



# leadership trends: emoji usage at work

**A special analysis of how leaders  
use emojis with teams in Slack.**

**DATA REPORT | JUNE 2020**

## INTRODUCTION

### A look at emoji usage in business

The emoji universe continues to expand. In fact, in 2020 the Unicode Consortium officially added 117 new emojis bringing the total number of approved emojis to 3,304. Yes, emojis have come a long way since their introduction in 1998, and it's not surprising since recent research shows that 81% feel that emoji users seem friendlier and more approachable. But most of today's emoji analysis is based on public social media content or surveys. At Cultivate we thought it would be interesting (and fun) to use our AI/ML technology to anonymously analyze how leaders use emojis while communicating with their teams at work. This report looks at a variety of emoji trends including top emojis used by leaders (both positive and negative), what emojis managers use versus their team members, how emoji usage differs by company, sentiment usage with emojis, and more.



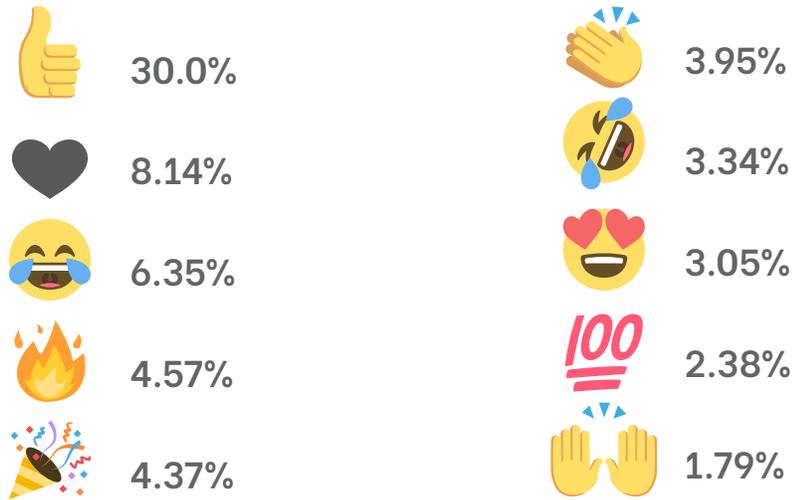
## DATA ANALYSIS

### The who, what and when of the data

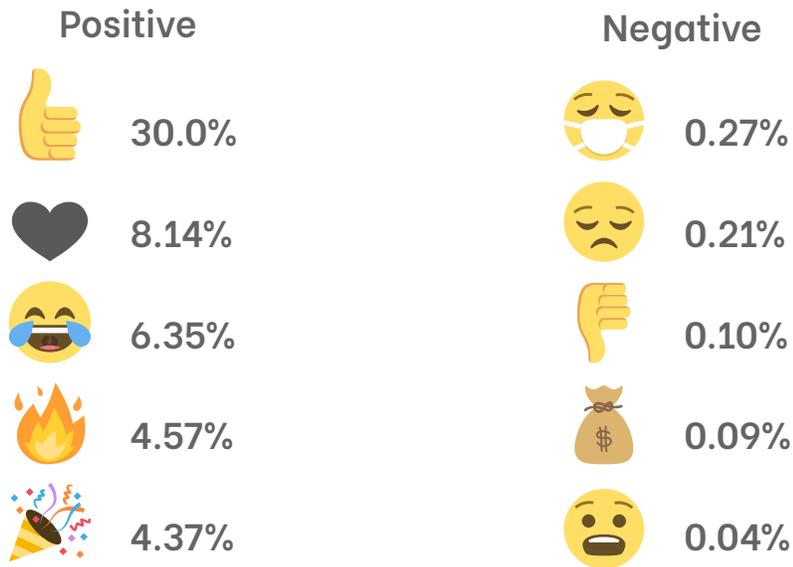
This analysis pulled anonymized “emoji reaction” data for the last 180 days (ending 6/10/20) from four enterprises using Slack in the workplace. In addition to the types of emojis used, the team also extracted metadata on the messages to which the emojis were a response, and the sentiment of the emojis. The total enterprise data set included 83,055 messages, 101,134 emojis used, and 466 different types of emojis (custom Slack emojis were excluded). In order to establish emoji sentiment, the team utilized a separate large public dataset from Twitter and Reddit to calculate a baseline for how positive or negative each emojis is. It is also interesting to note that the increase in remote work did not appear to have a significant impact on emoji usage – there was very little change in the data from Q1 2020 to Q2 2020.

# What are the most commonly used emojis?

## TOP 10 MOST COMMONLY USED EMOJIS



## TOP 5 MOST COMMONLY USED POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EMOJIS



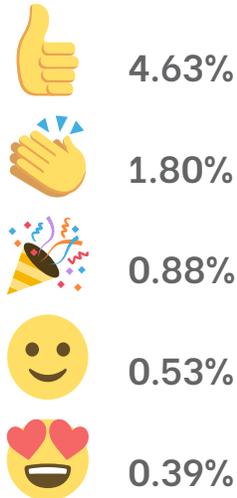
# Do people tend to stick to the same set of emojis?

**71.2%** of users  
used fewer than 10 emoji  
in the last 180 days.

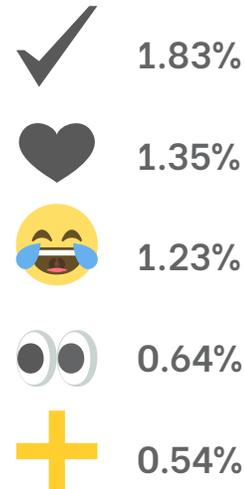
**50.7%** of users  
used fewer than 5 emoji  
in the last 180 days.

