

Feature Asymmetry in Interoperable Messaging

A barrier for mitigating network effects?



Who am I?

Stina Olsson PhD student

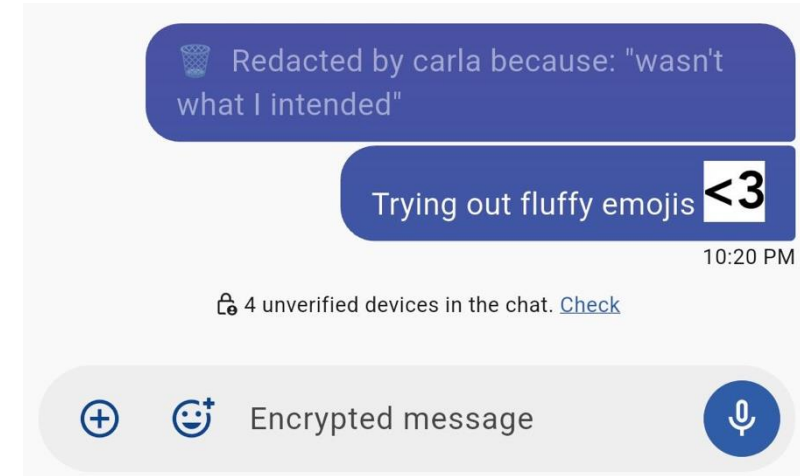
Aalborg University

How is **self-presentation** affected by
asymmetry in interoperable messaging
and could it have an impact on
(mitigating) **network effects**?

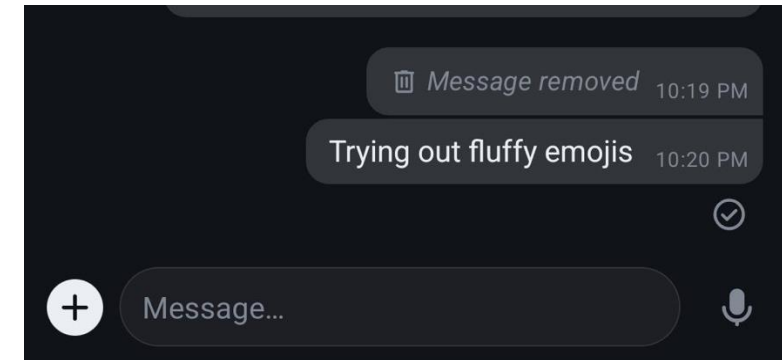


Feature asymmetry

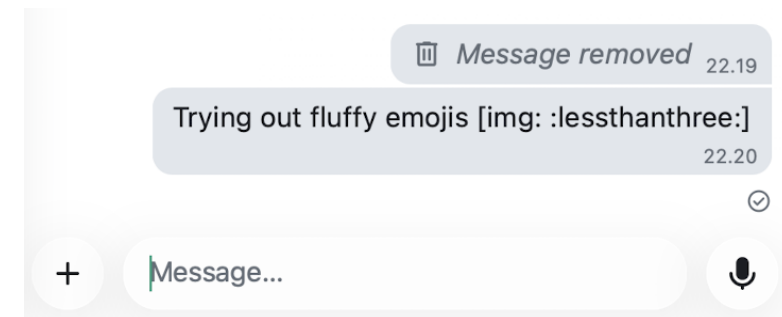
- Features for expression
- $\neq$ fallbacks or workarounds
- User side



