

Title:
Emoticon

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Summary:
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Article Body:
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Emoticons gained popularity in the middle of the last century. During the mid-seventies, they were popular among users of the Plato system. By the end of that decade, these symbols started appearing on the Internet. Like their earlier usage, these symbols represented a specific meaning and were less graphical in nature.

Scott Fahlman is the inventor of the original ASCII smiley emoticons : -) and : - (

These symbols have to be viewed by tilting ones head ninety degrees to the left. The colon represents the eyes, the hyphen represents the nose and the braces represent the mouth. A huge number of variations have been developed to represent a myriad of emotions. For instance, ; -) denotes a wink, : - D represents a wide grin : - O shows a surprised face, and so on.

Since western text is read from left to right, all these emoticons are tilted to the left. Some users from Asia developed a series of emoticons that could be viewed straight. These used a pair of braces to outline the face, an underscore

for the mouth and a pair of asterisks for the eyes like this (*_*) Most of the emotions in this type of emoticons are expressed through the eyes, whereas the western emoticons use the mouth for the same purpose.

Since the advent of the graphical user interface like Windows, the emoticons have been replaced by cute pictures that depict the same emotion. Instant Messengers and forums automatically display these icons when they encounter a character string that depicts an emoticon.