

Newly single and seeing his ex everywhere on his iPhone, he builds an app with AI

Friday, October 16: a breakup. Sunday evening: he starts coding, with a first prototype a few hours later. One week after the separation, on October 23, 2026, Ex-Filter is available free on the App Store for iPhone and iPad. In Castanet-Tolosan, near Toulouse, France, software publisher Nicolas used AI to build the tool he needed: a way to find, sort and archive photos of his ex. It gave him something to focus on while keeping his memories, with a few kawaii mascots to soften the task.

He looks for a photo and comes across his ex, from whom he has just separated. A trip, a restaurant, a smile: it was a happy memory. Seeing it at that moment hurts. It was not what he had opened his iPhone to find.

On Friday, October 16, 2026, at 10 p.m., Nicolas — a pseudonym — becomes single. After five years of sharing everyday life, the relationship has run its course. There is no infidelity or dramatic falling-out. But on the phone of this resident of Castanet-Tolosan, near Toulouse, his former partner is still everywhere.

Deleting five years of life together is out of the question. He wants to find a picture from a particular date without unexpectedly seeing her again. To keep the memories, while having more choice over when to revisit them.

On Sunday evening he starts coding

Two days after the separation, on Sunday, October 18, Nicolas decides to build the tool he wishes he had.

"Since I'm not a farmer, I can't count on L'amour est dans le pré. So, to keep my mind occupied, I wondered how to make myself a little digital bubble. My ex is everywhere in my photo library. I wanted some distance from the memories, without erasing them."

L'amour est dans le pré is the French version of the dating show Farmer Wants a Wife.

As a software publisher, Nicolas turns to something he knows: making the tool he is missing. With AI helping him write the code, a first version takes shape in a few hours. It has been years since he last faced this problem; now he discovers what the new tools can help him do about it.

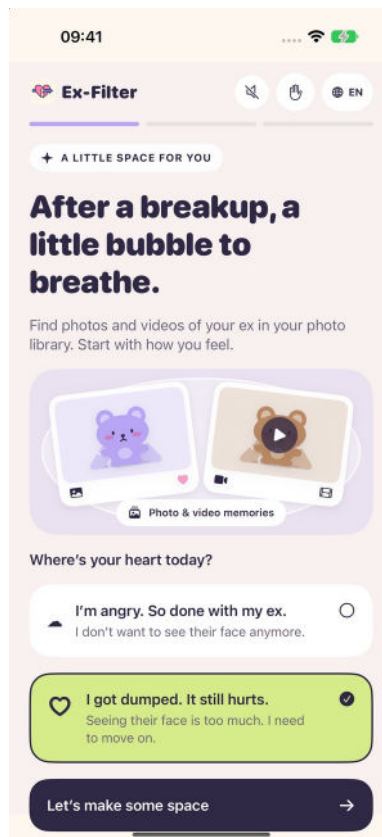
"AI couldn't go through the breakup for me. But it could help me create something to get through it."

Ex-Filter takes its name from the idea of quietly "exfiltrating" pictures that are painful to see right now. It grows out of this personal need. The app is free. The rest of the breakup will probably take more than a Sunday evening.

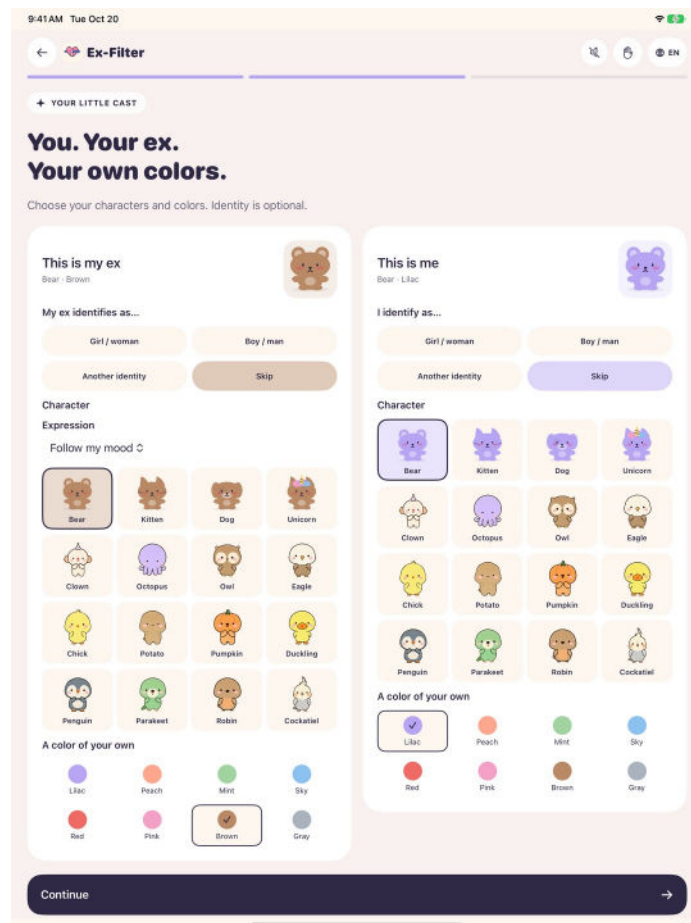
Cute characters to soften a difficult task

Like many couples, Nicolas and his former partner had animal nicknames for each other. That memory inspires Ex-Filter's avatars and mascots. He also uses AI to create these rounded characters in a few hours: little creatures to make the task feel gentler.