FluffyChat

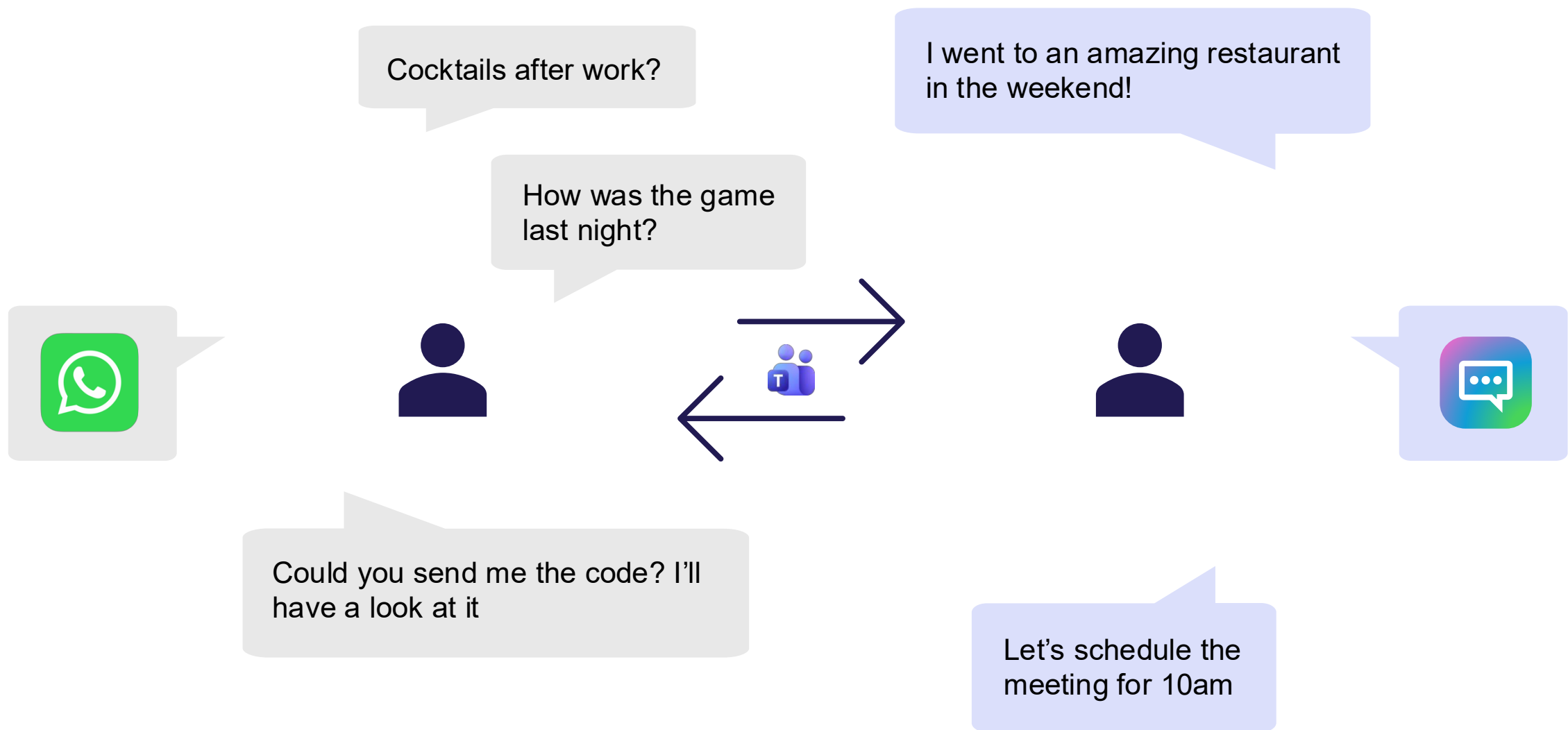


Element X
(mobile)



Element X
(desktop)

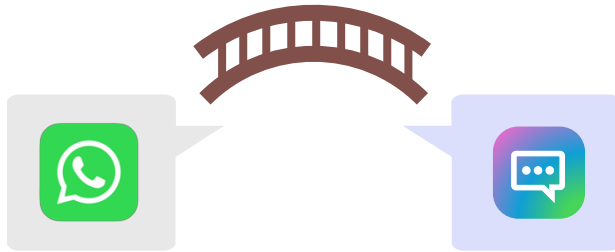




Network Effects: apps' value based on their amount of users rather than their functionality

Digital Markets Act (the DMA)

- EU law
- Solution: interoperability



Hey, let's check what it says

Messaging Interoperability

Page contents

[What does Article 7 mean?](#)

[How does Article 7 work in practice?](#)

[Which undertakings have been designated as gatekeepers in relation to their NIICS?](#)

[Useful links](#)

Given the strong network effects that gatekeepers benefit from in the provision of number-independent interpersonal communications services (NIICS), Article 7 of the Digital Markets Act (DMA) requires them to ensure interoperability with other NIICS providers. This measure aims to enhance market contestability in the provision of these services.

Upon request and free of charge, the designated gatekeeper must ensure that the basic functionalities of its NIICS interoperate with those of other providers, whether currently offering or intending to offer such services in the Union, by supplying the necessary technical interfaces or equivalent solutions to enable interoperability.

What does Article 7 mean?

Under Article 7 of the DMA, the designated gatekeeper must ensure interoperability for basic functionalities that it already provides to its own end users. The requirements are phased in over time, with specific deadlines tied to the designation decision.

Phase 1 – six months from the designation decision:

- end-to-end text messaging between two individual end users;
- sharing of images, voice messages, videos and other attached files in end to end communication between two individual end users;

Phase 2 – within 2 years from the designation:

- end-to-end text messaging within groups of individual end users;
- sharing of images, voice messages, videos and other attached files in end-to-end communication between a group chat and an individual end user;

Phase 3 – within 4 years from the designation:

- end-to-end voice calls between two individual end users;
- end-to-end video calls between two individual end users;
- end-to-end voice calls between a group chat and an individual end user;
- end-to-end video calls between a group chat and an individual end user.

Digital Markets Act Interoperability

- EU law
- Solution: interoperability



Hey, let's check what it says

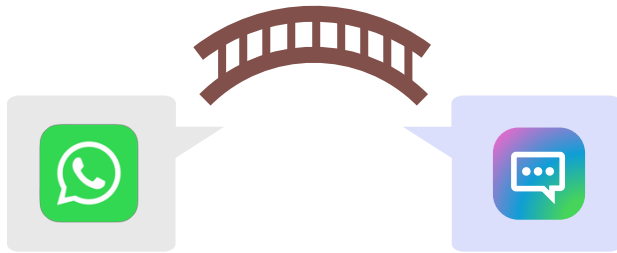
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- end-to-end voice calls between a group chat and an individual end user;
- end-to-end video calls between a group chat and an individual end user.

Digital Markets Act (the DMA)

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Hey, let's check what it says

Messenger, the designated gatekeeper must ensure that its services are accessible to its own end users. The requirements are set out in the designation decision.

