

IMMATERIAL

LABOUR

UNION

FACEBOOK
REACTIONS

#6

Editors' Note

Lidia Pereira and Δεριζαματζορ Προμπλεμ ιναυστραλια

Welcome to the 6th issue of the Immaterial Labour Union zine! Our newest issue serves as a continuation of the previous one, 'narrowing' the theme of the Like Buttons down to its most recent iteration: the Facebook Reactions.

A small introduction of our current issue's content: Juliana Silva introduces us to the hypocrisy of hiding behind 6 templated feelings; Fauno calls on us, the workers of the web, to struggle for our self-organisation; Δεριζαματζορ Προμπλεμ ιναυστραλια remixes emojis and isotype units, Template bring us insights from their research about... template culture; Klara Vincent-Novotna designs a poetic declaration on the psychological effects of networked capitalism; Silvio Lorusso introduces us to the corporate instrumentalisation of our "mood-hacking". Erik H Zepka declares his quantified love for quantification and Jess MacCormack's reaction is to burst into flames.

Contributions by: Erik Zepka, Fauno, Jess MacCormack, Juliana Silva, Klara Vincent-Novotna, Lidia Pereira, Silvio Lorusso, Template, Δεριζαματζορ Προμπλεμ ιναυστραλια

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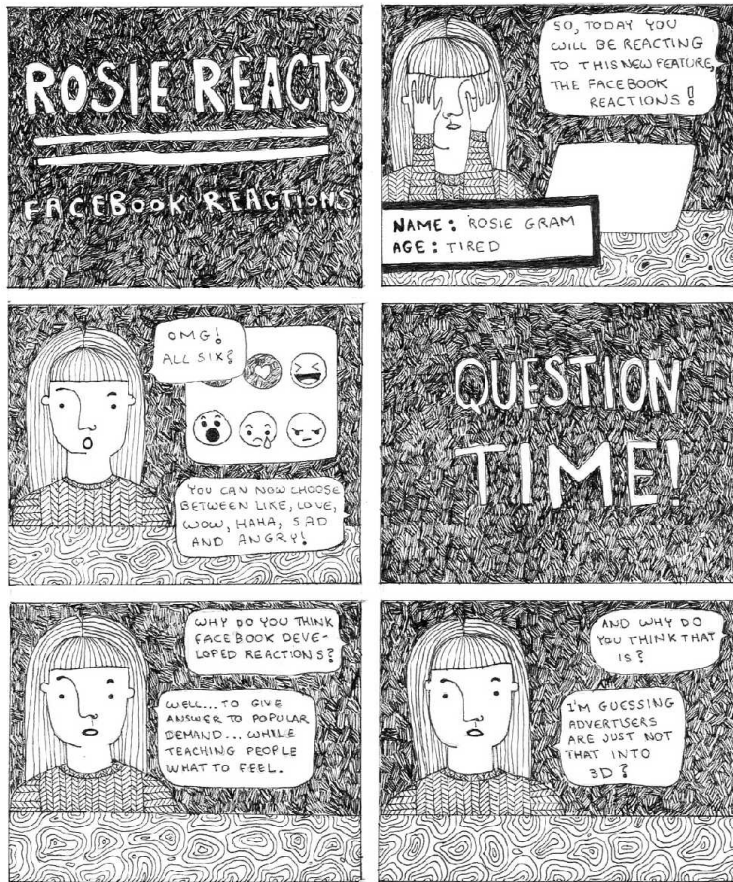
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Rosie Reacts