The journey starts with how the user feels: more angry, or more sad? They choose a character for themselves and their ex, along with colors and expressions. The experience also welcomes LGBTQIA+ couples. A few reference photos then let the app search for similar faces; the user checks the matches before deciding what to do next.



Mood selection on iPhone, shown in English.

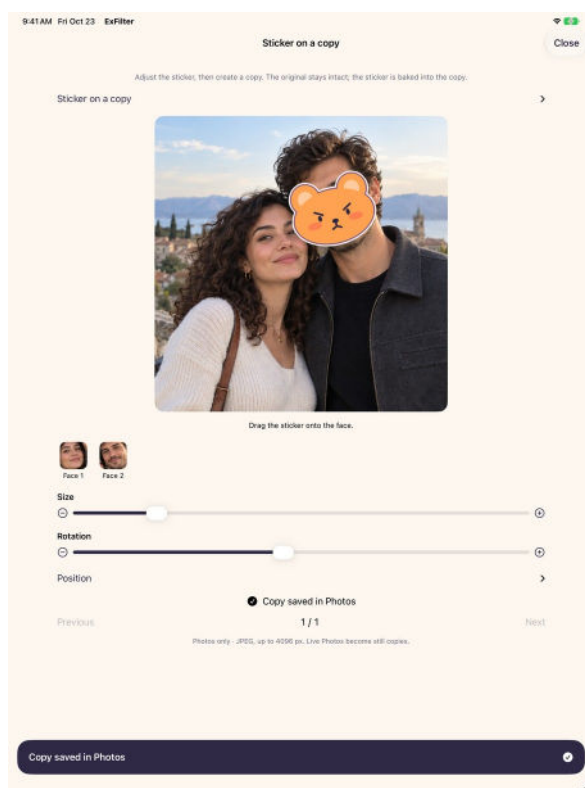


Character selection on iPad, shown in English.

Real simulator screenshots in English with synthetic demo media. The app also supports French, German and Spanish.

Users can gather pictures into an album, export originals to Files or create a private encrypted vault. An album groups photos without removing them from the rest of Photos. Moving them out of the photo library involves two separate steps: backup and deletion, with verification and confirmation.

What about a group photo or holiday picture they still love? A kawaii sticker can cover a face on a new copy. The original stays untouched. The copy offers another way to keep the picture, without making a permanent decision about all their memories today.



Ex-Filter editor in English on iPad: orange bear over the man in a fictional couple.

Screenshot of the real Ex-Filter editor in English on a simulator. Both people are fictional and AI-generated. The original is preserved; the sticker is part of a new still copy.

Turning the pages without tearing them out

Nicolas wants to turn the pages of the relationship without tearing them out. Building Ex-Filter gives him something to focus on and a practical response to a difficulty he has just discovered on his phone.

AI helped him write the app and design its characters. In use, face matching runs on the device using the references selected by the user. It can make mistakes, so the user stays in control of the results.

Tests adapting the app to an iPhone Duo, carried out on a simulator, also give him a reason to smile:

"It's funny: I've just coded the app to work on an iPhone Duo, even though I'm solo now."

Ex-Filter has been available on the App Store since October 23, 2026. The first prototype took a few hours; the following days went into development, testing and preparing the app for release. Moving on will take as long as it takes.

Research context

A study published on August 11, 2025, in *Evolutionary Psychology* identified 84 behaviors people considered for coping with the end of a relationship they had wanted to continue. Turning attention to other things, including keeping busy and focusing on oneself, ranked first among the broad categories of reported strategies.

This echoes Nicolas's experience of keeping himself occupied by building his app. However, the study concerns reported intentions. It demonstrates neither the effectiveness of these strategies nor that of Ex-Filter.

Source: <https://doi.org/10.1177/14747049251368249>

Practical information

Ex-Filter • iPhone and iPad • Free to download. Available on the App Store since October 23, 2026. Requires iOS / iPadOS 17 or later. Interface available in English, French, German and Spanish.

Download: <https://apps.apple.com/app/id6824399118>

Product information and privacy: <https://www.obviousidea.com/exfilter/>

Press contact: contact@obviousidea.com • Telephone available on request.

Nicolas is a pseudonym. Neither his real identity nor that of his former partner, nor personal portrait photographs, are intended for publication.

Nicolas's quotations were proposed and adopted by the creator for this press release. They do not come from an independent interview. The English quotations are translations of the French release.