

Business is Business: A Chinese gaming firm is hooking up with the popular gay dating app Grindr

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Grindr sells 60% share to Chinese gaming firm

A Chinese online gaming company is hooking up with the popular gay dating app Grindr. Chinese firm Beijing Kunlun Tech has bought a controlling stake in Grindr.

The world's biggest gay social networking app has sold a major share to a Chinese gaming company for \$93m (£64m).

The games developer made the announcement of the deal in a filing to the Shenzhen stock exchange.

The remaining shares will be held by founder Joel Simkhai and his employees.

"For nearly seven years, Grindr has self-funded its growth, and in doing so, we have built the largest network for gay men in the world," Mr Simkhai said in a blog post.

"We have taken this investment in our company to accelerate our growth, to allow us to expand our services for you and to continue to ensure that we make Grindr the number one app and brand for our millions of users."

In a statement, the Chinese company said the investment would improve its "strategic position".

However, the firm has not specified whether it plans to introduce the app in China - where the LGBT community continues to face widespread discrimination.

The app is accessible in the country, but its availability has been intermittent in the past, with users complaining of access problems in some cities.

The biggest gay dating app currently on the Chinese market is the homegrown Blued - which was started in 2013 by Geng Le, a former police officer.

Geng - who says his app draws around 3 million daily users - welcomed Beijing Kunlun's investment in Grindr.

"It shows the Chinese capital market's acceptance of LGBT social networks and their huge potential," he in a statement.

"And it may make us rethink our strategy by considering going public in the Chinese stock market instead of overseas ones."

The deal comes after police reported a drastic rise in the number of crimes involving the use of

dating apps [1].

The number of alleged crimes reported involving Tinder and Grindr has increased over sevenfold in two years.

Some have suggested that the figures are only “the tip of the iceberg” as some crimes go unreported.

Out of the total number of reported crimes, violent and sexual crimes were the most common.

Two men were jailed last year after attempting to blackmail a married man they found on hook-up app Grindr [2].

Also in 2015, PinkNews reported on a gang of four men who mugged two people after posing as a potential date on the app [3].

Joe Williams

P.S.

* “Grindr sells 60% share to Chinese gaming firm”. Pink News. 12th January 2016, 9:49 AM:
<http://www.pinknews.co.uk/2016/01/12/grindr-sells-60-share-to-chinese-gaming-firm/>

Footnotes

[1] <http://www.pinknews.co.uk/2016/01/11/crimes-involving-dating-apps-increase-sevenfold-in-two-years/>

[2] <http://www.pinknews.co.uk/2015/08/21/men-jailed-after-blackmailing-married-grindr-user/>

[3] <http://www.pinknews.co.uk/2015/12/18/there-is-a-gang-using-grindr-to-mug-gay-men/>