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**Competitive Research**

The four dating applications I chose to compare with Tinder were Hinge, Grindr, OkCupid, and Bumble. To research each of these applications, I briefly downloaded and made profiles to explore the features first-hand as a user. I also did some research on each application online to gain some more objective information and prevent personal bias/experience from interfering.

 I chose these four applications based on a Business Insider article that ranked the current top 10 dating applications on the market. I read about each briefly and chose four that each seemed different enough to provide users with slightly unique experiences. I found that while Tinder, Grindr, and Bumble seemed to be more casual dating apps, Hinge and OkCupid had a more serious, relationship-like tone in their layouts and descriptions. The latter two created user profiles built on personal information and more of it, while the first three seemed to be more appearance-based.

 As we will eventually be examining Tinder through the lens of safety features that it affords to the user, I decided to analyze features in each dating app that could either bolster or detract from the safety of the user. I chose to examine the matching process between two users, the catfish factor and what obstacles the application has in place to prevent catfishing, the communication method that the app allows to users, discovery settings which allow the user to filter the matches they want to connect with, a group/friends option that allows for groups of people to match, the ability to block & report users, location sharing and tracking, and the primary purpose of the application.

 I found that Tinder ranked somewhat poorly in relation to the other apps as far as safety features go. Like most of the other applications, Tinder utilizes a swiping process that allows users to swipe left or right on other user profiles. Two mutual “right swipes” unlocks a chat feature so that users of mutual interest can begin talking. In regards to catfishing however, the only real preventative measure that Tinder provides is account linking through Facebook and optionally through Instagram. These can both be feigned however. Bumble on the other hand, offers a feature in which only women can message a match first, reducing the amount of harassment that typically occurs on dating apps. Bumble also only allows for one conversation match per day, reducing the inceptive behind harassment and catfishing. In regards to discovery settings, Tinder does not require much profile information compared to the other applications. Users include their age and an optional biography, and can filter through a 1-100mi radius and a desired gender/ age-range; this is not a lot of information. Some of the other applications I reviewed included space for height, weight, interests, race, and even personality questions (OkCupid.)

 One thing that Tinder does have over the others is ease of use and efficiency. It is quick, free, and the network effect of popularity makes it a go-to choice for many singles. It appears that in other realms however, there is a lot of room for improvement on Tinder, such as the inclusion of more profile information, a more selective screening process, and a defense feature against catfishing and harassment.

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| **Dating App** | **Tinder** | **Grindr** | **Hinge** | **OkCupid** | **Bumble** |
| **Matching process** | Users swipe right/left. Mutual right swipes create a match, unlocking a messenger feature between matches.  | Swipe through up to 100 profiles | Users can "like" or comment on others' profiles. Replies to "likes" or comments open the chat feature | Swiping/ rating peoples profiles | swipe right and left |
| **Catfish factor** | Tinder account is linked to Facebook, adding a layer of security to prevent catfishing | Can message anyone = not as much security | Profile contains more pictures/information than a "typical" dating app, adding layer of security | profiles contain more information than Tinder - tend to be "busier" | Women message first, only one connection allowed per day |
| **Communication method** | text (instant messenger) and GIFs | text | text | text | text - only women can initiate conversation |
| **Discovery settings/filters** | Filters for gender, sexuality, distance (1-100mi radius,) and age (18-55+) | age, height, body type, race, interested in, location | proximity, height, ethnicity, gender, sexuality | Answers to preference/personality questions | filters for gender, sexuality,  |
| **group/friends option** | "Swipe with Friends" option | no | No | no | no |
| **blocking/reporting** | Yes | yes | Yes | Yes | yes |
| **location sharing/tracking** | No | no | No | no | no |
| **Purpose** | Casual dating | Casual dating (gay men) | Serious dating | Serious dating | Casual dating |