

9 Creative Ways to Use Technology to Keep Long-Distance Love Alive

These fun apps can help you feel close and connected to your sweetheart no matter how many miles apart you are.

BY CHARLOTTE HILTON ANDERSEN

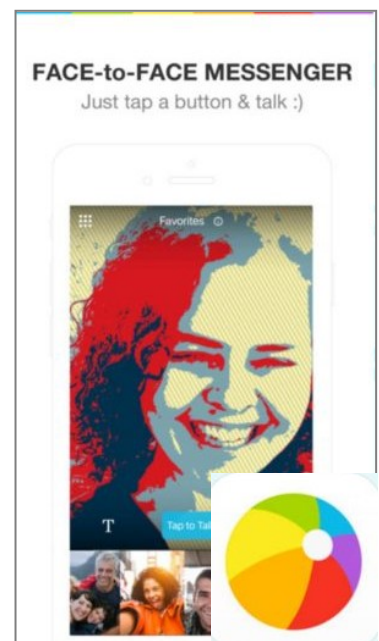
Best for basic video calling: Skype

Skype is a free video-calling program that works on phones, tablets and computers, allowing people to do audio and video chatting from anywhere they have a data connection. Being able to see the other person allows you to see their facial expressions, share pictures, and see their environment. This not only adds important information but brings a higher level of intimacy. "Dave and I used Skype when I was working in Phoenix and he was home in another state," says Meghan Johnson. "It definitely helped to see each other instead of just hearing. It felt more real and we were able to connect better, especially when one person isn't much of a phone talker." Can long-distance relationships really work?



Best for couples on different schedules: Marco Polo

If you combined a walkie talkie, a video recorder, and email, and then added silly filters, you'd get Marco Polo (free for Android and iOS). This "visual walkie talkie" app is great for couples who operate on wildly different schedules, making Skype or traditional phone calls difficult. You can send your honey a video message whenever you feel like it and they can open it whenever they're ready. "My husband Jonathan and I work opposite shifts and rarely see each other during the week. We use Marco Polo to send video messages to each other," says Michelle Stillely of Omaha, Nebraska. "It's nice because we can watch them and reply on our own time, rather than making sure we're both available at the same time to chat." Not getting much of a response from a long-distance love? These signs suggest the problem could be you.



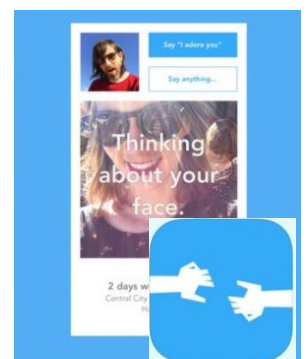
Best for international couples: WhatsApp

WhatsApp is a free texting, video, and calling app, all in one. What sets it apart from other phone apps, however, is that it uses your Internet connection instead of your cellphone minutes making it a free way to do international calls. In addition, the app boasts some of the best security precautions so you can rest knowing your personal calls and texts are securely encrypted. It doesn't have to be all tech-related though. Here are some perfectly wonderful ways to stay in touch long-distance.



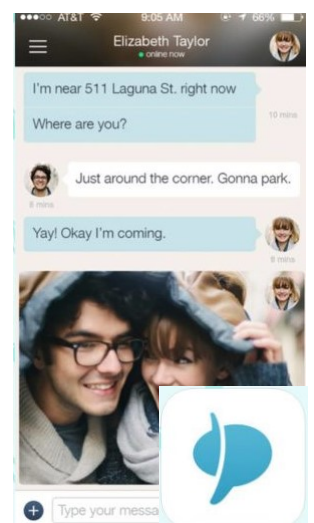
Best for couples with separation anxiety: Without

There are lots of communication apps out there, but there's one geared specifically for couples in long-distance relationship. Without (free on iOS) was created by a real long-distance couple, so it features intuitive extras like pre-set texts, reminders to send a love note, and lots of selfie options—including one that allows you type a quick note over the selfie before you send. It also monitors the state of your relationship by telling you how far apart you are, how long you've been apart and how long it's been since you communicated.