Within 6 months from the designation decision:

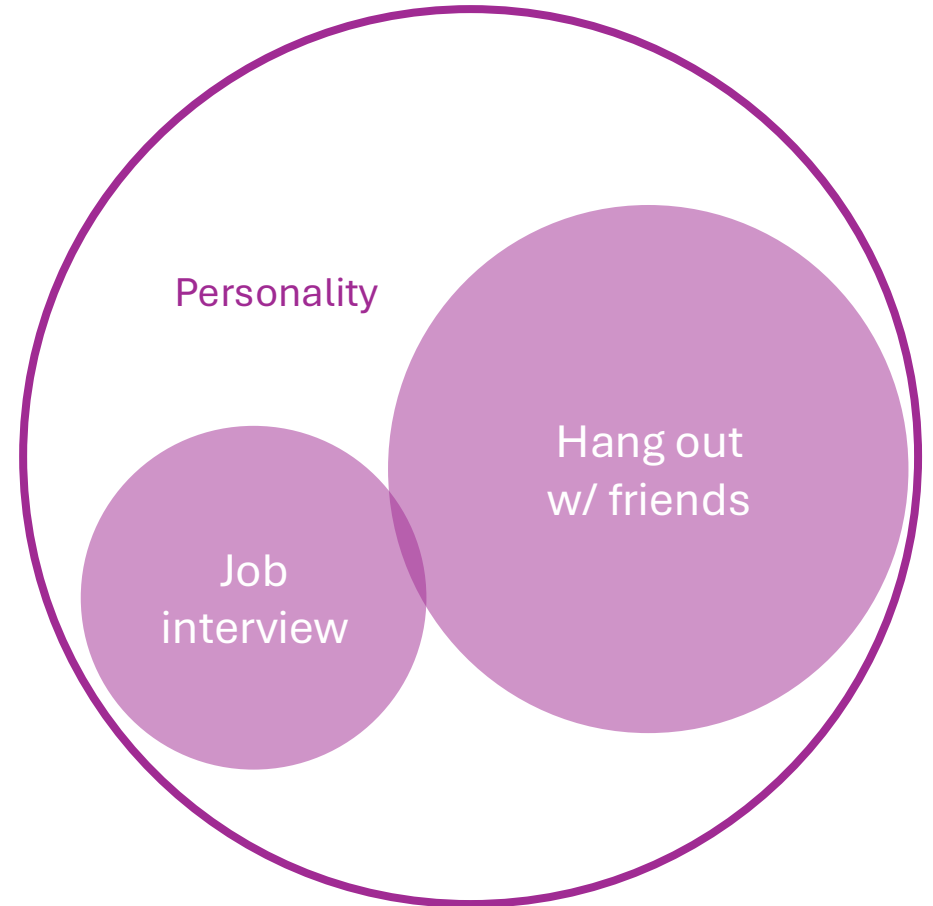
and **text messaging** between two individual end users;

images, voice messages, videos and other attachments between two individual end users;

Within 12 months from the designation:

Self-presentation

- Social psychology (1959)
- Knowingly or subconsciously
- $\neq$ Who you are
- Who do you want others to believe you are?



Self-presentation

- Amplified in the digital world
- *Even more* selective



<https://queenofinfographics.com/product/no-pants-zoom-meeting-social-distancing-vector-pdf-png-card/>

Self-presentation

- Amplified in the digital world
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How does it relate to the DMA?

- Text
- Images, voice messages, videos, and other attached files
- Reactions
- Animations
- Polls
- Sharing location
- Edit
- Unsend
- Read receipts
- Typing indicators

Virtual behaviour types

Verbal

Content

Self-disclosure

Non-verbal

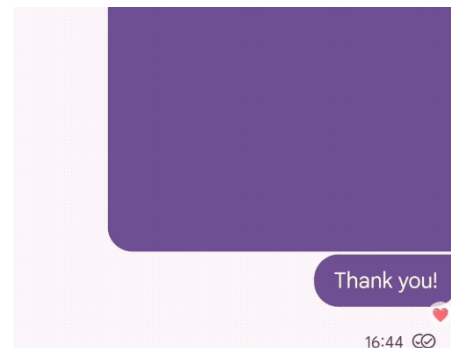
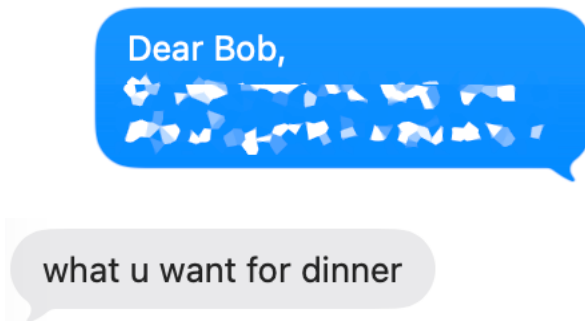
Reactions

Animations

Meta

Username/avatar

Edit message



What was the question again?

