

that participants feel closer to their Internet partner as time progresses through this CMC modality.

Similarly, Underwood and Findlay (2004) studied the effect of Internet relationships on primary, specifically non-Internet relationships and the perceived intimacy of both. In this study, self-disclosure, or intimacy, was measured in terms of shared secrets through the discussion of personal problems. Participants reported a significantly higher level of self-disclosure in their Internet relationship as compared to their primary relationship. In contrast, the participants' primary relationships were reported as highly self-disclosed in the past, but the current level of disclosure was perceived to be lower (Underwood & Findlay, 2004). This result suggests participants turned to the Internet in order to fulfill the need for intimacy in their lives.

In further support of this finding, Tidwell and Walther (2002) hypothesized CMC participants employ deeper self-disclosures than FtF participants in order to overcome the limitations of CMC, e.g., the reliance on nonverbal cues. It was found that CMC partners engaged in more frequent intimate questions and disclosures than FtF partners in order to overcome the barriers of CMC. In their 2002 study, Tidwell and Walther measured the perception of a relationship's intimacy by the partner of each participant in both the CMC and FtF conditions. The researchers found that the participants' partners stated their CMC partner was more effective in employing more intimate exchanges than their FtF partner, and both participants and their partners rated their CMC relationship as more intimate than their FtF relationship.