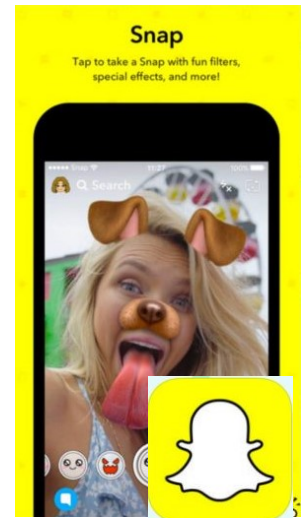
Best for couples that love the little things: Couple

This adorable little app offers the texting, video, and chatting options of other communications apps but comes with a romantic bonus. People using the Couple app (free iOS and Android) can end their late-night conversations with a "thumbkiss." When both people put their thumbs to the screen it gives you a little vibration. Okay so it's not the same as kissing but until scientists invent artificial lips or teleportation it's a sweet substitute. "My wife and I used Couple for over a year. Before I left for bootcamp in the navy, my wife told me about this app and we used it every day while I was gone," writes Robert Moore in a review. "She would write me a small message or doodle me a cute drawing. It helped her cope with me being gone and helped me stay strong while I was away. It even worked when I was sent to a ship." Make sure you are doing these little things to make your marriage better.



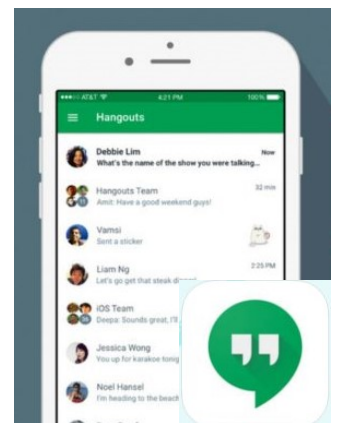
Best for couples that like their privacy: Snapchat

When it first arrived, Snapchat gained infamy for being the go-to app for sexting teens because of its unique feature of messages, or snaps, disappearing just ten seconds after being opened. But the app has come a long way since then and has added many new features that those in more mature relationships will love too. You can still send your love snaps the regular way and enhance them with silly filters, text or drawings but if you want more permanence you can do a Snapchat story. Stories allow you to post multiple pictures to your account which are viewable by any of your friends. Stories are automatically deleted after 24 hours. "My boyfriend and I met in college and Snapchat helped us stay in touch during the day. After the semester ended and I went home for the break we kept using it. I love that it allowed me to see what he was doing and him to see me as well in a quick, efficient way without having to go look for pics on a feed or anything. I love that I get to see his cute face multiple times a day; that's so important for a long-distance relationship," says Kate Hetzel, 21, of Eau Claire, Wisconsin.



Best for the couple that never wants to hang up: Google Hangouts

Some couples want to stay connected no matter what and Google Hangouts makes it possible to wake up talking, fall asleep talking and stay in touch for everything in between. The multi-platform app allows you to seamlessly move from phone to tablet to laptop as you go about your day. You can text, call, chat, or video conference with your sweetie to your heart's delight as it runs over Wi-Fi or your data network. You'll never have to be the last one to say "I love you." Or try one of these ways to say "I love you" without words.



Best for the couple that wants to connect in the real world too: Touchnote

Technology is great, but it does have its limits. All the virtual hugs, Skype'd smooches, and Facebook pokes can't beat a tangible reminder of your love. Enter Touchnote, the perfect bridge between online and reality. The app allows you to create real-life postcards from your phone. Pull pictures from your camera, add in some heart-felt text, specify your loved one's address and then hit send. The app will print out the postcard and mail it for you, straight from your heart to their hands. Need ideas of what to say?



Best for adventurous couples: High-tech gloves

For couples separated by long distances, sometimes a phone call just doesn't feel like enough connection. So researchers from Simon Fraser University decided to try and solve that problem by making a way to reach out and touch someone—literally. Each partner wears a special glove equipped with sensors, called the Flex-n-Feel. When one person moves their hand, the other person "feels" it in their glove. "Long-distance relationships are more common today, but distance don't have to mean missing out on having a physical presence and sharing space," said inventor Carman Neustaedter, an associate professor at SFU. "If people can't physically be together, we're hoping to create the next best technological solutions." Currently the gloves are just a prototype but there is a similar technology currently on the market for couples who want keep their physical relationship alive long-distance. We-Connect is an app that can be connected to sex toys, allowing you to keep the romance hot. Or try one of these tips from couples with steamy sex lives.



Original Article: <http://www.rd.com/advice/relationships/apps-for-long-distance-couples/>