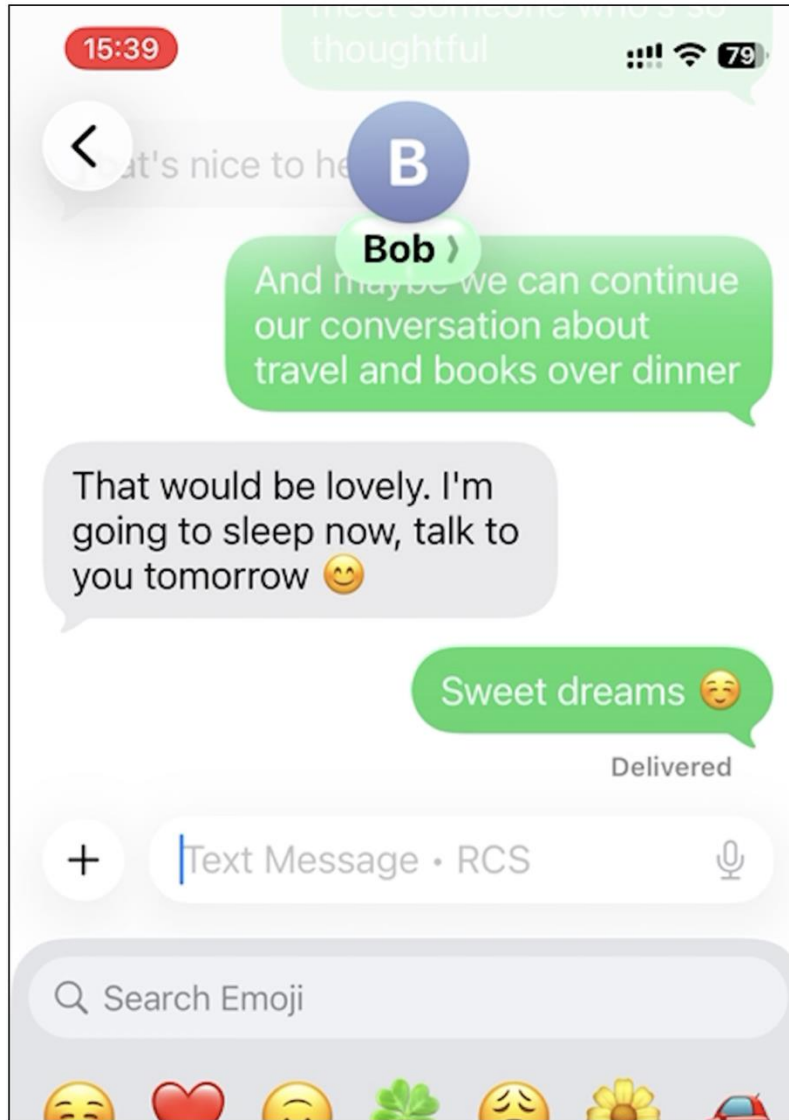
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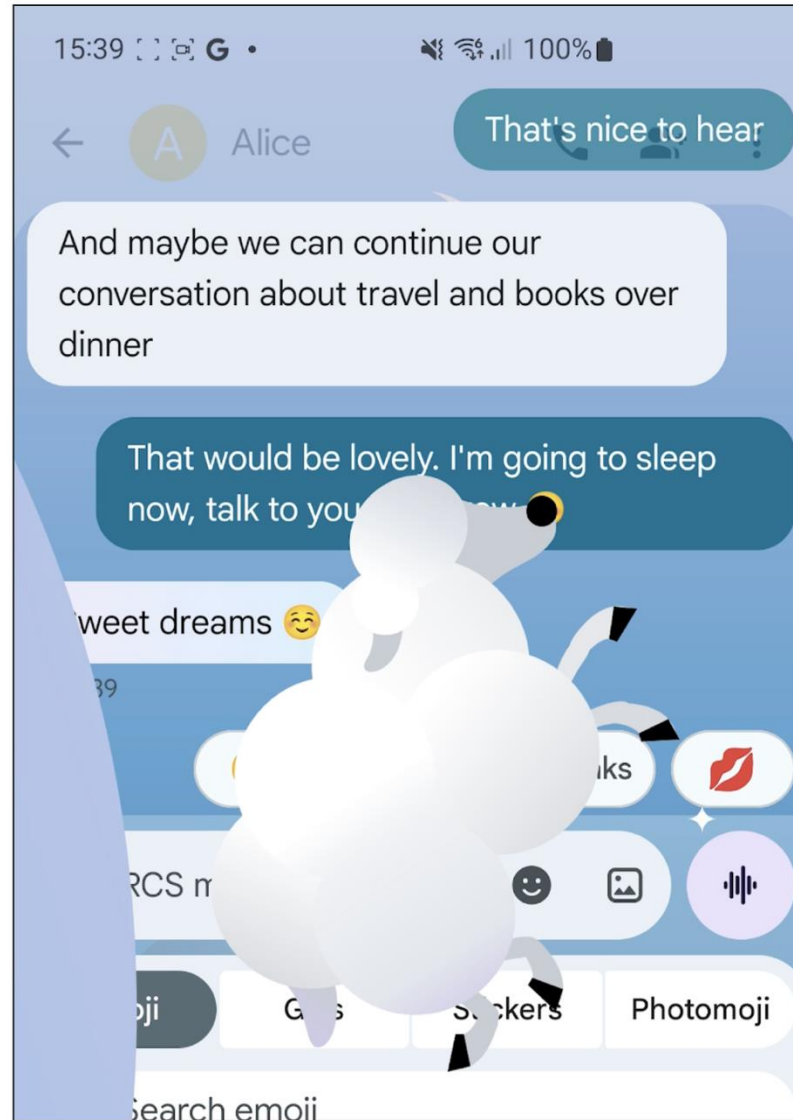
Feature asymmetry

