SPARKS

Find Your Light

Product Overview & Market Position

A proximity-based dating app that requires real-world presence.

No photos. No profiles. No chat. Just presence.

Prepared by Blink Digital Agency

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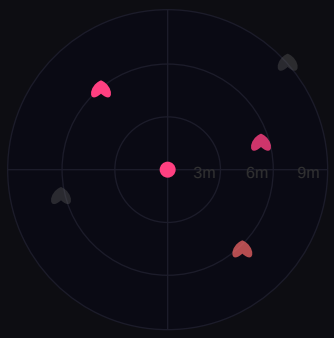
THE PROBLEM

Executive Summary

Sparks is a proximity-based dating app built on a simple premise: attraction happens in person, not on a screen. Unlike every existing dating platform, Sparks has no photos, no profiles, no swipeable cards, and no messaging system. Instead, it detects other users nearby using GPS and Ultra-Wideband (UWB) technology and lets you send anonymous signals of interest — called "sparks" — to people you find attractive in the real world.

The app's philosophy: **No photos. No profiles. Just presence.** Sparks is the first dating app that requires users to physically go outside and be around other people in order to function. It cannot be used from a couch.

The core interaction is simple: you see someone you find attractive, you open the app, you select their anonymized blip on a radar-style interface, you choose how much information to reveal about yourself (from completely anonymous to highly specific), and you send a spark. They receive a notification. If they spark you back, it's a mutual connection. What happens next happens in person — not in a chat window.



The Sparks radar — pulsing hearts represent nearby users

MARKET CONTEXT

Dating Apps Have Made Dating Worse

The photo trap

The dating app industry generates over $5.6 billion annually, yet user satisfaction has cratered. Photo-based swiping encodes appearance bias at scale. Users are reduced to curated images that never match reality. Chemistry cannot be assessed through a screen, and the mismatch between digital personas and real human beings creates chronic disappointment.

The harassment epidemic

The single largest driver of user attrition is harassment through messaging. Every major dating app with text messaging faces the same problem: the first message is frequently inappropriate, sexual, or threatening. Despite billions invested in content moderation, the problem persists because the attack vector — free-text input from one stranger to another — is inherent to the product design. The only solution is to remove text entirely.

Screen addiction & social isolation

Modern dating apps contribute to the very social isolation they claim to solve. Users spend hours swiping from their couches in a dopamine loop that mimics social interaction without delivering human connection. The app becomes a substitute for going out, not a catalyst for it. Meanwhile, rising rates of loneliness and declining in-person interaction point to a generation kept apart by the tools designed to connect them.

Appearance-based discrimination

Photo-based apps systematically disadvantage users who are less photogenic or face demographic bias. Research shows that users of certain racial, ethnic, and body-type categories receive dramatically fewer matches regardless of compatibility. In person, voice, movement, energy, humor, and presence all contribute to attraction. On screen, none of that exists.

THE SOLUTION

What Makes Sparks Unique

Physical presence required

Sparks cannot be used remotely. The app only functions when users are physically near other users in a real-world environment. There is no browsing, no scrolling, no swiping. The radar screen shows anonymized heart-shaped blips representing nearby users, with no identifying information attached. This is not a feature constraint — it is the entire product thesis.

Zero-profile architecture

Users have no photos, no bios, no lists of interests, no height or job title. The only stored preferences are basic matching criteria (gender interest, age range) used to determine which blips appear on the radar. On Sparks, you are a presence, not a profile.

Emoji-only communication

Sparks has no text input anywhere in the application. No messaging, no chat, no DMs. The only expressive element is a curated set of 24 emojis organized into three categories: flirtation, vibe, and energy. Users can attach up to three emojis to a spark. This eliminates harassment by design. The emoji vocabulary *is* the moderation policy — if a specific emoji causes problems, it is simply removed from the set.

UWB precision targeting

Sparks uses a two-layer proximity architecture. GPS provides broad awareness of nearby users (within ~200 meters). Apple's Ultra-Wideband technology, via the Nearby Interaction framework and the U1/U2 chip present in every iPhone since 2019, provides precision targeting within ~9 meters at centimeter-level accuracy with directional data. This allows the app to distinguish between two people standing next to each other in a crowded venue.

CORE MECHANIC

The Boldness Spectrum

When sending a spark, users choose a boldness level that controls how much location information the recipient receives. This is not a privacy setting — it is an intent signal. The five levels map to the vocabulary of real-world flirting:

Whisper
"Someone nearby noticed you"

Glance
"Someone within 10m noticed you"

Signal
"Someone to your left noticed you"

Dare
"Someone 3m ahead-right noticed you"

Spark
"Someone 2m ahead noticed you"

This spectrum lets users opt into exactly the level of vulnerability they are comfortable with. A shy person can Whisper for months before ever trying a Dare. A bold person can Spark immediately. The gradient between anonymity and visibility is the core emotional mechanic.

