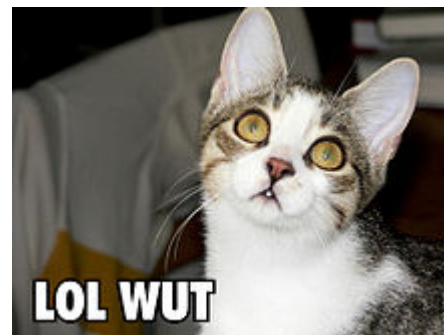


LOL

LOL, or **lol**, is an initialism for **laughing out loud**^{[1][2][3]} and a popular element of Internet slang. It was first used almost exclusively on Usenet, but has since become widespread in other forms of computer-mediated communication and even face-to-face communication. It is one of many initialisms for expressing bodily reactions, in particular laughter, as text, including initialisms for more emphatic expressions of laughter such as **LMAO**^[4] ("laughing my ass off") and **ROFL**^{[5][6][7]} or **ROTFL**^{[8][9]} ("rolling on the floor laughing"). Other unrelated expansions include the now mostly obsolete "lots of luck" or "lots of love" used in letter-writing.^[10]



A lolcat using "LOL"

The list of acronyms "grows by the month" (said Peter Hershock in 2003),^[6] and they are collected along with emoticons and smileys into folk dictionaries that are circulated informally amongst users of Usenet, IRC, and other forms of (textual) computer-mediated communication.^[11] These initialisms are controversial, and several authors^{[12][13][14][15]} recommend against their use, either in general or in specific contexts such as business communications.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* first listed LOL in March, 2011.^[16]

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Analysis

Silvio Laccetti (professor of humanities at Stevens Institute of Technology) and Scott Molski, in their essay entitled *The Lost Art of Writing*, are critical of the terms, predicting reduced chances of employment for students who use such slang, stating that, "Unfortunately for these students, their