

# Developing a framework to humanize technology mediated interaction

When do we humanize online interaction and how do we do so?

## The research subject

When building online systems, designers have to make many decisions that impact user experience. One of said choices is when and how to humanize interaction. Making the right decision has increased in importance as more of our interactions are taking place online. The aim of this thesis is to discover if guidelines can be developed to facilitate designers when making these decisions

## The challenge

Research is conducted by taking a new dating app called Breeze as a use case. This dating app is different compared to existing dating apps because it does not allow matches to chat, but automates the date arrangement process. The app faces the problem that many of the dates get canceled because users stop responding during the date arrangement process. User research reveals that, by having limited online interaction, this process has become impersonal, anonymous and inflexible which makes it easy to dehumanize your match. Dehumanization leads to loss of commitment when arranging the date.

## The theory

Dehumanization is inevitable when interaction is mediated by technology. It can be mitigated by humanizing interaction. However simply humanizing interaction is not the solution because, apart from its advantages it too has disadvantages. The ideal balance between dehumanization and humanization depends on the type of platform in question.

## The solution

Through conducting two Build-Measure-Learn loops, this thesis finds that the ideal balance does not only differ between platforms but also differs within the customer journey of one platform. Within each step of the journey, users have different interaction needs. Additionally the companies that build these systems also have (conflicting) needs, which depend on their strategy and available resources.

In order to find this ideal balance between humanization and dehumanization, this thesis proposes the Framework for humanized interaction. This framework is validated through conducting expert interviews, a pilot with an external company and by applying it to the use case. The latter results in new concepts and recommendations suitable for implementation by Breeze.

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