

DIGITAL

LOVE

THINKING ABOUT SIGNING UP TO A DATING APP? HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT FINDING LOVE WITH A 'SWIPE' OR 'CLICK'

Words by: Laura Hills



Whether you're looking for **The One**, an excuse to meet new people or a quick hook-up, there are now more ways than ever to get what you want.

From Blendr to Tinder, one quick search in the App Store will show you that when it comes to finding love in 2014, there's no longer a need to make awkward small chat at the bar.

With over 50 million users Tinder is one of the most rapidly growing apps in the UK and it's not hard to see why. Since it's launch in February (yes it's really only been around for that long) it's been hailed as the second coming for single people everywhere, Facebook's sexier cousin, which means you don't have to spend hours uploading album after album of pictures or deciding what type of status is going to get you the most likes and shares in order to meet your match.

For those of you who haven't come into contact with Tinder since it's launch (presumably you've been living under a rock this whole time), it finds your location using GPS, then your Facebook information – including your likes, name, age and photos of your choice – to create a profile for you. The app then finds potential matches in your area. If you like the look of them you swipe to the right and if they've also liked you then you're free to start messaging each other.

However, as with all strains of the dating game Tinder and other such apps come with their own unwritten rules that if you follow carefully you're almost destined for success... or at least a few dates for two in the diary.

From the word go you need to be thinking about how you're going to capture the attention of the future Mrs/Mr Right.

"Having a 'quirky' name won't get you noticed, it won't make you seem funny it'll just act as a further deterrent to push you into the Land of the Left," reveals Jess who has not only been using the app since the week it launched, but has also just gone 'official' with someone she met using it.

Unlike dating sites of yonder (Match.com and Mysinglefriend, for example) today's dating sites and apps aren't about setting up lengthy profiles and bios, nor are they about composing a ten-paragraph message to anyone who takes your fancy telling them all about yourself.

Perhaps it's a sign of how busy we've all become, or maybe we've just got lazier in the quest for love, but whatever the reason online dating sites are about first impressions. There are no second chances to grab someone's attention, so make sure you pick the pictures and information that are going to sell you wisely. For example, there's little point in putting up a picture of you and a group of friends, in the world of split-second judgements your future potential date just doesn't have the time to try and work out which one is you.

"Group pictures are annoying and please, no pictures of you holding a baby; it might be your niece or your nephew but how am I meant to know that? For all I know you're looking after your newborn with one hand while scrolling through my pictures with the other," says Jess.

And they aren't the only no-nos. "Nothing annoys me more than coming across a picture of a guy who's face is all but covered, whether it's a ski mask or he's standing half a mile from the camera. If I can't see what you look like in your first picture the chances are I'm saying no immediately," Jess adds.

Luckily, aside from picking the snap you think you look nicest in there are some things guaranteed to enhance your chances of making a match.