Lidia Pereira

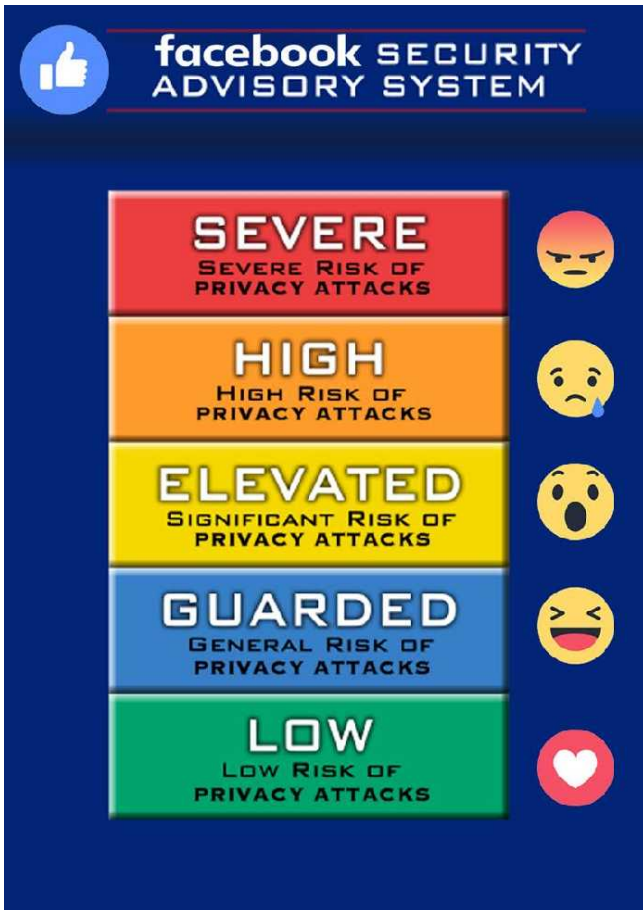


Algorithmic Feeling

Erik H. Zepka

The algorithmic feeling - how much i love you in the most numerical way possible - i forgot to tell you what i meant but fortunately i recorded it in the database so you can just replay that at any time and for all intents and purposes it's pretty much indistinguishable from me.

Think of all the emotions you have these days - loving, liking, expressing the desire to embody someone's physical appearance - think of all the ways in which desire is reducible to something tangible and calculable - how did people love when there were no game controllers? the past is one of those mysteries that would be impossible without the right algorithms (without the right ideas generated from the right virus programs) you know they like you when nothing on your feed is sacred - yeah so expression is truncated but think of reproducibility and speed and volume. never before has an entire hive of bees liked the pictures i take of myself. never before has being invisible been so social. find what you love and do everything mathematically possible to maintain the highest probability of remaining connected to it.

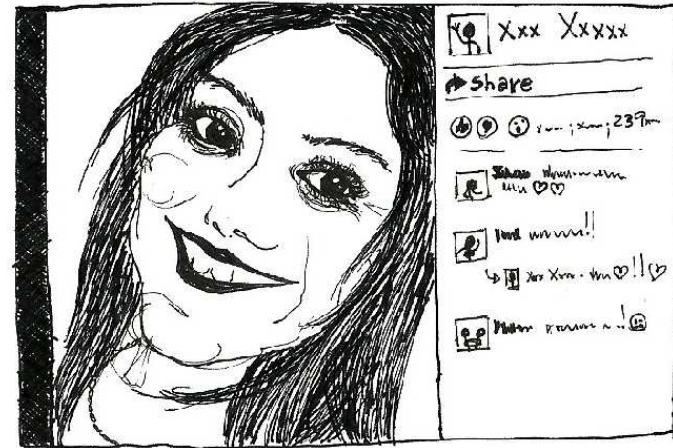


Limited Stock

Juliana Silva

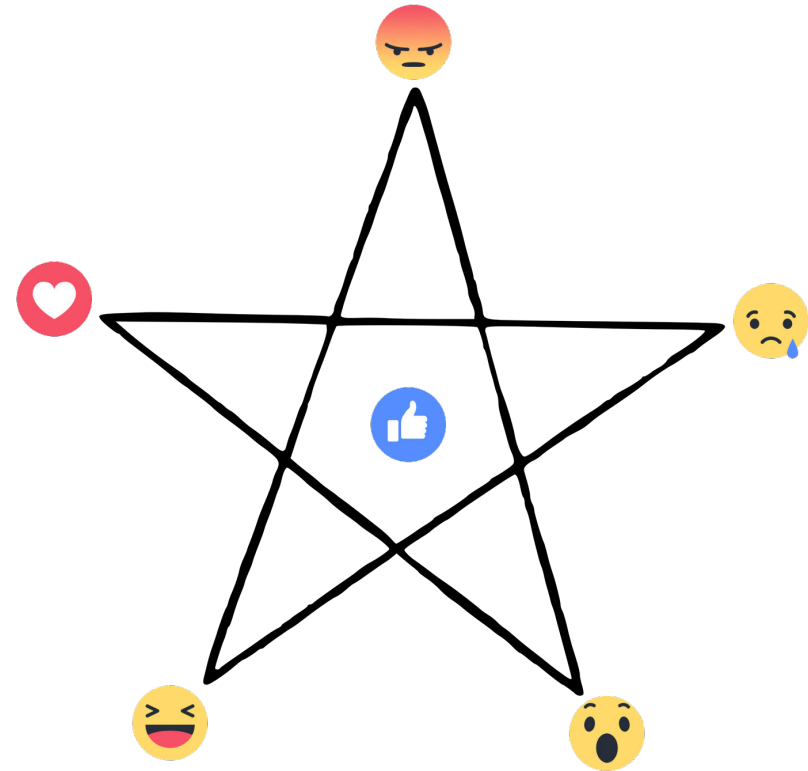
Last week I was coming home by train, after spending roughly a week vacationing with my boyfriend. I woke up at 7. I hadn't slept shit all night, because we both got ill and that means he kinda snored. In short, I felt like shit.

