

Long-distance relationships can form stronger bonds than face-to-face ones

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The long-distance relationship has plagued college students and people relocated for work for ages. These relationships are seen as destined to fail, but are they actually creating stronger bonds than a geographically closer relationship? A recent paper published in the *Journal of Communication* found that people in long-distance relationships often have stronger bonds from more constant, and deeper, communication than normal relationships.

Crystal Jiang, City University of Hong Kong and Jeffrey Hancock, Cornell University, asked dating couples in long-distance and geographically close relationships to report their daily interactions over different media: face-to-face, phone calls, [video chat](#), texting, instant messenger, and email. Over a week, they reported to what extent they shared about themselves and experienced intimacy, and to what [extent](#) they felt their partners did the same thing. When comparing the two types of relationships, Jiang and Hancock found that long-distance couples felt more intimate to each other, and this greater intimacy is driven by two tendencies: long-distance couples disclosed themselves more, and they idealized their partners' behaviors. These two tendencies become more manifested when they communicated in text-based, asynchronous and [mobile media](#) because they made more efforts to overcome the media constraints.

Long-distance relationships have been unexplored for years. One of the reasons is that the general public believes it is rare and not normal. Previous studies have focused on how couples cope with problems, such

as jealousy and stress, but until recently, several studies have shown that long-distance relationships are not always problematic. Some surveys even indicate that long-distance couples have equal or better relationship qualities than geographically close couples. This study was designed to observe what exactly happens in long-distance relational communication, particularly in comparison to geographically close ones.

Long-distance romance is much more common nowadays. Couples get separated for a variety of reasons, due to modern mobility, and they choose to maintain the relationships through all kinds of communication technologies. Recent statistics show that 3 million married couples in the US live apart; 25- 50% college students are currently in long-distance relationships and up to 75% of them have engaged in one at some point. On the other hand, people think long-distance relationships are challenging.

"Indeed, our culture, emphasizes being together physically and frequent face-to-face contact for [close relationships](#), but long-distance relationships clearly stand against all these values. People don't have to be so pessimistic about long-distance romance," said Jiang. "The long-distance couples try harder than geographically close couples in communicating affection and [intimacy](#), and their efforts do pay back."

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