Building relationships in a socially distanced world with Hinge

Hinge

50%
of Hinge users plan to **continue using video calls**

☑

Development took about **5 weeks**

67%
of users had fun on **video dates**

🛡

Video call feature **increases trust and improves overall security**

Get to know Hinge

Hinge is a popular dating app aiming to help people truly connect and build meaningful connections. With features that prevent ghosting, a profile that promotes personalities (not just photos), a vertical timeline (i.e., no swiping), and a "most compatible" feature — Hinge takes dating seriously.

Designed for millennials seeking a long-term relationship, Hinge helps people go on more dates and create lasting connections. But when COVID hit, changes needed to be made to fit the new circumstances we were in.

Hinge knew they needed to adapt to keep their users connected. And they knew video chats and in-app calling was the best way to do that.

The urgent need for video functionality

Hinge had been considering adding video chat for its users for a while. When the

pandemic hit, video quickly went from a "would be nice" feature to an urgent necessity. People were isolated and often mandated to stay home, which made traditional in-person dates impossible.

After surveying its users, Hinge found that 70% were open to virtual dating. They also discovered that many daters were turning to Zoom for video chat dates. Hinge knew they needed to add video calls and phone calls as in-app features to keep people connected and enable them to build new relationships throughout the pandemic.

Time to market was key

Since voice and video streaming were outside of Hinge's core competencies, they knew they needed a third-party API provider to get them going quickly.

Security, stability, quality, and ongoing support were all important to Hinge. They sought a sophisticated solution that could provide a high level of abstraction of the IP-based communication and a graceful coverage of the entire calling experience. This was essential to ensure smooth and fast development.

To maintain an excellent user experience for their large user base, Hinge developers wanted modern code, frequent bug fixes, and good documentation. They needed scalability and reliability in a short amount of time.

Hinge chose Sendbird's in-app voice and video calling API because we could deliver on all their objectives.

A holistic and integrated video calling experience in five weeks

Hinge partnered with Sendbird to roll out a 1:1 calling and video chat feature on their app. The two companies had already partnered on Hinge's chat using Sendbird's chat API, so the respective teams were familiar with each other's processes.

Still, Hinge did their due diligence and interviewed several other companies before taking things to the next level with Sendbird. In the end, Hinge decided to go with Sendbird for a variety of reasons.

Mitch LaPoff, a product manager at Hinge, explains that time to market was a key factor.

> **"**
>
> From an engineering perspective, Sendbird was the gold standard for all the capabilities we evaluated.
>
> Jason Pearson, Android Developer, Hinge

"We really wanted to get it out to our users as fast as we could… We felt like we could hit the ground running the fastest with Sendbird… that was a huge plus."

Jason Pearson, an Android developer at Hinge said that Sendbird's reliable support was another huge factor. "There were some issues with other providers' SDK support… Sendbird, however, has always supported us, even if we were the ones that caused the issue… this made us feel really confident about our ability to get the support we needed for video and calls."

Working with Sendbird, Hinge launched voice and video calls in five weeks to five different markets.

Creating a safer and more connected online dating environment

Video dating is changing the tapestry of online dating in general. Security and safety are top concerns for Hinge and its users. In-app voice and video dates help create a safer dating environment.

In-app calling lets users determine if they have chemistry and feel safe before sharing personal information like phone numbers or social media profiles.

Voice and video calls help daters get to know each other and establish trust before leaving the platform. And while the COVID pandemic
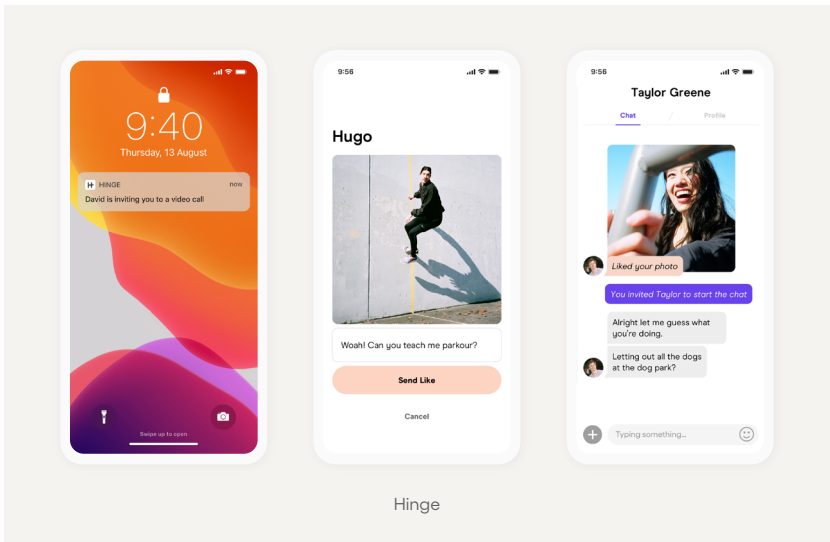
Hinge

made video dates the only option for a while, Hinge also sees long-term potential in video dating as a pre-first date tool.

Users can increase their level of confidence in a person before they meet. This helps daters develop chemistry and determine whether their date will meet their expectations in real life. Plus, it's an essential safety feature to help daters make sure the person they've been chatting with matches the profile (i.e., they aren't being catfished).
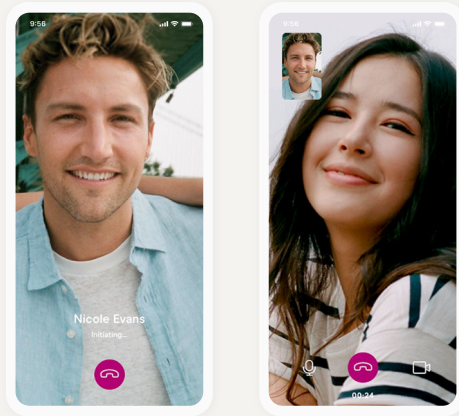
Key features of voice and video chat:

- 1:1 voice and video chat within the Hinge app
- Reliable connectivity and call quality — no lags
- Connected to chat userID to streamline

integration and enhance analytics.

Additional features, like:

- Built to scale, with the ability to host millions of peak connections at one time
- Secure user experience within the calls
  - Secure user authentication
  - Media stream encryption
- Developer friendly tools
  - Sample app
  - Up-to-date documentation
  - Webhooks
  - Frequent SDKs and API updates

Implementation was collaborative and the experience was easy to customize. With the Sendbird API, Hinge was able to seamlessly

Hinge video chat

integrate voice and video calling in their app to create the user experience they wanted.

Results that build meaningful relationships

Since its launch, the call feature has been exciting for users. Two-thirds of Hinge users report that their first video chat was fun.

They enjoy the high quality of Hinge voice and video calls. The experience has been incredibly robust, and it shows: More than half of users who have gone on a video date are likely to keep using video.

Safety in dating is paramount, and by providing audio and video built into their apps, Hinge is able to keep its users safe.

Forced to quickly innovate during COVID, Hinge found audio and video calls to be a safe and fun way for their users to keep engaging and developing chemistry despite social distancing. They also found a potential avenue to make online dating safer and more successful moving forward.

Building connections in a digital world

SendBird is a the leading interaction API platform trusted by modern digital apps like Reddit, Delivery Hero, and Hinge. Learn how you can boost engagement, and build deeper connection with and between users through our chat, voice, and video APIs — at www.sendbird.com