

CASE STUDY

Instagram Dating

Real connections, in a more familiar place.

A speculative product concept exploring how Instagram could introduce a dating experience that feels natural, safe, and true to its community — without compromising the platform’s core identity.

- 

Socially Native
Builds on existing Instagram behaviours
- 

Privacy First
Your dating life, your control
- 

Meaningful Matches
People with shared interests and lifestyles
- 

Premium Experience
Optional subscription for advanced features

“Same interests. Different stories. Real connections.”

Role	UX & Product Design
Type	Speculative Concept
Duration	4 Weeks
Tools	Figma, FigJam, Notion



More than follows.
Real connections.

Same app.
A deeper connection.

PROBLEM & OPPORTUNITY

Dating could exist within a platform people already understand.

Dating apps require users to build an entirely separate social identity, while Instagram already contains much of the information people use to understand one another — interests, lifestyle, communities, and values.

People already share so much of themselves. Why start from zero?

“The best connections often start with shared interests and real context.”

Familiar platform. New possibilities.

The Current Problems

- Separated from existing identity**
Users need to create a new profile and start over on a separate platform.
- Profiles can feel artificial**
Many dating apps encourage curated or incomplete representations of who people are.
- Limited context**
It's hard to get a real sense of someone's personality, interests, and lifestyle before matching.
- Privacy concerns**
Users are often hesitant to date due to safety issues, data privacy, or the fear of being seen by the wrong people.

The Opportunity

Create a dating experience that leverages Instagram's existing behaviours and social context, without making users feel exposed or compromising their existing social relationships.

- ✓ Use **existing signals** like interests, photos, and communities
- ✓ Give users **more context** before they match
- ✓ Prioritize **privacy, safety**, and user control
- ✓ Make the experience **feel native** to Instagram
- ✓ Create **genuine value** for both free and premium users



From social to something more.
Instagram already helps people express who they are. Instagram Dating builds on that foundation to help people find meaningful connections.



- 70%** of Gen Z say they are interested in dating people who share similar interests.
- 62%** of dating app users feel profiles are often inauthentic or overly curated.
- 1 in 3** young adults say they would be open to dating features on existing social platforms.

Sources: Pew Research (2023), Forbes (2023), Hinge (2023)

USERS & RESEARCH

The opportunity sits between familiarity and privacy.

To design a meaningful dating experience within Instagram, I explored user needs, existing behaviours, and the current dating landscape. The goal was to understand what people want, what frustrates them, and how Instagram can uniquely address those needs.

Same people.
Different connections.

“

“I already share my interests, my places, my life on Instagram. It would be amazing to meet someone who gets that.”

— Research participant

USER PERSONAS

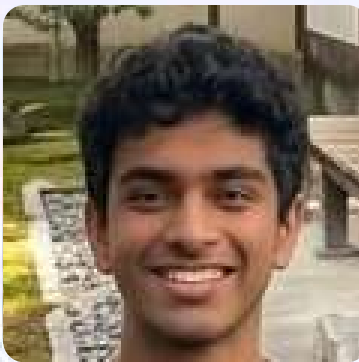


The Curious Explorer

Sophie, 22
University Student, Montréal

“I’m not actively looking, but I’m open to meeting someone who shares my interests.”

- ✓ Uses Instagram daily
- ✓ Engages with niche interests
- ✓ Wants more context before matching
- ✓ Values authentic connections



The Privacy-Conscious User

Alex, 26
Marketing Professional, Toronto

“I’m interested in dating, but I don’t want my existing followers or coworkers to see my activity.”

- ✓ Values privacy and control
- ✓ Wants a separate dating identity
- ✓ Needs clear safety features
- ✓ Likes the idea of interest-based matching



The Intentional Dater

Maya, 28
Product Manager, Vancouver

“I’m looking for something real. I value shared values and interests over just appearance.”