- Behaviour (type) asymmetry
- Representation asymmetry

Rich Communication Services / SMS

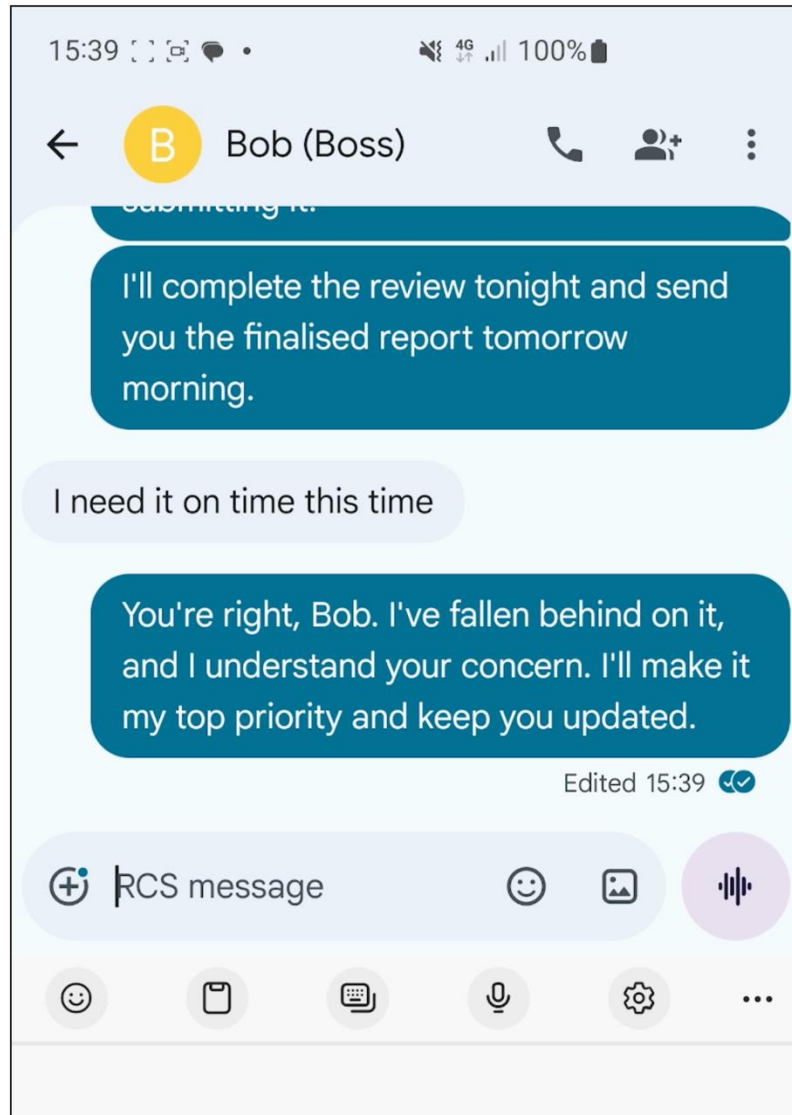


Apple



