



**Is it a bird? Is it a plane? It is a smiley face!** Venturing into the last 30 years, when the world was about to embrace the new millennium, things such as smartphones or emojis never existed. Even when computers were around, emojis weren't found until 1997, which led people to ask a question--'why have emojis taken over as the norm of basic communication nowadays?' In the span of two mere decades, how did the emoji sweep across the world by storm? *If you're curious, read on to unravel the mysteries of this change!*

**An emerging new era?** Though surprising, the reasons are not as convoluted as you might think. For starters, it allows everyone to express themselves much easier by tenfold. Back when emojis were not around, people would have a difficult and rather embarrassing time trying to express their emotions. *Sure, when you're ecstatic and on cloud nine, there's no issue telling others of your excitement. But what if when you're depressed, dejected or devastated? Will you be able to confidently show this vulnerable side of yours to other people without a shadow of doubt?*

**A wildcard for anything!** Worse yet, what about the introverts, who prefer to keep every emotion, even euphoria, to themselves? It is during these circumstances that people may be reluctant to open up to others. However, with the introduction of emojis, all those problems are solved. *Feeling demoralised? A frowning emoji got you covered. Feeling disappointed? A facepalm emoji got your back.* When all these emojis circulate amongst people, not only would the person sending the emojis be able to express themselves fully, but also allow the person receiving them be able to comprehend how the sender is feeling. Better yet, smartphones nowadays provide a wide array of choices, roughly 1800 of them with more on the way. Ironically, people would now face a new problem of choosing the most suitable emoji to send, but undeniably, it allows people, be it outspoken or reserved, to express themselves in a click of a few buttons.

**A harmless addiction** On top of that, emojis are insanely addictive and fun to use. The 1800 emojis people have access to are all uniquely created to all have a whacky design. Apart from the emojis showcasing a person's feeling, it also has a large arsenal of emojis depicting numerous iconic items such as a moon, a skull, a piece of prop etc. all with facial expression. *You might think that all these emojis are completely useless. Well,* a report conducted by Facebook shows that the emoji with the most users, was in fact the prop with a smiley, and similar research conducted by Department of Psychology, the CUHK shows *that the 'moon face' emoji is used daily in one of every five people!* As preposterous as it may sound, people love to use emojis especially the ones mentioned above, not only because they are silly, but also the fact that they can be manifested into actual emotional expressions. For instance, the 'moon face' emoji may imply dissatisfaction and irony, while the smiling prop may induce the feeling of shock, self-loathing and cheekiness. It adds a revolutionary and surprising depth into the meaning of such emojis, and the way it can be interpreted is completely up to person receiving it. *That's why people would be more than happy to use them over and over again, without getting tired of it one day.*

And looking at the bigger picture, the popularisation of emojis is not without the popularisation of smartphones. The majority of people using computers for communication are mostly for business purposes. *If you think about when was the last time you received an email with hearts and smiles? Never, right? Obviously, very rarely would you receive such things even if you send an email to a friend.* On the other hand, smartphones being lightweight and versatile *allow you* to call anyone freely around the world, and send message to them through

WhatsApp, Signal, Instagram etc. Such an invention has provided convenience to people, and many more would also want a phone of their own.

Without doubt, emojis mostly reside in those apps for communication. All of which are mobile apps instead of computer applications. Those apps are also one of the most, if not the most, used apps in the world. Hence, it's safe to assume that the rise of emoji is not without the rise of its masters.

Nowadays, it seems impossible to send a message to a friend without adding a few emojis to the text. Thanks to the invention of emoji, we can express ourselves subtly. *Maybe five minutes later, you will send an emoji again. Is it a bird, Is it a plane, or it's a smiley face!*