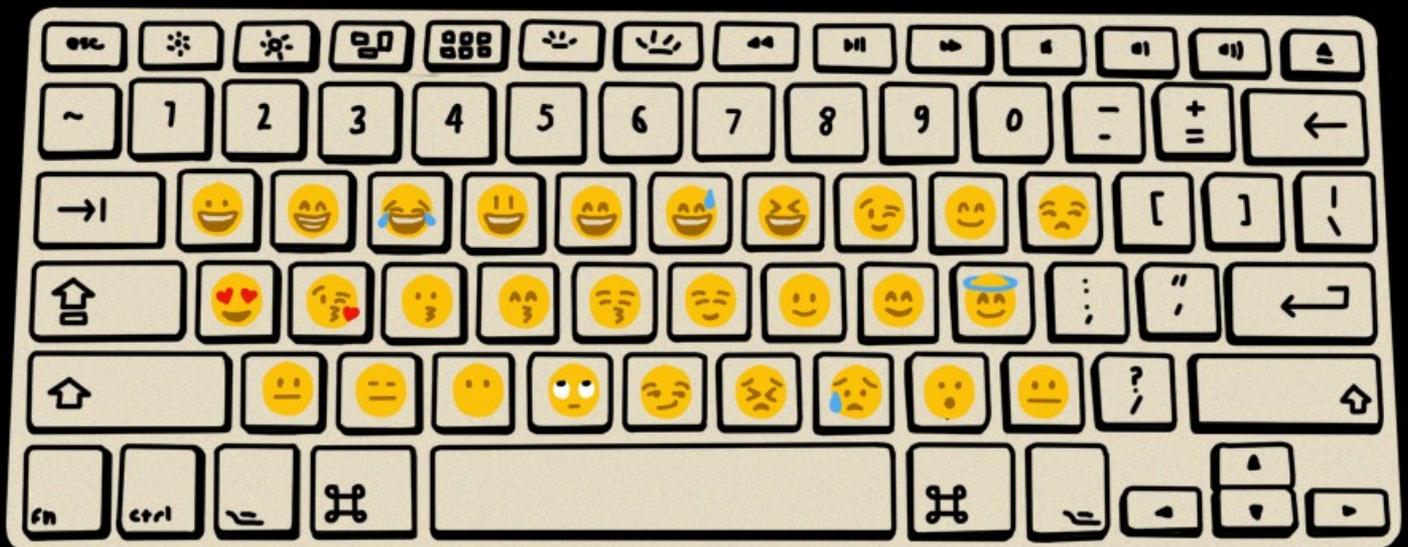


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/ No, emojis aren't making our generation stupid



No, emojis aren't making our generation stupid
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tears of joy face

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If you go on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram right now, you're almost guaranteed to see them. They have penetrated every corner of the Internet and show no signs of slowing down. Over 90% of global Internet users partake.

You might think this sounds pretty trivial or juvenile, yet with over two billion emojis being sent everyday, and even the *Oxford Dictionary* making the 'Face with Tears of Joy' emoji its *Word of the Year* back in 2015, the cultural significance of emojis can't be disputed. Perhaps you view emojis as the last nail in the coffin for language as a whole, and envision a future of illiterate adolescents standing over the corpse of the English language tweeting 'poo with a smile' faces. But do these claims that emojis mark the end times for language have any credence? Are they really destroying communication?

"The short answer is they're not", says Vyvyan Evans, Professor of Linguistics at Bangor University in Wales and author of *The Emoji Code*, set to be published later this year. Contrary to many of his peers, Vyvyan looks at emojis as a fascinating linguistic phenomena, and a clear demonstration of humanity's ingenuity when it comes to communication. A far cry from those who argue we're all
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What must be remembered when looking at emojis is that they aren't a language, but a facet of communication; they nuance language, rather than replace it. But Vyvyan believes that given the staggering increase in use of emojis over only a few short years, their evolution could see them become a language all of their own.

"It is possible for emojis to become a functioning language," he says. "You can look at *blissymbols* as an example of how language can be visually based; it's a symbol-based language that allows people with severe speech and motor difficulties to actively communicate with purely representational symbols, it's been particularly useful for many people with cerebral palsy."

However, before you go ahead and burn your dictionary, Vyvyan feels that in their current incarnation, emojis will not become a language.

"Emojis as we know them today have only been available since 2012, so this is still very recent," he explains. "Yet in such a short space of time emoji has become the worlds global form of communication. In Silicon Valley they're already experimenting with animated emojis, so without trying to predict the future, it seems we could be seeing the foundations of a new language."

Perhaps it's not yet time to construct our linguistic bomb shelters, and instead embrace the continuing evolution of human communication. But one burning question remains; as someone who has studied emojis in great depth, which emoji is Vyvyan's favourite?

"It would have to be the dancing lady in the red dress," he laughs. "I've been asked this question before and the response is always 'when would you even use it?' But I just think it's a great emoji! And it further demonstrates their versatility as a means of communication."