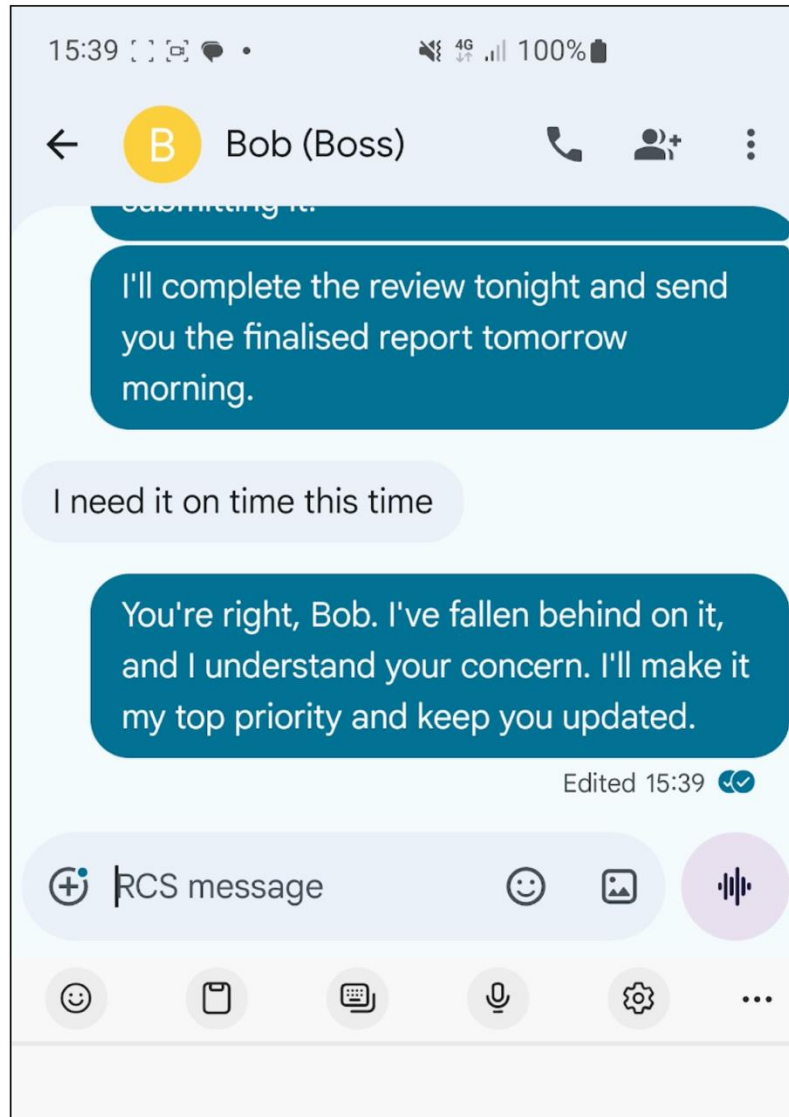
Google

Rich Communication Services

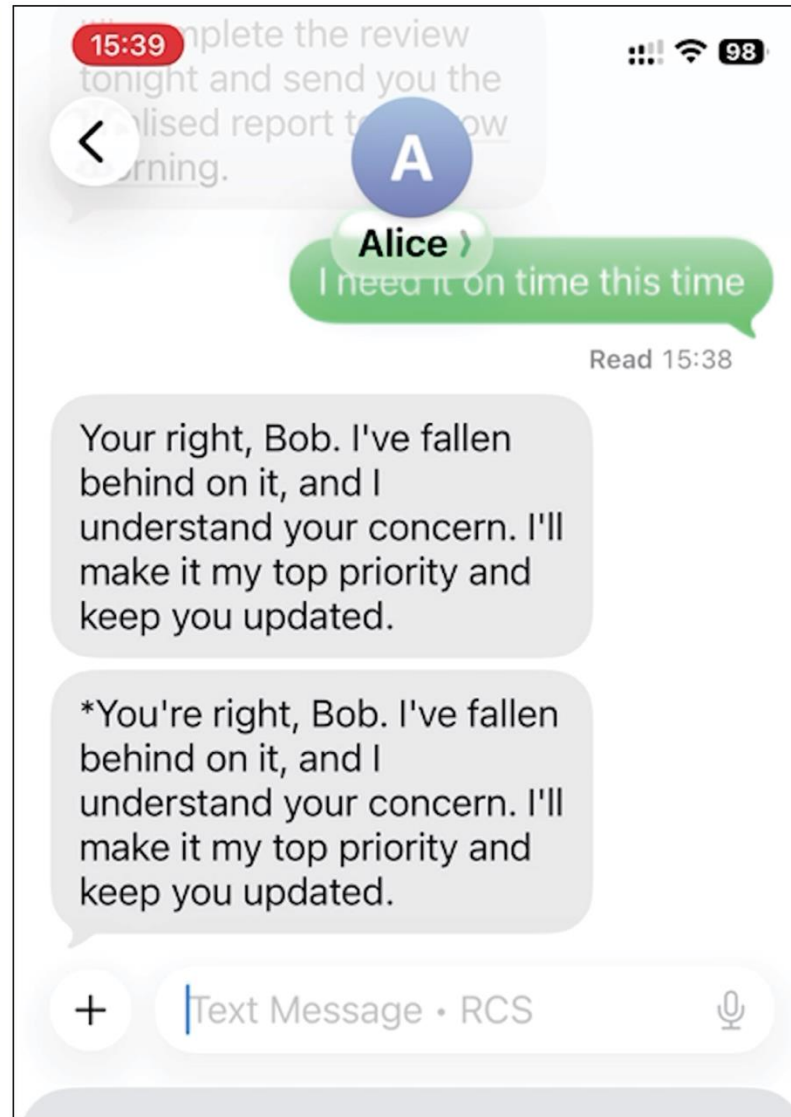


Google

Rich Communication Services



Google