A girl comes in at the same station I did. She looked every bit as crappy as I did. Carrying a suitcase bigger than herself, clambering up to the seat right in front of me, trying her hardest to stay awake (pretty much like I was doing). Probably feeling even worse than I was. Then she pulls out her iPhone. Lo and behold, ladies and gentlemen, a transformation worthy of a Disney-fairy-godmother-moment takes place! She is revived! Smiles, poses, makes bunny ears with her fingers - the works.



And then, as fast as it had happened in the first place, puff. She is back to the tired young lady, with her phone back in her pocket, bobbing her head and drooling slightly in her half-asleep state. Girl, I understand. Instant gratification via "likes" was already tempting, now these "reaction" thingies are even harder to resist. It's that, now, people can "love" you. And we are one

love-needing generation. Or at least, we just admit to that fact more easily than our ancestors.

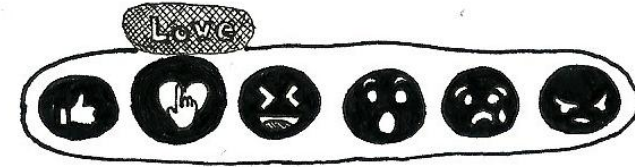


(And no, I'm not about to wax poetic on the problems and flaws of this generation - I'd rather be part of an emotionally needy generation than of a generation who believed in the positive effects of bullying in schools, that women should be groped and not heard, and that lgbtq's and everyone not white was basically sub-human. Also, that capitalism was a valid and sustainable economic growth model.)

Oooh, but it's addictive, isn't it? We feel validated, our opinions are no longer the solitary voices in our head. We made someone identify with us, understand us, share our point of view. Someone loves that pic, someone thinks our joke is funny at the point of laughing out loud, someone gets genuinely angry at some unfairness in the world.

No Title

Jess MacCormack



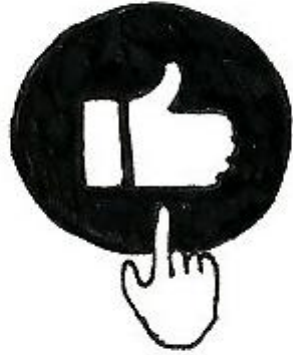
"FEEL THE LOVE"

Except that no, not really. We give these likes as a mere acknowledgement, we love pictures that we just think have the potential to be cute, we get angry at things that don't actually relate to us, and that we have very little ability to feel about, despite our best efforts.

I once saw an interview to Amanda Palmer on Youtube, and there was this excerpt, about village people - how we, as human beings, are only mentally equipped to deal and empathize with the pain and suffering of a small group of people. Like our own little village. I think that might be just it - we are not equipped to deal with all the feelings in the world, at all times. It's good to be informed and to empathize with the suffering of the people who go through war and need our help - and it's good and necessary to rationalize that empathy into action, it's good to feel happy about a friend's promotion, or at least feel a smile at the birth of a niece of a former school colleague - but please, don't expect me to be plugged into it all the time, to feel everything with the intensity the reaction buttons suggest. I can't feel for all of you, all the time. And to say otherwise would just be a lie. I've done the "react to everything" routine, while it was still new, and the emoticons seemed all shiny and interesting, a whole new array of human emotions available for use.

Turns out they're just limiting. If I don't have the balls to simply state my opinion on something over a simple comment, then there is no point in just pretending that the wide range of human emotions can be summed down to 6 little buttons, just so that I can feel better about myself for having communicated today.

