

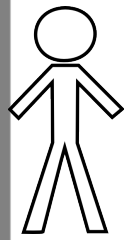
Deaf gay men's use of language on dating apps

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Overview

Pilot study based on the work by Goedel & Duncan (2015) to identify the usage patterns of geo-social networking apps by Deaf gay men. The survey was sent to 25 different Facebook groups in order to achieve a broad sampling range. 52 men from 10 countries responded.* A mix of open and closed questions were used to determine demographics and app usage. (*Argentina, Australia, Denmark, Germany, Hungary, NZ, The Netherlands, UK, Ukraine & USA)

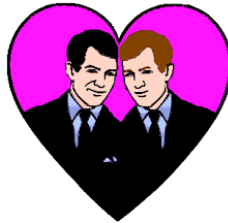
Demographics & Usage



85%
white



36%
45-54



98%
gay



96%
College



65%
single

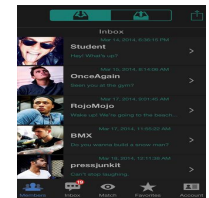


65%
employed

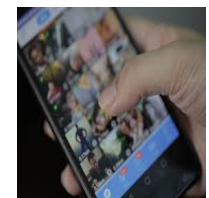
Top 5 apps listed and number of men using them



Most people sent up to 5 messages per day.



Most people logged on up to 5 times per day.



Average Time most men on the apps was 31-60 mins per day.



Results

77% of the Deaf men who participated in the study will not, or will only sometimes, state that they are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. This presents a problem for Deaf men who use sign language, as a spoken language is a second language for them and they often make mistakes when writing. This creates an additional problem because Rudder (2009) states that 'Netspeak, bad grammar, and bad spelling are huge turn-offs'.

"I am Deaf but can read lip don't be scared of me. OK. I love to learn your culture hearing" (Participant No. 48, 18-24, USA)

54% of the Deaf men who participated in the study have had to learn new language to be able to use the apps. This new language includes acronyms such as WLTM (would like to meet), GAM (gay Asian male) and BRB (be right back or bathroom break). **Acronyms are learnt by asking friends, asking people on the apps, looking on the internet or working it out/thinking what it might mean.**

"I use google search when I don't understand what their secret language. Most common they thought ASL is Age, Sex, and Location... How annoying..." (Participant No. 48, 18-24, USA)

Implications

Poor grammar affects the perceptions of Deaf men by hearing men, resulting in hearing men being reluctant to engage with Deaf men. Therefore, building trust is difficult for some Deaf men which means they are cautious about meeting hearing men. If Deaf men do want to meet hearing men, communication difficulties present a barrier, thereby increasing potential social isolation and poor mental health for Deaf men.

