
Ding-Dong: A Marriage Partner-Finding System with Social Support

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Abstract

Although various partner-matching services are available on the Internet, finding a partner is still difficult because reading the various attributes and self-advertisements of potential marriage partners is not enough to find a lifetime partner. We have developed an SNS-based marriage partner-finding system, “Ding-Dong,” which makes full use of support from participants’ friends. Using Ding-Dong, the partner seeker can understand what the partner candidate is really like by seeing the candidates’ everyday behavior, reading the “reviews” written by their friends, and watching the conversations between the candidates and their friends.

Author Keywords

Marriage, Matching, Mate selection, Social support, SNS, Facebook Application

ACM Classification Keywords

H.5.3 [Information interfaces and presentation (e.g., HCI)]: Web-based interaction; H.5.m [Information interfaces and presentation (e.g., HCI)]: Miscellaneous.

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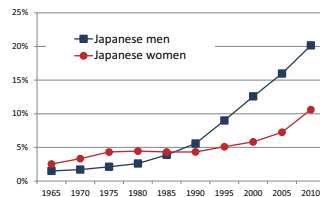


Figure 1: Ratio of unmarried people in Japan (average percentages of unmarried people between ages 45 and 54). [2]

Introduction

The number of unmarried people in Japan has rapidly grown over the last twenty years (Figure 1), and the birth rate is constantly decreasing, causing a serious concern about the future of Japanese society [1][3].

Arranged marriage had long been very common in Japanese society, where potential partners are introduced by relatives or colleagues with their photos and résumés. However, younger generations do not like this process, and they prefer finding partners on their own [4]. As a result, Kon-Katsu (“activities for marriage” in Japanese) is becoming popular these days among people who wish to get married [6].

Kon-Katsu covers various activities like registration with marriage consultation companies, participation in events for singles, using partner-matching services on the Internet, etc. Since the term Kon-Katsu became popular, various partner-matching services have emerged [5]. However, finding a partner is usually difficult, not only because young people are busy working at their jobs but because there are relatively few chances to meet potential partners. Users of matching services usually have to register their profiles, habits, interests, etc., and they can add arbitrary comments in a free format. After the user registers that personal information, the administrator of the system selects a matching pair and tells each user that there is a matching partner in the database. To protect privacy, details of matching partners are not shown at first, but contact information is given to both users in the pair so that they can communicate directly. This strategy seems decent, but it is far from ideal for the following reasons. First, a written profile does not show the person’s real personality. We can see a person’s personality only by watching what the person does or

says. Second, we cannot trust a recommendation letter written by the applicant. Third, the matching is mainly calculated by the profile information, but the best-matched person cannot be filtered out by such a simple method. For these reasons, we believe that using an SNS is the best way to understand a person in depth. If we could see the “reviews” of the person, it would be helpful in learning what the person is really like.

Ding-Dong

To prove our idea, we developed an SNS-based partner-finding system called “Ding-Dong” (Figure 2), where the seeker’s friends on the SNS can take great part in the partner-finding process as “supporters.”



Figure 2: The partner seeker’s page on Ding-Dong.

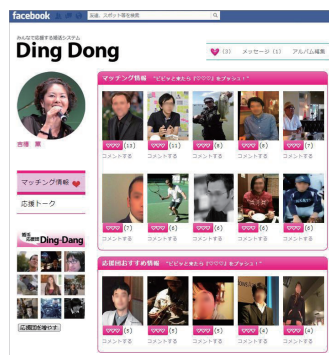


Figure 3: The matching page.



Figure 4: The communication page.

We implemented Ding-Dong as a Facebook application where the partner seeker's close friends can act as the "supporters" on Facebook. The Ding-Dong application accesses the data of the partner seeker, supporters, and potential partners, using standard Facebook APIs. The primary pages of Ding-Dong are as follows:

Top page for a partner seeker:

The seeker's top page (Figure 2) shows a small list of potential partners randomly selected from the matching page mentioned below, a chat view among supporters, and supporting messages from the supporters.

Matching page:

The matching page (Figure 3) displays two kinds of potential partners. The ten people shown at the top are randomly selected from among all the Ding-Dong members, and the next five are people recommended by the seeker's supporters. When partner seekers feel that a potential partner is their type, they click the "Like" button once or more, based on how appealing the potential partner is. The number of clicks is accumulated and used for sorting the potential partner list on the communication page.

Communication Page:

The communication page (Figure 4) displays the list of potential partners sorted by the number of accumulated "Like" clicks. The page is used for gathering comments and opinions from the seeker's supporters, and the partner seeker can also invite supporters of the potential partners to the communication page.

Preliminary Evaluation

We carried out informal interviews with ten people (seven female), and gathered the following opinions:

- "Objective evaluations by supporters would be a great help for decision-making."
- "It is a nice thing that I can communicate with the supporters of a potential partner, because in many cases I don't have the courage to contact the person directly."
- "It is fun to know who my friend favors."
- "It seems that I can introduce one of my friends to her potential partner pretty easily, since everything is on the Internet"
- "The seeker and I can talk about the potential partner easily, because we share all the information."
- "I think nobody buys a book at a bookstore without taking a look at it. We buy books from Amazon.com without looking inside because there are many review articles on the Internet. Hearing the opinion of supporters should be crucial to finding partners."

Discussion

Supporters play the most important role in the Ding-Dong system. Partner seekers can gain great benefits from their supporters.

Keeping up high Kon-Katsu motivation

It can be difficult to maintain motivation during Kon-Katsu operations, and partner seekers can grow exhausted and depressed after countless futile meetings with potential partners. In such cases, supporters in the Ding-Dong system can encourage and help the seekers by contacting the other party's supporters.

Promoting decision making

By watching the seekers' Kon-Katsu activities and understanding their situations, supporters can give

appropriate advice to seekers when they lose confidence in the process.

Finding real, charming points

Because Ding-Dong is a Facebook application, partner seekers can watch the online activities of potential partners, particularly their activities with their supporters. Most partner-matching services only provide people's photos and profiles, which can hardly describe how charming the people really are. When we see people's everyday activities, we can see their real, charming qualities.

Forming a trust network

It is crucial for any partner-matching service to provide correct information to the participants, but false statements about career or academic backgrounds are usually hard to detect, and false statements about beliefs and creeds, impossible. In the real world, we can trust a potential partner if we can trust the person's friends. In the Ding-Dong world, we can trust a person if we can trust the person's supporters.

Conclusion

We proposed an SNS-based marriage partner-finding system, Ding-Dong, which makes full use of support from participants' friends. Hopefully, by watching the everyday activities of potential partners and their supporters, the

chance will be greater of meeting with really promising partners. We are preparing to launch the Ding-Dong site soon and ask a number of unmarried Facebook users to participate in this big challenge.

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