Like



"click"

both cases, the person is asked to internalize the rigorous management of emotions. Filtering out social dynamics, both methodologies are conceived for the individual and can be packaged as self-help remedies, leading to an abundance of online services and apps offering exercises and tutorials, but also mood monitoring and anxiety tests. In several cases, these tools are promoted as solutions to the stress caused by multi-tasking and the fatigues of digital interactions, that is, the very symptoms that characterize the daily routine of the entrepreneurial self.



Time cover, February 3, 2014

Every day a push notification appears on my iPhone. It's the app Pacifica asking me: how are you feeling?

innate or acquired ability – both physical and intellectual – is converted into human capital. In turn, ‘negativity’ – be that sarcasm or critique – is considered unacceptable. In a society where relationships are often the very product of work, naysayers are seen as a threat, even when they’re right. The [definition of “naysayer”](#) confirms this common sentiment.

Despite a general feeling that things were going well, a few naysayers tried to cast gloom.



AccelerateMe.net header

While negativity is stigmatized, depression and anxiety disorder are growing worldwide. Instead of trying to change the external conditions that cause distress, people are increasingly required to modify the operation of their minds, to ‘mood-hack’ in order to change their own interpretation of events and personal contingencies. In order to accomplish this, many research efforts are currently put in the fields of positive psychology and motivational literature, which often mix cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and mindfulness techniques.



Scheme of MoodGym app's WUTIWUF (What You Think is What You Feel) strategy

The fundamental logic of cognitive-behavioral therapy is that one should influence the interpretation of thoughts rather than the reasons why these thoughts emerged. Similarly, mindfulness techniques allows practitioners to detach from their own selves in order to ‘visualize’ thoughts and feelings without judgment. In

Isotype, Emoji, Reaction

Lidia Pereira and Nikos Voyiatzis

Facebook’s new feature, Reactions, is now available for consumption by the platform’s subscribers. Marketed as an attempt to answer popular demands for a dislike button, the new feature promises a more expanded spectrum of human emotion with which the users can, supposedly, better express themselves. None of the Reactions is a new character, although they are a new technical integration to Facebook’s platform. Therefore, they embed the already standardised classifying principles of Emoji. The latter has, in turn, been called the ‘new international language’¹, or even a super language², “(...) one that helps people connect across barriers and cultural divides”). This aspiration to internationalisation via pictorial aid is, however, not something exclusive to Emoji. In 1920’s Vienna, philosopher, sociologist and political economist Otto Neurath, in collaboration with Marie Neurath and Gerd Arntz, had begun to develop what would later be known as the Isotype (International System of Typographic Picture Education).

Isotype

The Vienna Method of Pictorial Statistics - Isotype since 1936 - was developed within the context of Red Vienna, at the time where the Austrian capital was a separate socialist state. A project of the Museum of Society and Economy, directed by Neurath himself, the Isotype³ aimed at being an auxiliary pictorial language designed to communicate social facts clearly to a broader audience. Its potential for opening up the access of crucial information to less-educated adults and school children was a reflection of a municipal politics oriented towards education and culture. Otto Neurath firmly believed in statistics as a tool for empowerment. When asked to join the project, graphic designer and activist Gerd Arntz⁴ saw in it an opportunity to “expand the reach of his political beliefs into the realm of actively informing the proletariat, albeit as a graphic designer”.

Emoji

The Emoji (‘picture’ + ‘letter’) was developed in 1999 in Japan as a solution to deal with heavy MMS traffic, which put too much

strain on mobile operators. Developed by scientists, the Emoji corresponded to a single character, thus offering the perfect solution to an overloaded network infrastructure. So how did the Emoji travel to the West? During a promotional visit to Japan, Steve Jobs⁵, who wanted to expand the iPhone market to Japan, managed to strike a deal with mobile operator SoftBank: In return of a piece of the Japanese market, the following iPhone model should include Emoji.

Reactions

In February 2016, the Reactions were added to Facebook as an extension of the Like button. Now users would also be able to react with "love", "wow", "haha", "sad" and "angry" to their friends' posts. With guiding principles in mind to ensure the wide usage and universality of the Reactions, a group of Facebook scientists and designers⁶ rummaged through anonymized datasets of users' exchanges in order to determine the most commonly expressed emotions. Besides, the research group conducted international surveys and even worked with Facebook's internationalisation team! According to Geoff Teehan, a member of the Reactions' development team, narrowing down the possibilities was imperative, for "the more reactions we offered, the less likely they would all be universally understood".