- ✓ Wants meaningful matches
- ✓ Values compatibility and shared interests
- ✓ Open to premium features
- ✓ Frustrated by superficial swiping

COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS



Tinder

Large user base but can feel superficial



Bumble

Women-first approach, but still a separate app



Hinge

More meaningful connections, but limited social context



Instagram

Rich social context but no dating functionality (yet)

KEY INSIGHTS

01

Users want more context

People feel more comfortable connecting when they can see shared interests, communities, and lifestyle signals.

02

Privacy is essential

Users want a clear separation between their existing Instagram identity and their dating activity.

03

Familiarity reduces friction

Instagram’s existing interface and behaviours can make the dating experience feel more natural and approachable.

04

There is untapped potential

Many Instagram users are open to dating on the platform if done thoughtfully and with strong privacy controls.



67%

of Gen Z say they are interested in meeting people through shared interests and communities.

Source: Pew Research (2023)



1 in 2

young adults say they would consider using a dating feature on an existing social platform like Instagram.

Source: Forbes (2023)



78%

of dating app users say privacy and safety are a top concern.

Source: Hinge (2023)

STRATEGY & DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Use familiarity as the foundation, not the entire experience.

The strategy was to create a dating experience that feels native to Instagram, while addressing the unique challenges of privacy, trust, and meaningful connection. Instead of simply adding a new feature, the design leverages Instagram’s strengths and reimagines how people can meet through shared interests and authentic context.

STRATEGIC PRINCIPLES



Socially Native
Build on behaviours users already understand from Instagram.



Privacy by Default
Dating activity should be separate from a user’s existing social identity unless they choose otherwise.



Context Before Commitment
Give users meaningful information — shared interests, communities, and lifestyle — before asking them to match.



Quality Over Volume
Prioritize compatible and genuine connections rather than maximising swipe volume.



Optional Monetisation
Premium features should enhance the experience, not gate core functionality.

FROM INSTAGRAM STRENGTHS TO DATING VALUE



Same platform.
New possibilities.

“Familiarity builds comfort, but thoughtful design builds trust.”

More than follows.
Real connections.





OUR STRATEGIC FOCUS
Leverage Instagram’s existing ecosystem to create a dating experience that feels natural, safe, and valuable — for both casual connections and long-term relationships.

USER FLOW

A dating flow built around progressive commitment.

The flow is designed to feel familiar and intuitive, while giving users control over what they share and when. From setting preferences to meaningful conversations, every step builds trust and encourages intentional connections.

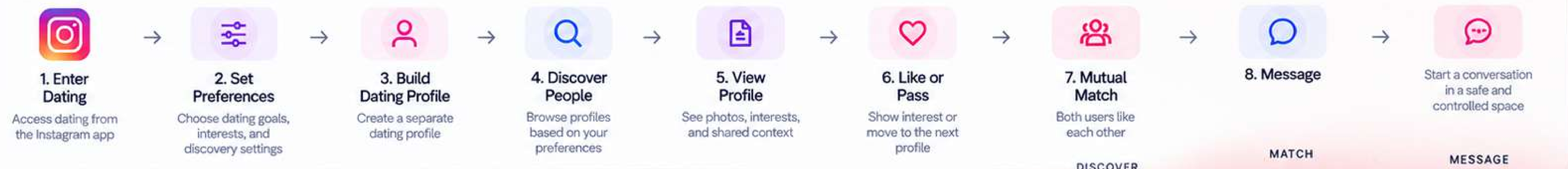
Same platform.
New connections.
Your pace.

“

I like that I can take my time and choose what to share. It feels like me, but on my terms.”