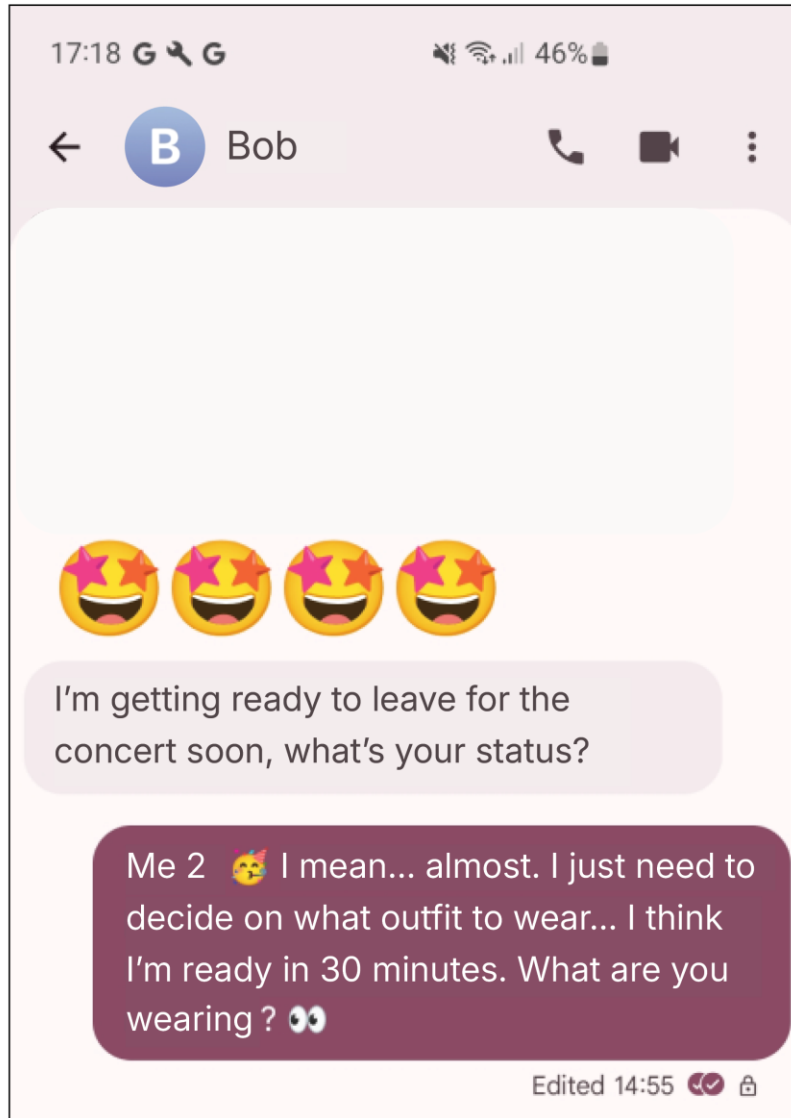


Apple

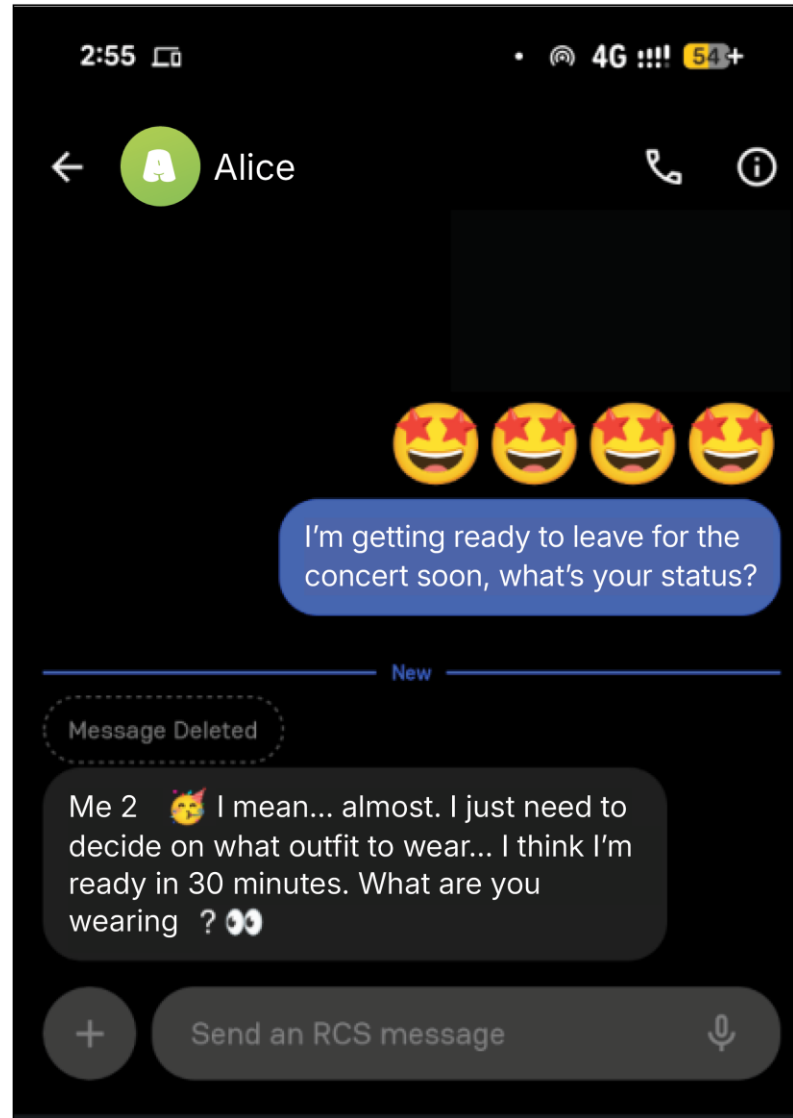
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Rich Communication Services