Universal?

Isotype, Emoji and Facebook Reactions have all made the same claim of universality. With Isotype, the focus was placed on opening up the possibilities for accessing information vital to full democratic participation; it was therefore a project concerned with emancipatory education. With both Emoji and Facebook Reactions, however, the emphasis is placed on better systems to communicate and connect on a global scale.

Neurath's project aimed at making information effective, understandable and easy to navigate. Despite its laudable aims, the Isotype as a project is still very much inscribed within a separation between archivist/curator/designer and the overall population it seeks to liberate. Whilst one might argue that instituting the role of the "transformer" (according to Marie Neurath⁷, "the transformer has the responsibility to understand the data, to get all the necessary information from the expert and to decide what is worth transmitting to the public. (..) In this sense the transformer is the trustee of the public.") was aimed at bridging that gap, the tools for emancipation were still being

(-: Mood-Hacking :-)

Silvio Lorusso

"The flip side of positivity is thus a harsh insistence on personal responsibility: if your business fails or your job is eliminated, it must be because you didn't try hard enough, didn't believe firmly enough in the inevitability of your success."
(Barbara Ehrenreich, 2009)

What's the recipe of success? According to the dominant, yet invisible ideology (did anyone say "neoliberalism"?), all the necessary ingredients can be found and cultivated inside of the individual. The most important one of which is, to a great extent, attitude: if you really want it, you can and must have it. If the individual is all that matters, what's the role of the outside world? The world is no less than your oyster, of course.



We are the 99%

When success is the direct result of attitude, positive thinking becomes instrumental to it: you can't get it if you aren't optimistic about getting it. A positive attitude is therefore one of the main assets of the entrepreneurial self, for whom any

Likes

Klara Vincent-Novotna

⊗ The interface is like the cell membrane, a transductive apparatus. The cell and its exterior can know each other only via the membrane, through the grammar of the signals propagated by it.

⊗ The primary mode of the interface is ocular. Physis (matter, nature) developed biological interfaces, a multiplicity of bodily modes. Socialization has been a process of polymodal interaction: the differentiation of the developing organism into ways of knowing, doing, and feeling. We are performing an irreversible change in the cultural technics of socialization.

⊗ There is a physiological basis of affectivity which becomes entrained by networked visual culture; over time, this ocular dominance patterns our affective-expressive grammars, the way we channel and contextualize information in a terrain of data.

⊗ Emotions are embodied processes which are distributed throughout various organ systems. The roles of the autonomic nervous system, musculature and respiration (etc.) are constitutive of affect. Emotions reach their destiny through embodied action; if we are cyborgs, we are incredibly sedentary ones.

⊗ Intimacy is a distance projected onto visible operations of the interface. Sequestered by the network and transduced by the interface in specific visual-behavioural motifs (smash that like button), we are misrecognizing a system of codified signs for the inaccessible substance of the subject. The feedback mechanism of affirmation informs not only our projected identities, but the evaluative rubrics through which we appraise them.

⊗ My spectral double is co-terminous with my consumer identity. My public rituals of consumption are also modes of production: of likes, of reaction glyphs, of annotated reblogs, all destined to be expressed in particular actions on the interface.

⊗ I see an advertisement for creatine powder and wonder if I still have a body. Emotions have become dis-embodied – filtered back into the visual ecology of the network, arrayed in its signs. I am furious but remain motionless. My emotion finds no purchase as the economy of physiologic forces that would propel me to embodied action is cuckolded.

⊗ We are all cucks.



developed and controlled by a select few. Although Neurath departed from a vision of democracy, world peace and equal access to information despite literacy levels, socio-economic background etc, his vision took place within controlled information flows and standardised classifications.