— Concept user feedback

USER FLOW OVERVIEW



KEY DECISION POINTS

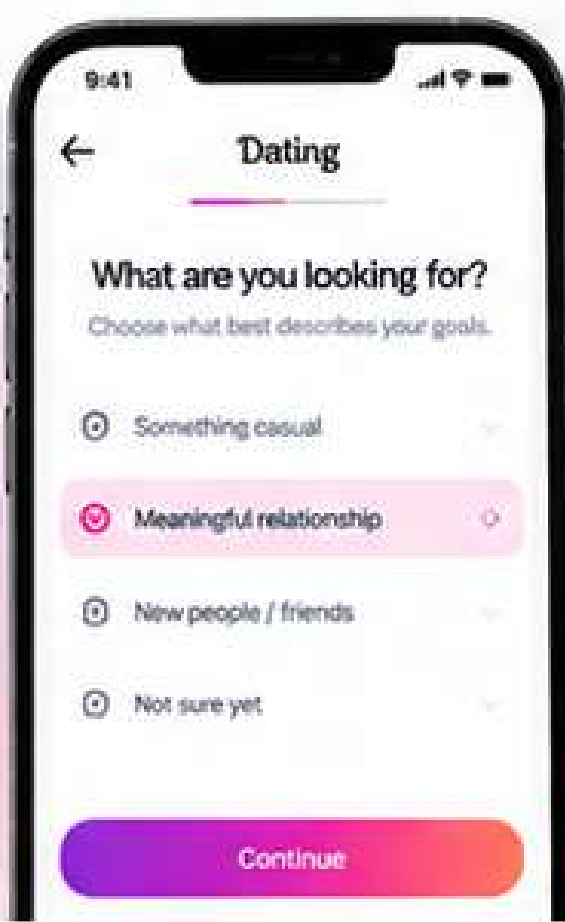
- Separate dating profile**
Keep dating activity separate from your main Instagram profile.
- Discovery controls**
Choose who can see you (e.g. age range, location, interests) and hide from followers if preferred.
- Shared context**
Option to show shared interests, communities, or mutual followers.
- Safety features**
Report, block, and control your experience at any time.

DESIGN PRINCIPLE

- Reveal information and commit progressively.**
Users should be able to explore, share, and connect at their own pace, with clear control over their privacy, visibility, and level of engagement.
- “It feels natural, not overwhelming. I can learn about someone before we even match.”

— Concept user feedback

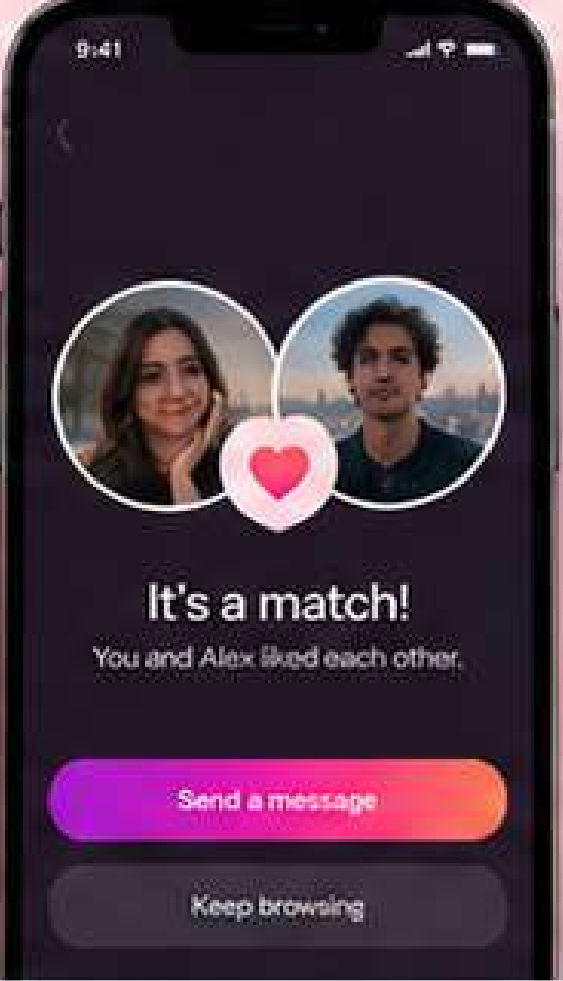
SET PREFERENCES



DISCOVER



MATCH



MESSAGE



KEY DESIGN DECISIONS

Designing around trust, compatibility, and choice.