The Emoji Code: How Thumbs-ups, Smiley Faces and Hearts Shape Our Language will be published in May 2017. You can [preorder it](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Emoji-Code-Thumbs-ups-Smiley-Language/dp/1782437878/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1484304227&sr=8-1&keywords=the+emoji+code) (https://www.amazon.co.uk/Emoji-Code-Thumbs-ups-Smiley-Language/dp/1782437878/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1484304227&sr=8-1&keywords=the+emoji+code) now. (https://www.amazon.co.uk/Emoji-Code-Thumbs-ups-Smiley-Language/dp/1782437878/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1484304227&sr=8-1&keywords=the+emoji+code)

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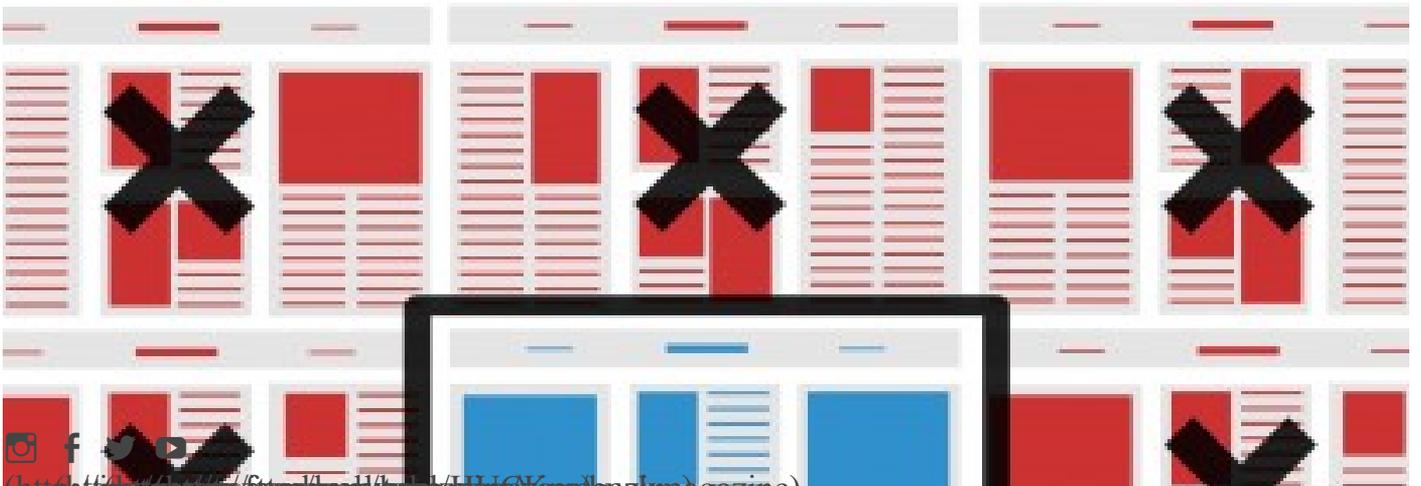


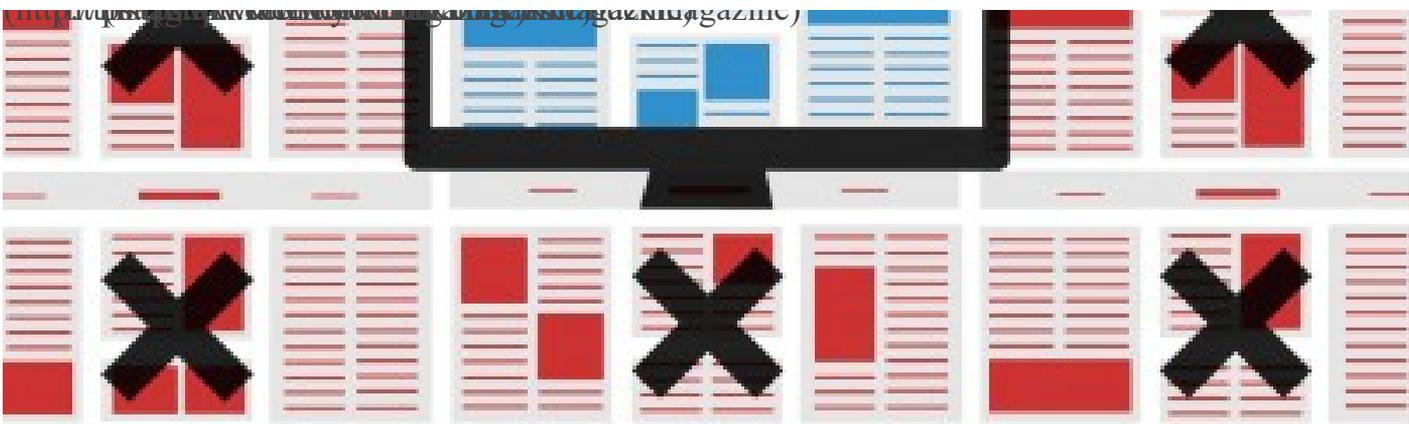
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