

## 2.5 Design exercise: detect and iconize emotions

### Objective

The aim of the exercise is to develop the ability to recognize and express emotions through emoticons, i.e. the little icons we use in digital messaging to express feelings or just to compress a text. Interestingly, emoticons combine verbal and visual communication in a same graphic object.

### Background

Human beings are particularly good at recognizing facial expressions. This acute sensitivity is the result of evolution: it allows us to make surprisingly accurate guesses about the mental state and intentions of other people.

As you can see from the example below (Fig. 2.5a), a few elements are enough to understand the emotions of the person in front of us: in this case only the expressions of the mouth.

Icon											Emoji	Meaning
:~)	:~:]	:~>	8~)	:~)	:o)	:o)	:^)	=]	=)		😊😊😊😊😊😊😊😊	Smiley or happy face. <sup>[4][5][6][7]</sup>
:~D	8~D	=D	=3	B^D	c:	C:					😂😂😂😂	Laughing, <sup>[4]</sup> big grin, <sup>[5][6]</sup> grinning with glasses <sup>[8]</sup>
x~D	X~D										😂😂	Laughing <sup>[9][10][11]</sup>

Fig. 2.5a – Examples of emoticons and their meaning

### Instructions

1. Select three emoticons on a chat tool on your phone or computer.
2. Describe the emotion you recognize in a few words.
3. Modify one of the icons, for instance add eyebrows to further emphasize the expression.
4. Create new emoticons to express:
  - Anger
  - Concentration
  - Perplexity
  - Happiness

As a source of inspiration and to test your ability to read emotion consider taking the read the eye test at this link <http://socialintelligence.labinthewild.org/mite/>