Bio updates is average bio edits per user, per month

WAV / survey data comes from**Findings based on a survey of ~5,000 Tinder members in the US between May 6 and May 12, 2020 and August 14 to 24, 2020

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YPulse Finding Love Post-COVID Trend Report. Based on a survey of 1000 13-39-year-olds in the U.S., fielded December 2020

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