These key decisions address the unique challenges of bringing dating into Instagram’s ecosystem — balancing familiarity with privacy, personal preferences, and the diverse ways people connect.

Same platform.
More possibilities.

“I like that I can choose what matters to me — whether it’s shared interests, lifestyle, or someone with a similar level of social presence.”
— Concept user feedback

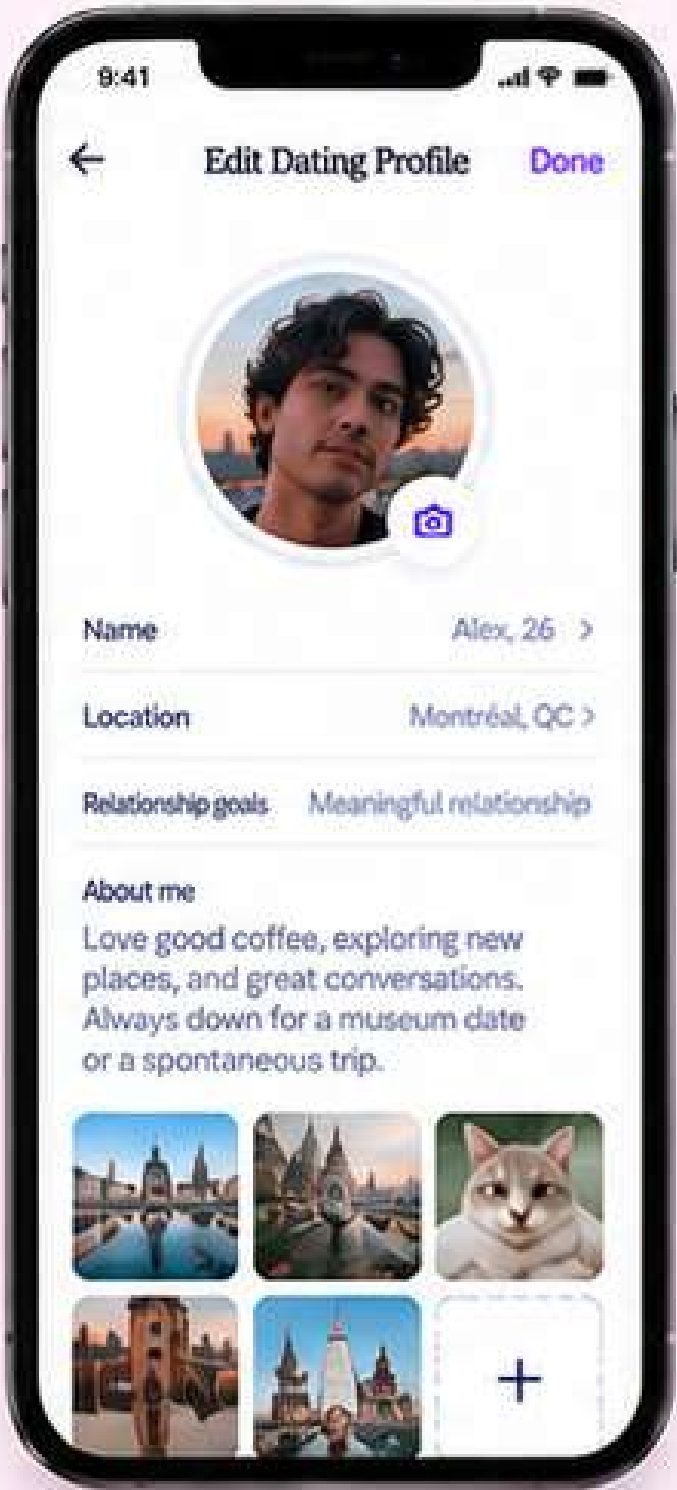
1 Separate dating identity

Your dating life, your control.

Instagram Dating has a dedicated profile, separate from your main Instagram account. You choose what to share, keeping your dating activity private and in control.

