



JASON PARHAM

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Gay Men Flocked to Goose for Friendship. Some Still Feel Excluded

Despite positioning itself as an anti-hookup app, users tell WIRED that Goose has fake profiles, harsh acceptance standards, and problems with inclusivity.



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During the sign-up process he chose a few selfies where he was fully clothed; in one, wearing a black shirt, a baseball cap, and blue jeans, he pulled his shirt upward showing off his abs. While his X bio says “I Have a 9 Inch Dick and a Bubble Butt,” he didn’t mention anything about being an adult performer on his Goose page. But when he logged back in to see if he’d been approved he was greeted with a message instructing him to upload new photos and check out the community guidelines. His account had been flagged as inappropriate.

“Nudity, pornography, and sexually suggestive vulgar content are not allowed on Goose. Never engage in commercial transactions involving sexual activity or services,” the [message read](#).

In July, [WIRED exposed a large-scale network](#) of what appeared to be AI Instagram accounts that Goose cofounder David Aliagas seemingly commissioned to attract new users to the platform. But beyond the veil of shady marketing, questions

where other users are located, is reminiscent of Sniffies and, similar to Facebook, it lets users “check in” to different neighborhoods. Disappearing chats echo Snapchat. User profiles, where photos flicker by on a timed loop, function like Instagram Stories. There’s also screenshot protection, akin to Raya’s rule that prevents people from saving your pictures.

As some people in the LGBTQIA+ community have pointed out online, many of these features appear to be hookup-oriented. “Why do you need those two things if you are not sending a certain type of photo?” one user [asked on TikTok](#) about vanish mode and screenshot protection. Added another [on X](#): “So are we sucking dick on the Goose app or are we not???”

Hunter Lawrence, who was exhausted from the churn of transactional interactions on other dating apps, was also wooed by Goose’s focus on friendship over hookups. But not long after he joined, things got a little X-rated. He says he asked one guy, “‘How are you?’ And he was like, ‘Being totally honest, playing with my morning wood,’” Lawrence says, breaking into laughter over the phone. “Guys will be gay guys.” The chat ended after that exchange, but the 31-year-old Austin, Texas, hairstylist, who has been a frequent user since Goose launched last month, says most of his conversations have remained PG.

Lawrence sees Goose as angling to be an all-use social media app. “No one’s reinventing the wheel here,” he says.

where they live in the Bronx.

When Regulus filtered the map, which wrongly labeled their neighborhood, to a 10-mile radius in an attempt to locate more queer men who looked like them, “It was hella scarce of Black and Latinx people anywhere in NYC, which is so odd to me,” they tell WIRED. “I mostly encountered cis white men that looked either generic or AI generated—probably both. I’ve seen *The Matrix*.” Regulus deleted the app after one week.

Goose cofounder Derek Chadwick tells WIRED the company does not make decisions based on users’ identity, gender expression, or personal presentation, and denies ever doing so. Asked if the app has plans to improve the experience for POC members, Chadwick says it was built without exclusionary mechanics they say have historically plagued legacy platforms, such as ethnicity filters.

It’s unclear how many users have actually joined Goose; the app declined to share numbers but said that members have initiated over 250,000 conversations since launch.

X user @whatsthattwunk, who asked that WIRED not publish his name due to professional concerns, found out that shirtless photos of him, including one snapshot he’d taken in a gym locker room in his underwear, had been uploaded to a Goose profile under the name “Robert,” a 33-year-old attorney in Nashville.

aggressively managing the creation of fake profiles.

The company has also been accused of exploiting user data. On June 27, major concerns about data mining began to circulate online. Goose's original terms of service gave the app full rights over user images, meaning the app would own any and all content that is uploaded or sent on the app in perpetuity and could use it to create "derivative works of, adapt, reformat, translate, and otherwise exploit all or any portion of your Member Content." After facing backlash, Goose updated its TOS on June 30 to "explicitly limit [its] scope" over user rights. Goose, however, does use member content to train safety and anti-spam models, in addition to developing safety guidelines.

Despite the controversy that has surrounded the app's launch, Lawrence appreciates the more vanilla aspects of Goose.

"When it comes to the dating space in the gay world, everyone wants to make a problem or pick it apart, when I think it's pretty transparent about what it is and what it wants to do," he says. "It's a nice departure from the real debauchery of what we're so used to being advertised to, which is just sex 24/7. To have one place that is just for something a bit more genuine is nice."

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[Jason Parham](#) is a senior writer at WIRED where he covers internet culture, the future of sex, and online dating. His WIRED cover story “[A People’s History of Black Twitter](#)” was adapted into a Hulu docuseries in 2024 and won the AAFCA Award for Best Documentary and a Rockie Award ... [Read More](#)

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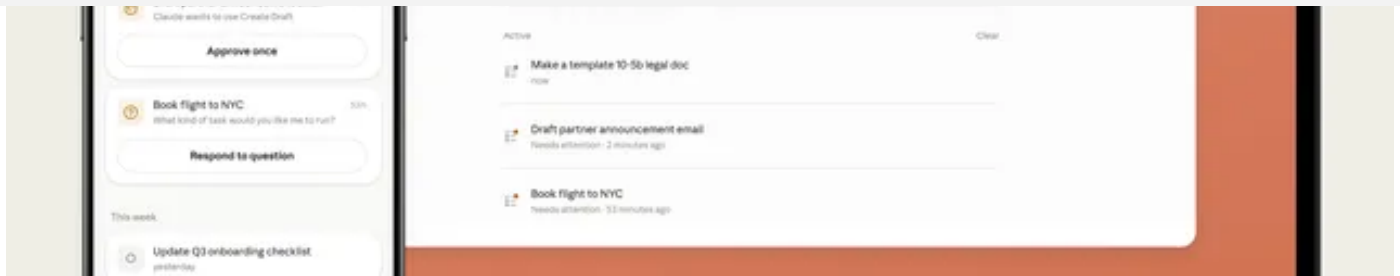
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