

# Electronically Mediated Relationships

Much of the research conducted into social relationships assumes that they are based predominantly around face-to-face communication. The emergence of electronically mediated relationships through the Internet – email and chat – has forced us to rethink our assumptions.



Imagine you meet John face to face. He is wearing a hoody, jeans, is carrying a backpack and looking hung over. He tells you (in an American accent) that he is sorry he was late – his bus didn't turn up.

What information do you piece together about John from the “cues” you can see/hear?

Now imagine you meet John online. Which of those cues do you pick up now? How might this affect your communication with him?

## The Reduced Social Cues Model (Sproull & Kiesler, 1986)

Define static cues and give an example:

Define dynamic cues and give an example:

Sproull & Kiesler argue that in email communication, there are no dynamic cues. Why is this?

What might be the consequences of these lost social cues? Explain (in relation to Young's ACE model) why this lack of social cues can result in "flaming" or WRITING IN CAPS TO SHOUT!

In order to introduce some of these lost cues, emoticons have emerged. What do the ones below stand for?

:o)                      :o(                      :p                      :'(

We can also use abbreviations to inform of mood: Which ones do you know?