- ✓ Separate profile and settings
- ✓ Choose photos and information
- ✓ Control visibility and discovery
- ✓ No activity shown to existing followers unless you choose to

 Same platform.
A different space.



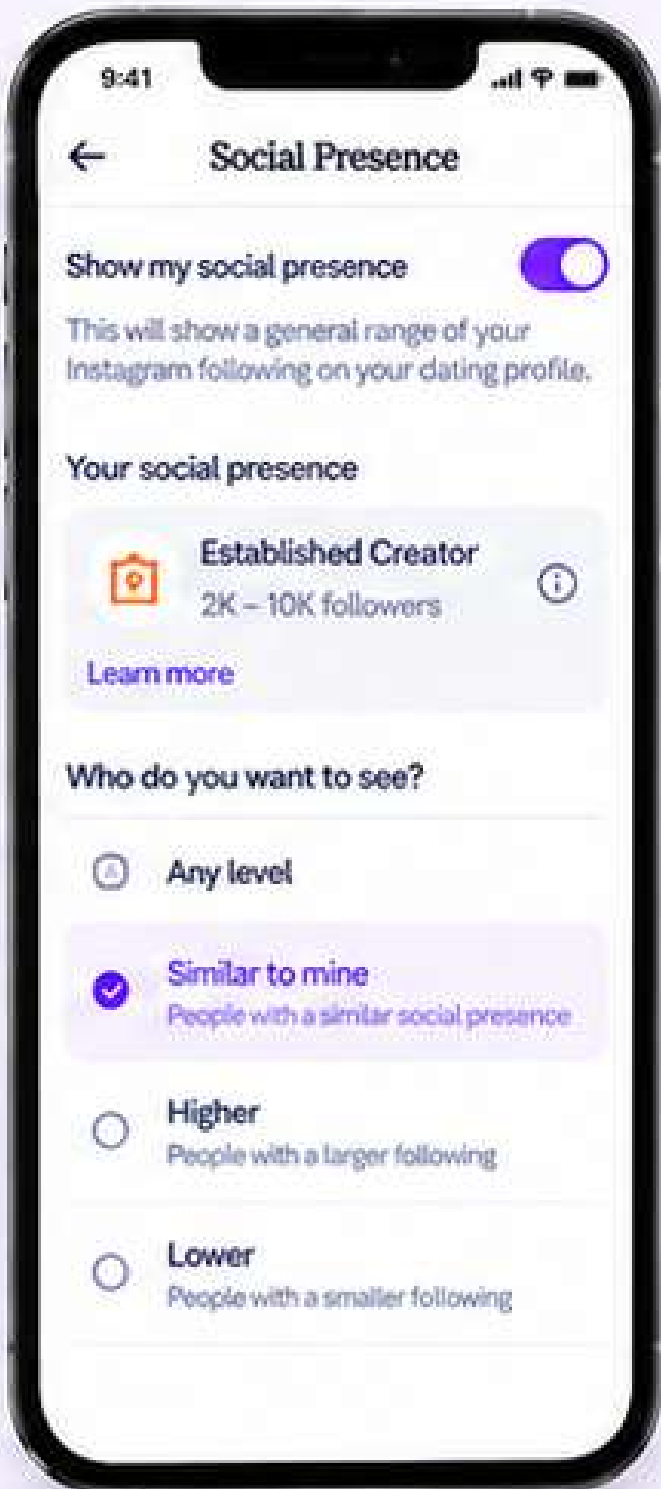
2 Social presence (optional)

For those who care about it.

Follower count can be a meaningful signal for some users — whether you’re a creator, public figure, or simply value a partner with a similar level of social presence. This feature is optional and designed to give users more control over what matters to them.

- ✓ Choose if your social presence is shown
- ✓ Use follower ranges (not exact counts)
- ✓ Set preferences for similar, higher, lower, or any level
- ✓ Designed to reduce popularity gaming and protect privacy

 Status is a preference, not a ranking.