Scientists and designers working for ICT giants developed and designed what is supposed to be the new international language. With its ability to connect and communicate globally, the emoji has already been used on countless marketing campaigns. It is not like language itself is a neutral artefact, detached from the socio-political structures which inform it and through which those structures are mirrored and perpetuated. But it is also not like the Emoji is the language of the masses which has been shamelessly appropriated by capital. The Emoji has been designed within that context, and as a global language it is not convincing that it should have been developed by cybernetic capital. International, in this case, means western by default, as with many other “international” languages (english, esperanto, etc). Shouldn’t we be more wary of profit seeking monopolies controlling - even more, that is - the way we communicate, designing our language and setting up a template for human interaction? Christian Fuchs maintains that Facebook, Google, et al are not “communications corporations”, but the “world’s largest advertising companies”⁸; it sure helps to be able to control how targets express themselves.

1: <http://magnacomww.com/?reqp=1&reqr=qaybYzM1MjybMv5hMj==>

2: <https://www.wired.com/2015/07/sign-language-emoji/>

3: <http://isotyperevisited.org/>

[Isotype representing social facts pictorially.pdf](#)

4: <http://www.gerdarntz.org/content/gerd-arntz#political>

5: <https://www.iemoji.com/articles/where-did-emoji-come-from?page=2#emoji-blessed>

6: <https://medium.com/facebook-design/reactions-not-everything-in-life-is-likable-5c403de72a3f#.r109r82yp>

7: <http://isotyperevisited.org/The%20transformer%20revisited.pdf>

8: <https://www.triple-c.at/index.php/tripleC/article/view/757>

We are the workers of the Web

Fauno

We have to stop thinking that the issue with Internet is about individual privacy, that it's just a matter of consciousness, of changing practices, and knowing the dangers.

The only role left for us if we continue discussing in these terms is to become digital conscientious objectors, looking in horror how everything goes to shit, gathering anecdotes to convince the apathetic multitude.

We are the workers of the Web.

We have to assume that by using Facebook, Google, Twitter, and any other platform, we're not getting anything gratis, but we aren't giving ourselves in kind either. What we are doing is working. These platforms are the cognitive factory, the walls are their production line, usability is Taylorism. The work force is our idling time.

And now is where privacy enters, as commodity, not as a exchange currency for the service. Facebook can't pay us wages in privacy units.

If we're going to demand something, our demand will be to be paid for everything we share and every search we make. If we're going to struggle, it will be for the self-organization of networks, for our free time!

"Facebook should pay all of us"¹ concludes similarly but the premises are differ totally.

If I recall correctly, Christian Fuchs in Immaterial Labour Union² proposes that these corporations finance universal basic income.

Author's contact details: fauno@endensadelsl.org

1: <http://www.newyorker.com/business/currency/facebook-should-pay-all-of-us>

2: <http://ilu.servus.at>

E-mail interview to Template

Template

Q: You have done an extensive research on template culture. Would you care to explain our readers, in a few words, what was your process and the main conclusions you derived?

A: It started with an observation while browsing the web: everything looks the same! Bootstrap, Tumblr themes, Wordpress templates, 'insert your content here'. When did web design (slash life) turn into such a 'fill in the blanks' experience? Our conclusion is ambiguous: templates make creating quick and easy. But to express individuality users should consider digging deeper than simply customizing what is already there.

Q: Having that research in mind, how would you reflect on the new Facebook Reactions?

A: Facebook is a great example of online template culture. The platform tells you where to place what kind of information ("What's on your mind?" or "Add a high school"), it requires very little effort to share, link or publish content and it offers great opportunity to compare yourself to other users. Facebook is well known for its like button: "Marlon Harder and 24 others like this post". Its users found it limiting: why not also have a dislike button? Ignoring this small request, Facebook gave them love, haha, wow, sad, yay and angry instead. We think these new Reactions, and how they came about, turn people in even more tag-wordy, robotic versions of themselves. It might feel like they have more to say, but the only ones profiting from this are Facebook and their advertisers.

Template's website: <https://template-studio.nl/>

Emojitype Isoticon

Δεριζαματζορ Προμπλεμ ιναυστραλια

Remixing facebook reactions list with emojis and isotype units leads to the emojitype isoticons reactions.



Like



Love



Haha



Wow



Sad



Angry



Like



Love



Haha



Wow



Sad



Angry



Like



Love



Haha



Wow



Sad



Angry



Like



Love



Haha



Wow



Sad



Angry



Like



Love



Haha



Wow



Sad



Angry



Like



Love



Haha



Wow



Sad



Angry



Like



Love



Haha



Wow



Sad



Angry