

What's your favorite emoji?

NARRATION: This is Justin Bai. Several months ago, I produced a story about one of my obsessions: the card index emoji. That obsession eventually took me to the first-ever Emojicon, an emoji conference held in San Francisco. Throughout the day, there were talks ranging from emoji linguistics to emoji intellectual property law. While the card index emoji has remained my favorite, I decided to ask the other conference attendees what their favorite emojis were.

I like the pink poodle. I just use it to express joy.

I like the cat emoji 'cause they're very strange. No one really knows how to interpret them.

Most frequently used emoji for me is definitely a cat, or anything with cats, like laughing cats, crying cats, all those because I'm such a cat lady.

The whale emoji. I like whales.

The octopus emoji, perhaps, because it's so bizarre. You can send it in any context and any conversation, and then nobody ever knows what you actually meant ever because it's so rare, and so like—it seems to have some significance, like seems to have some symbolic significance that could be interpreted in some way but you never know exactly what the other person was trying to say, so like, I feel like that really well kind of reflects my personality, yes.

Yeah, the sunglasses one—that's cool. And the smiley one—always, you know, smiley.

I'm partial now to—I've sent a lot of the men with bunny ears. That's quickly risen up in my emoji usage. That would be a favorite for sure.

My favorite emoji is the heart eyes emoji because I also like using it as a word. You can say like, "Heart-eyes at that." And it's one of the first emoji I started using that doesn't have a good emoticon representation because it's really hard to draw with punctuation symbols. So it has a very clear meaning, it displays well on the different devices across different

platforms, and so it has ties back to, like, the original face-based emoticons, but is the type of thing you could never display with just punctuation marks.

Probably the upside-down smiley face 'cause it conveys a sense of existential despair that permeates all of Millennial existence.

I like the ghost, but when its tongue is sticking out on Apple. I don't really like the other versions where it's more spectral.

Blue square. 'Cause it's a blue square—you can't go wrong with that. It's simple, it's understated, and not a lot of people use it.

I mean, probably the pride flag, for what it represents.

My favorite emoji is information desk girl. Not the new one—the new one, I think, is messed up, but the original one with the pink dress and the hand up in the air—it's just like I never knew what it meant, and why is she called information desk girl? I read a lot of Haruki Murakami and it sounds like a character in one of his books 'cause a lot of his books deal with, like, receptionists or just people who're just doing their job, and they have a lot of information and people are just, like, asking a lot for them. And, like, why does she have all the information and why is her hand up in the air? I love that.

NARRATION: And as I put my hand up in the air, that's all the information I have about people's favorite emojis.