3 Context-driven discovery

More than just a photo.

Instagram Dating surfaces shared interests, communities, and lifestyle signals to help users find more meaningful matches.

- ✓ See shared interests and communities
- ✓ Connect through lifestyle and values
- ✓ Optional Instagram content (e.g. tagged places, music, etc.)
- ✓ Built-in safety and reporting tools

 Deeper context.
Real connections.



MONETISATION & PRODUCT SYSTEM

A product model that creates value for users and Instagram.

Instagram Dating is designed to be accessible for everyone, with premium features that enhance discovery, control, and compatibility. The goal is to support a sustainable business model while keeping the core experience authentic and user-focused.

More meaningful connections.
More possibilities.

“I’d consider premium if it gives me better matches and more control — not just more swipes.”
— Concept user feedback

PRICING TIERS

Instagram Dating Free
A complete dating experience for everyone.

- ✓ Create a dating profile
- ✓ Set preferences
- ✓ Discover and like profiles
- ✓ Mutual matches
- ✓ Message your matches
- ✓ Basic safety features

Current plan

Instagram Dating+ \$9.99 / month
More control. More discovery.

- ✓ Everything in Free
- ✓ Advanced filters (interests, lifestyle, etc.)
- ✓ See who liked you
- ✓ Increase profile visibility
- ✓ Undo a pass
- ✓ Access to exclusive dating prompts

Try Dating+

Instagram Dating Pro \$19.99 / month
For those who want the most out of their experience.

- ✓ Everything in Dating+
- ✓ Priority placement in discovery
- ✓ Advanced matching insights
- ✓ Travel mode (global discovery)
- ✓ Profile boosts (limited)
- ✓ Exclusive features and early access