PRODUCT

The User Experience

Radar

The primary screen. A dark radar interface with concentric range rings and a rotating sweep line. Nearby users appear as pulsing heart-shaped blips — pink for UWB precision, gray for GPS-only. Tapping a heart opens the send panel where the user selects boldness, adds optional emojis, previews the notification, and sends.

Heatmap

The analytics screen. Shows where users receive the most sparks, broken down by location, day, and time. "You get noticed most at Oxmoor Center on Thursdays around 6:30pm" is actionable self-knowledge that no other dating platform provides.

Pings

The notification history. Received sparks, sent sparks, and mutual sparks (both users sparked each other). Each ping shows only what the sender's boldness level allowed. Mutual sparks are highlighted as the marquee event.

Settings

Controls visibility, preferences, and safety. Active hours scheduling, UWB precision toggle, gender/age preferences, block list, and cooldown rate limiting. One-tap data deletion for complete privacy.

TECHNOLOGY

Technical Architecture

The system consists of three layers:

Client layer: Runs on each iPhone. Handles GPS reporting, UWB ranging via the Nearby Interaction framework, and the SwiftUI user interface.

Cloud backend: Handles user presence clustering (grouping nearby users by GPS), brokering UWB discovery token exchanges between devices, and routing push notifications via Apple Push Notification service (APNs).

Data layer: Stores only preferences, ephemeral location data (Redis with short TTL values — location data evaporates when the app closes), and aggregated heatmap analytics. No photos, no chat logs, no message history.

UWB ranging is entirely peer-to-peer. The server never knows the precise spatial relationship between two users — only that they are in the same general area. The most sensitive data (exact relative position) never leaves the local device.

MARKET POSITION

Competitive Comparison

Sparks does not compete with Tinder, Hinge, or Bumble in the traditional sense. Those platforms are content consumption apps built around the infinite scroll of human faces. Sparks is a location utility built around physical presence.

Feature	Sparks	Tinder	Bumble	Hinge
Photos required	**No**	Yes	Yes	Yes
Profile required	**No**	Yes	Yes	Yes
Text messaging	**No**	Yes	Yes	Yes
Requires going outside	**Yes**	No	No	No
Harassment possible	**No**	Yes	Yes	Yes
Real-time proximity	**UWB + GPS**	No	No	No
Anonymity spectrum	**5 levels**	None	None	None
Content moderation	**No**	Extensive	Extensive	Extensive

AUDIENCE

Target Audience

The dating-app-exhausted. Adults aged 22–38 who have used Tinder, Bumble, or Hinge and churned out due to frustration with superficial matching, harassment, or the emotional toll of photo-based judgment. The largest segment and most motivated to try a fundamentally different approach.

The approach-anxious. People who regularly go to coffee shops, parks, and social venues and notice attractive strangers but lack confidence to initiate contact. Sparks gives them a tool to express interest with controllable risk — from completely anonymous (Whisper) to fully identified (Spark).

The privacy-conscious. Users uncomfortable with data exposure on traditional dating apps. Sparks collects almost nothing: no photos, no messages, no biometric data. Location data is ephemeral. The entire data footprint is smaller than a single Tinder profile.

ROADMAP

From Concept to App Store

PHASE A — NOW

UWB Technical Validation

Test app deployed to two iPhones. Validating UWB range, accuracy, indoor performance, and crowd differentiation at real Louisville venues. Proving the core technology works before writing production code.

IN PROGRESS

PHASE B — Q3 2026

GPS-Only MVP

Ship a GPS-only version to the App Store. All five boldness levels, emoji-only communication, full heatmap analytics. Validates the core user experience — do people want to send anonymous sparks to real-world strangers? — without UWB dependency.

NEXT

PHASE C — Q4 2026

UWB Precision Layer

Add UWB precision targeting as a premium feature. Sub-meter targeting of individuals in a crowd — the differentiator no competitor can replicate. Premium subscription gates UWB access.

PHASE D — 2027

Scale and Platform

Android launch (GPS-only initially). Venue partnerships for promoted locations. Event mode for concerts and festivals. API for third-party integrations. International expansion.

CONCLUSION

A Structural Rethinking

Sparks is not an incremental improvement to dating apps. It is a structural rethinking of how technology can facilitate human attraction. By removing photos, eliminating text, requiring physical presence, and encoding the vulnerability spectrum of real-world flirting into a five-level boldness system, Sparks addresses the root causes of dating app dissatisfaction rather than treating symptoms.

The technical foundation — Apple's Ultra-Wideband hardware, present in every iPhone sold since 2019 — is mature, privacy-preserving, and precisely suited to the use case. The safety architecture — emoji-only communication, curated vocabulary, no text input, rate limiting, blocking, ephemeral data — eliminates the harassment problem structurally rather than through after-the-fact moderation.

The market timing is right. Users are exhausted by existing platforms. Regulatory scrutiny of dating app data practices is increasing. The cultural conversation around screen time, social isolation, and curated digital identity is mainstream. Sparks offers something none of the incumbents can replicate without abandoning their core product:

A dating app that only works when you go outside and look at real people.

sparks — find your light

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