## Does manager versus team member emoji usage differ?

### TOP USED MANAGER EMOJIS

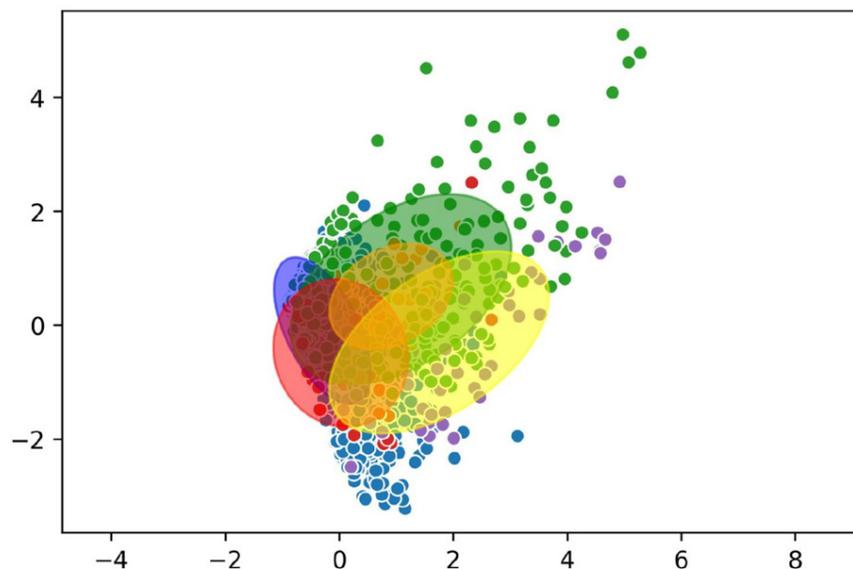


### TOP USED TEAM MEMBER EMOJIS



## Does emoji usage differ by company?

It appears that it does. We limited the analysis to a common set of emojis offered by Slack, reduced it to two dimensions with PCA, then fit a Gaussian distribution to the emoji usage of each company's users to visualize differences in usage across companies.

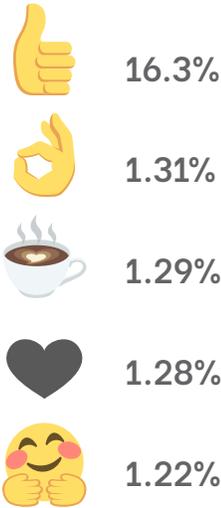


As you can see there are distinct differences and overlapping, which could be caused by a variety of elements including company culture, differences in emoji vernaculars, team structures, etc.

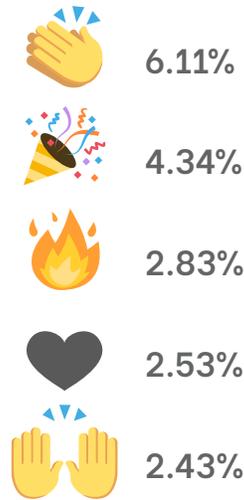
# Certain types of emojis are more likely to be used in response to particular types of messages.

We calculated the global usage rate for each emoji, and also the usage rates of each emoji in response to messages of a specific intent. The differences tell us if people are more likely to use certain emojis in some conversational situations, and if so, which ones. The values below are the differences between situational usage rates and global usage rates.

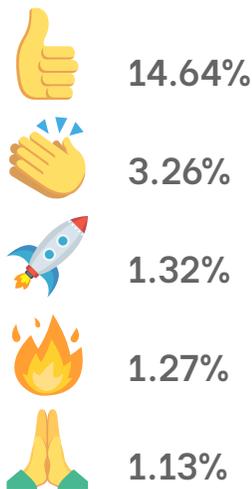
## Ad-Hoc Scheduling Request



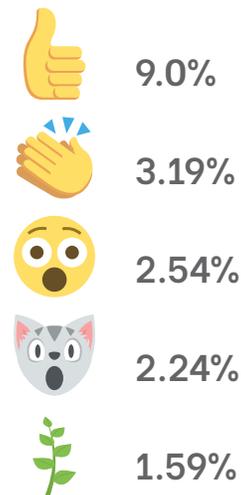
## Giving Recognition



## Informing Work Done



## Expressing Doubt



Scheduling requests and making commitments elicits the highest sentiment emoji responses (average sentiment of emoji responses, per message instance). While expressing disagreement elicits the lowest sentiment responses.

## About Cultivate

Cultivate is a digital leadership platform that leverages artificial intelligence (AI) to provide in-the-moment feedback and tools to enterprise leaders. Beyond helping managers become more self-aware, the platform enables employees to be more effective, engaged, and balanced.

We go above and beyond to ensure that user data is safe, secure, and private – always. We pair emerging technologies with academic research to create a cutting-edge, human-centric experience. We strive to build products and features that empower individuals to develop into effective people leaders. We test, validate, and iterate on Cultivate to build behavior-changing products our users love.

The Cultivate Platform is the first enterprise coaching solution based on observed digital behavior. By using AI/ML technologies, it helps companies leverage digital behavior to extract important organizational learning and unleash leadership potential.

Learn more today by visiting [www.cultivate.com](http://www.cultivate.com)