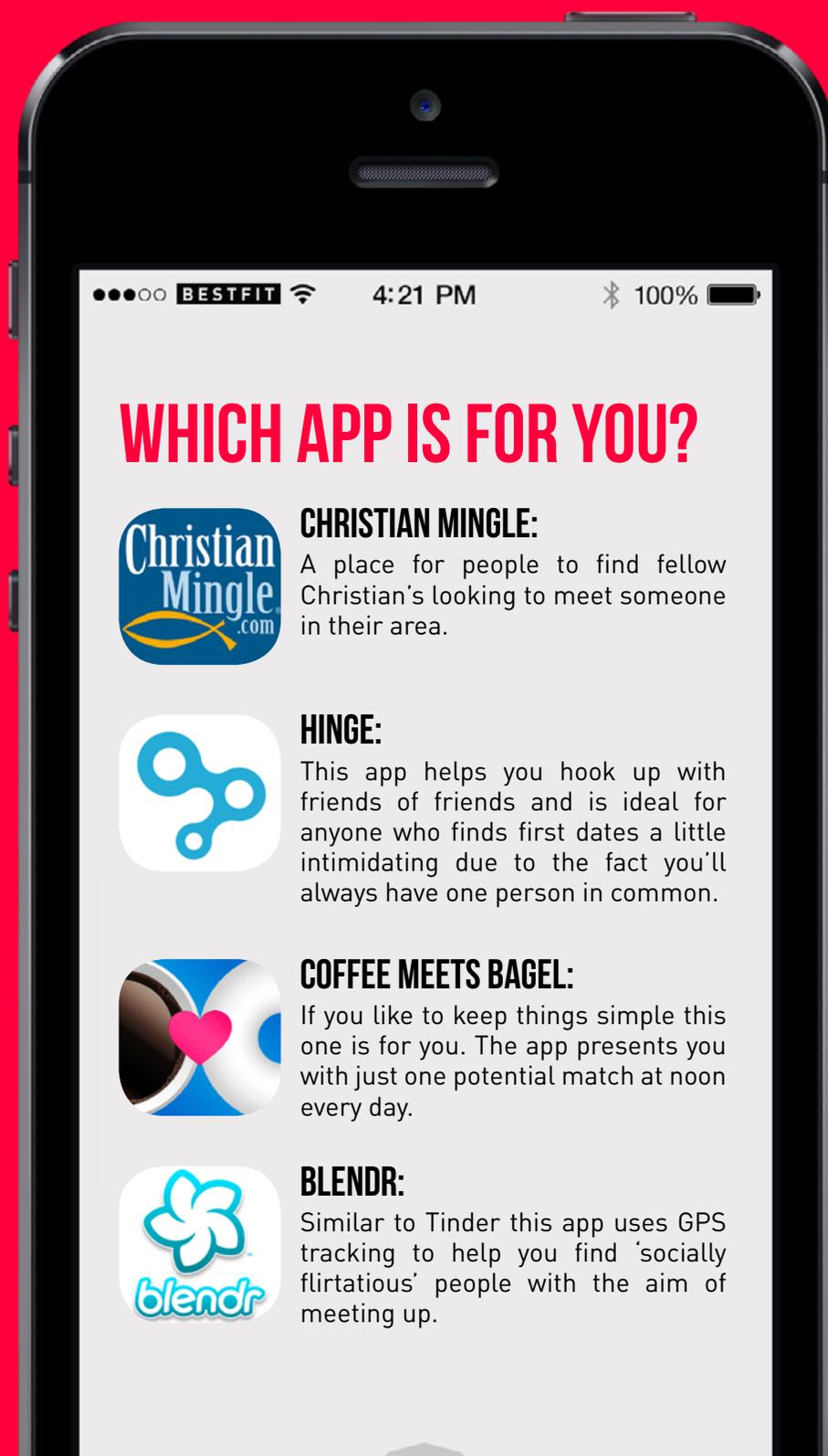
Regular Tinder user Emma explains, "If I come across a guy holding a cute cat or a dog I nearly always swipe right!" Simple.

Similarly a poorly written bio can ruin your chances of securing that all important match, it's your only chance to tell potential love interests a little bit about you. Don't waste it.

"I prefer it when a guy keeps it simple, just a little about them to draw in my interest and make me want to know more. If they're particularly into one thing it's nice to include that especially as it boosts their chances of meeting someone with similar passions. I once came across a man who's bio simply read, 'Ugly girls need not swipe left' he might have meant it as a joke but it wasn't funny and immediately put me off," said Anna, a self-confessed online dating addict.

For those who are truly committed online can be a very rewarding way of finding love. Whether your dates turn into anything more or not, there's no denying that they're a great chance to meet interesting, fun people you might not have met otherwise. And played correctly it can help those who are serious about finding love meet someone.

Online dating experts John Seymour and Susan Quilliam revealed, "Think of this as your new and exciting hobby, you'll need to put the hours in but if you do the odds are you're going to find success. Online dating can be an emotional rollercoaster, not everyone you meet and like is going to like you back but as with all things in life, persistence is key and if you at first you don't success, give it another shot."



WHICH APP IS FOR YOU?



CHRISTIAN MINGLE:

A place for people to find fellow Christian's looking to meet someone in their area.



HINGE:

This app helps you hook up with friends of friends and is ideal for anyone who finds first dates a little intimidating due to the fact you'll always have one person in common.



COFFEE MEETS BAGEL:

If you like to keep things simple this one is for you. The app presents you with just one potential match at noon every day.



BLENDR:

Similar to Tinder this app uses GPS tracking to help you find 'socially flirtatious' people with the aim of meeting up.