Try Pro

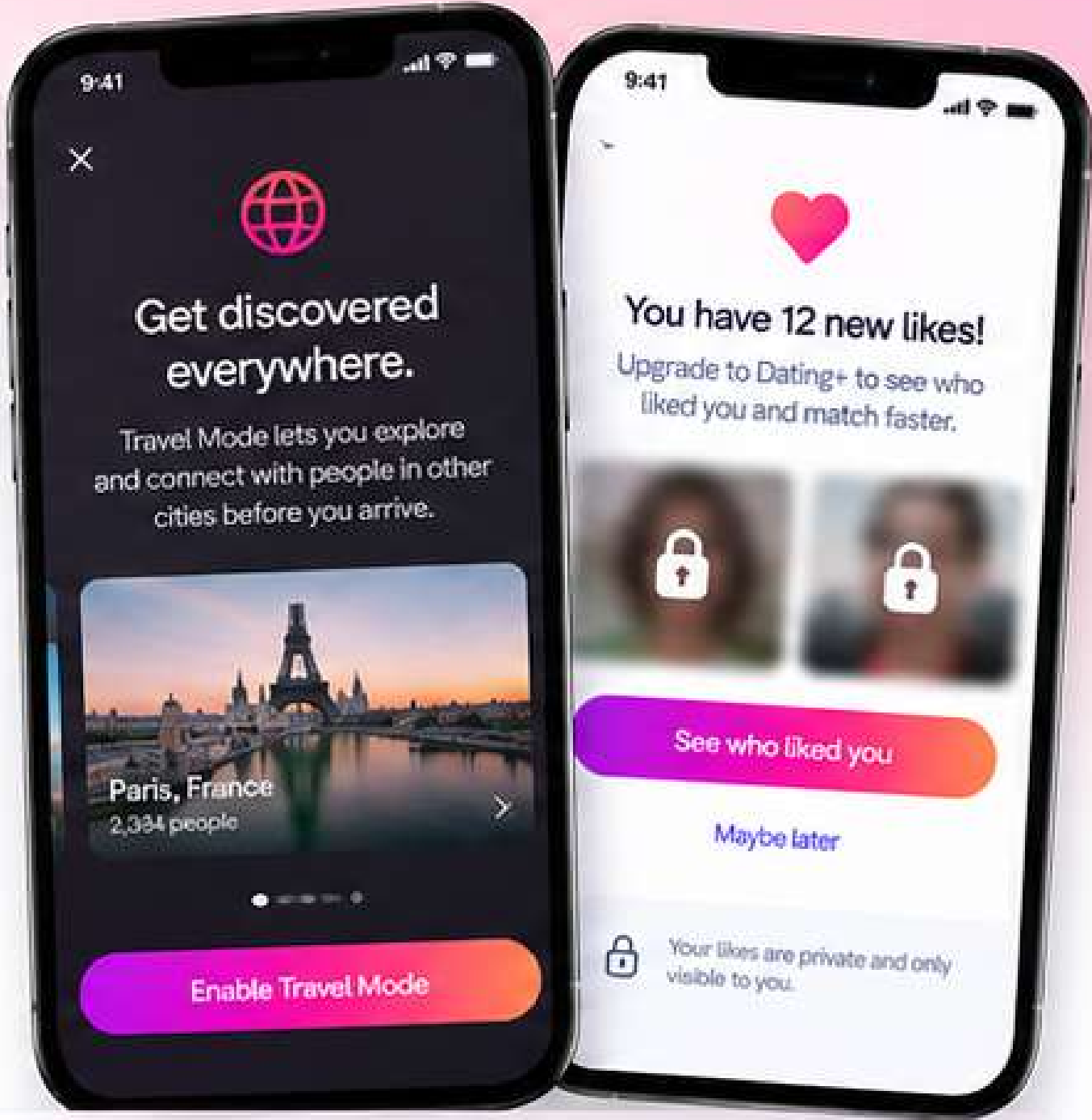
ADDITIONAL REVENUE OPPORTUNITIES

Profile Boosts
Temporarily increase your visibility in discovery.

Travel Mode
Discover people in other cities or while travelling.

Partner Integrations
Experiences, events, and brands relevant to dating and lifestyle.

Exclusive Features
New tools, themes, and early access to experimental features.



USER VALUE → BUSINESS IMPACT



KEY PRINCIPLE

Enhance, don't limit.
The core dating experience remains free and accessible. Premium features are designed to add genuine value — not to gate basic functionality.

OUTCOME & REFLECTION

Designing dating for a platform built around identity.

This project explores how Instagram could introduce a dating experience that feels natural, safe, and valuable — for both casual connections and long-term relationships. It demonstrates how existing platform strengths can be leveraged to create a new experience, while carefully addressing privacy, trust, and user control.

*Same people.
New possibilities.*

“

“Dating on Instagram just makes sense — it feels familiar, but in a new and exciting way.”

— Concept user feedback

*More
than followers.
Real connections.*

PROJECT OUTCOMES



A cohesive product concept

Designed a fully realized dating experience within Instagram’s ecosystem, from strategy to key interfaces.



Privacy-first design

Created a separate dating identity with clear controls, giving users confidence and flexibility.



Meaningful discovery

Leveraged shared interests, communities, and contextual information to encourage more authentic matches.



Sustainable business model

Developed a monetisation strategy that enhances the experience without gating core functionality.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1

Privacy is part of the UX

When dating and an existing social identity coexist, privacy cannot be an afterthought — it must be built into the core experience.

2

Familiarity reduces friction

Leveraging existing interaction patterns can make a new product feel immediately understandable and approachable.

3

Context can improve matching

Giving users more meaningful information — beyond just photos — can lead to stronger, more intentional connections.

4

Business models influence UX

Premium features should create genuine additional value for users, rather than artificially limiting the core experience.

NEXT STEPS



User testing

Validate the concept and privacy model with potential users.



Refine features

Test different matching and discovery mechanisms.



Explore safety systems

Design and evaluate moderation, reporting, and verification tools.



Prototype & iterate

Build a higher-fidelity prototype and gather real user feedback.