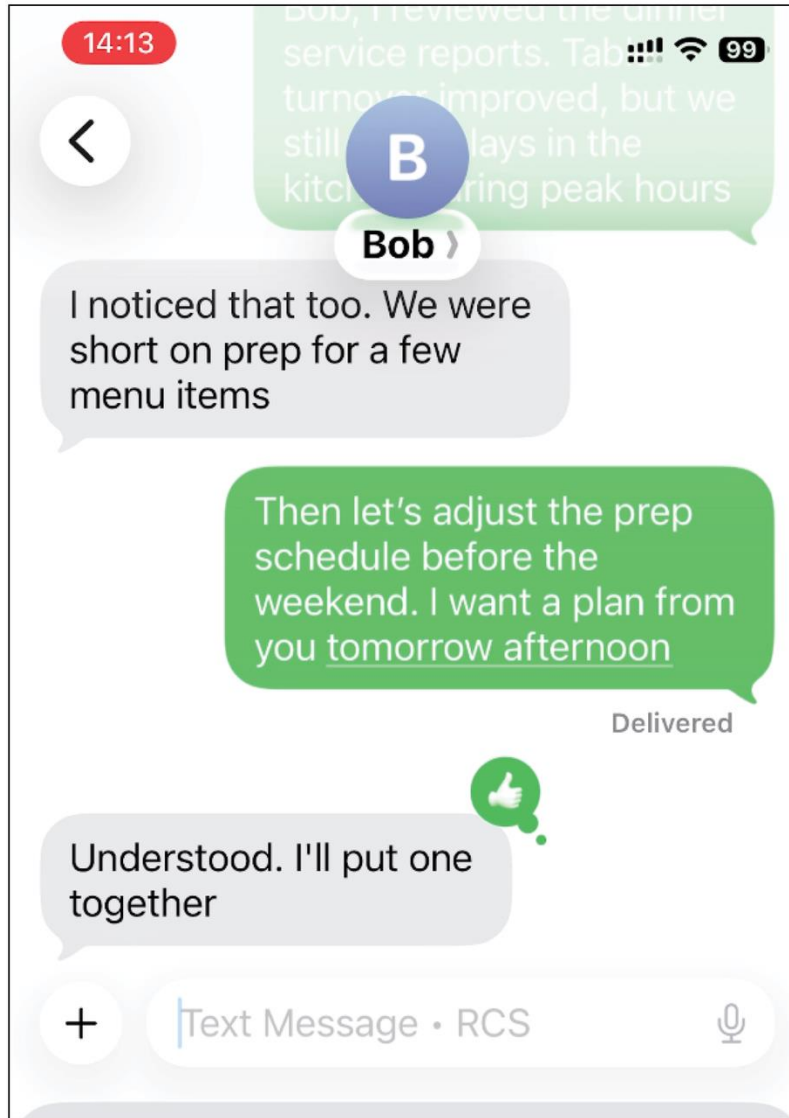


Google

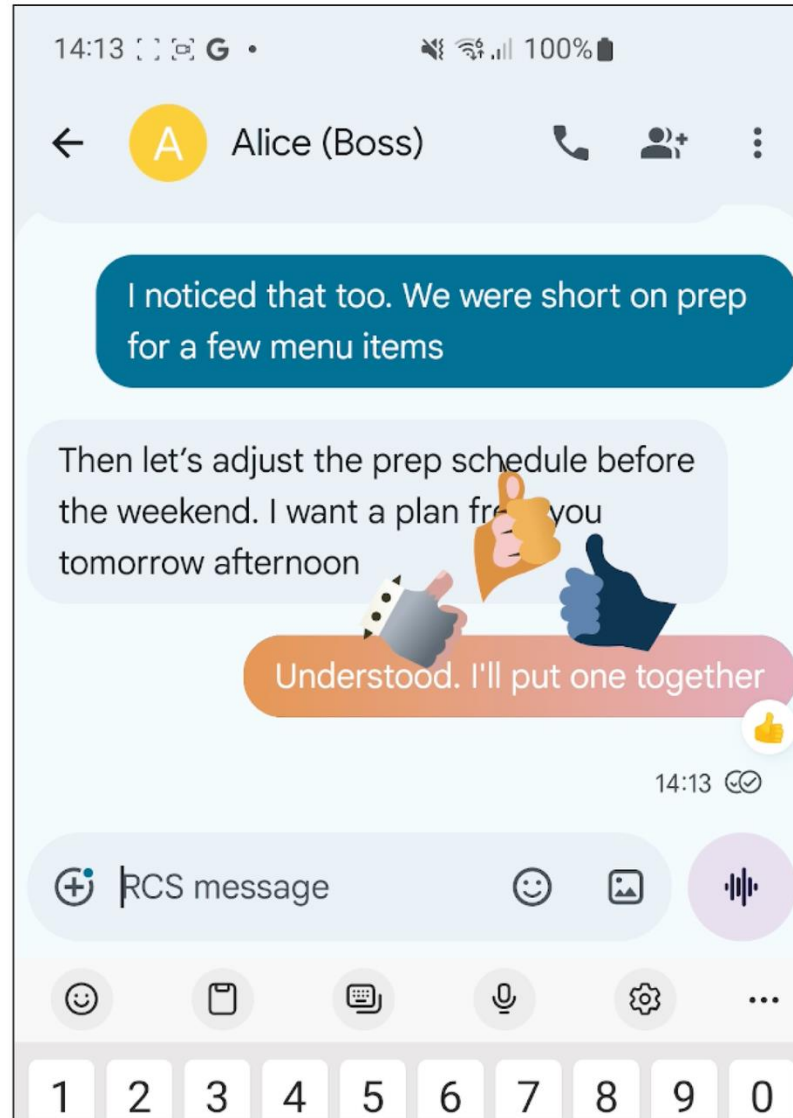


Beeper

Rich Communication Services



Apple

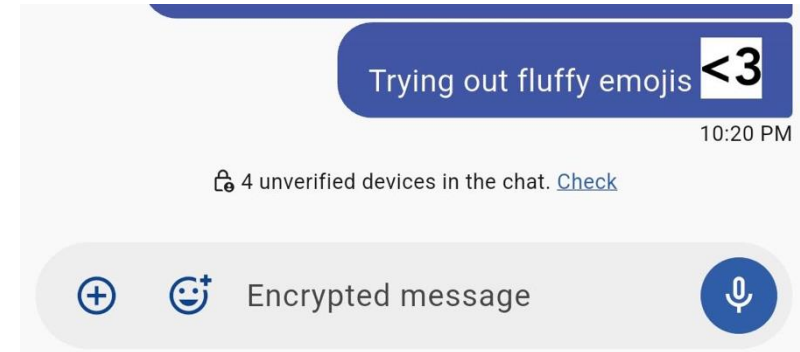


Google

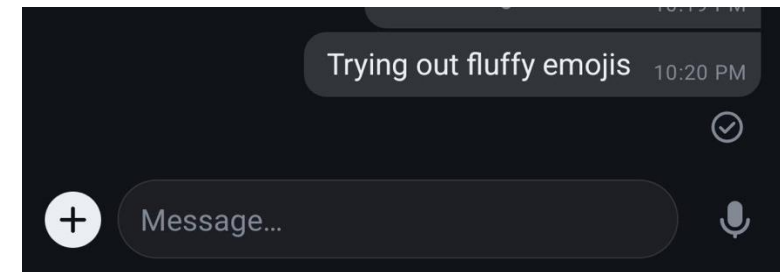
Clearly the issue is asymmetry

Revealing asymmetry

- User awareness
- Reconsider seamlessness



FluffyChat



Element X
(mobile)

Conclusion

How is **self-presentation** affected by **asymmetry in interoperable messaging** and could it have an impact on (mitigating) **network effects**?

- Asymmetries frustrating
 - Alternatives
 - Workarounds
 - Back to gatekeeper
 - Asymmetry → barrier to adopt interoperability
- Text
 - Images, voice messages, videos, and other attached files
 - Reactions
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Conclusion

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"agree to disagree, but let's not ignore"

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Thank you for listening!

