May 16th, 12:00 PM - 3:00 PM

Connection: An Autism-Focused Dating App

Cyrena Johnson
Western Washington University

Follow this and additional works at: https://cedar.wwu.edu/scholwk

Part of the Higher Education Commons

Connection: An Autism-Oriented Dating App

Cyrena Johnson and Dr. Moushumi Sharmin
NEAT Research Lab, Computer Science Department

**Introduction**

30% of US young adult internet users actively use dating sites. [1]

41% of autistic adults have never been in a romantic relationship longer than two months. [2]

44% of autistic adults who use dating sites reported having had long-term relationships which lasted an average of 2.65 years. [3]

Relationship sites are effective, but focus on speed dating and favor outgoing individuals.

We propose **Connection**, a relationship building app designed for autistic adults.

**Features**

- **Color-coded text messages with corresponding emojis to indicate emotion of the text.**

- **Inclusive design focused on creating long-term relationships and friendships for ASDs and neurotypical individuals.**

- **Access to information on safety, relationship advice, and sexual education.**

- **Focus on privacy sensitive design.**

- **Inclusive approach for gender and sexual identities.**

- **Help section for writing positive, informative biographies.**

**Research Methodology**

**Existing Technology**

- Spectrum Singles

- Aspieology

- AusticDating

- Tinder

- Bumble

**Research Paper Databases**

- Pubmed

- ACM Digital Library

- IEEE Xplore

- Google Scholar

**Quotes from ASD Subreddit**

“Online dating, that seemed like a perfect tool for introverts at first, is tailored to meet the needs of extroverts looking for casual relationships and their protocols are often based on the concept of attraction built on first impressions.” [4]

“If you’re having difficulty meeting people, then... spend some time getting to know people who have hobbies and values in common with you. This is the most solid basis for a relationship.” [4]

“...I never assume someone is interested in me unless they give explicit cues. I prefer girls that are very direct and know what they want because of this, it just makes it easier for me.” [4]

**Future Plans**

- Interviews focused on friendships, romantic relationships, and experience with dating apps.

- Design Connection+.

- Usability and controlled evaluation.

- Longitudinal field deployment.

**References**


[4] Kurndo. Why does no one fall in love (and such) with aspies? @ NTs & aspies. Retrieved February 25, 2018 from https://www.reddit.com/r/autism/comments/zu1tt3/why_does_no_one_fall_in_love_and_such_with_asp/