

The Icons of Modern Folklore

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Icons are images or representations, symbols linked to commands or signs that stand for its object by virtue of a resemblance to it. Classic icons in folklore are for example the tulips that form always an instant link in our minds to the Netherlands. A similar icon is the cross for Christianity or the peace-symbol for the hippies. What are the main icons of today's folklore? Which symbols will in decades to come remind us of this time? In our day and age the borders between countries are becoming less eminent with globalization and through the Internet communication is becoming ever faster. To deal with this intercultural computer-based community we are all becoming a part of, icons are vital in order to simplify for us these machines and also to express emotion in a typed conversation. Computer icons and emoticons are designed icons with a history, they are very important to our time and they will continue to be the true icons of modern folklore.

To convey a purpose of a function for a file, folder or application, computer icons, a small pictogram, are used instead of the normal alphanumeric on computers. They were first developed to make the interfaces of the computer easier for novices to grasp. Interfaces with icons were later popularized by the Apple Mac and Microsoft Windows and standardized to those we know so well now. The systems always use the same icons so people will recognize them immediately.

I think it is interesting to see how simple but amazing many of the designs are. I noticed that for Macs the most common colours of the icons are either light blue or orange. These designs have many become classic and very important to us.



Furthermore, in the communication part cyberspace to



of express

emotions and convey facial expressions, emoticons are widely used in the most popular communication form of the 21st Century, e-mails and instant messaging. They help alert the responder to the temper of a statement and improve the interpretation of plain text to make it more like a voice-conversation. Both typographical, :D, and also their graphical replacement



. The most widely known emoticons are the "smileys". The first person known to have used the :-) and :- (to suggest emotions is Scott Fahlman in 1982 and within months it spread to the Arpanet, the early Internet. Now there exist countless emoticons to convey almost every feeling a human being is capable of! These icons represent how speedy communication has to be nowadays. Human contact is gradually being decreased and to convey our emotions caricatured faces replace us! They are icons of us, monuments of facial expressions in case we ever forget.

In conclusion of this research into icons of the cyber-world I have found that they are definitive as icons of our time. Computer icons and emoticons are just fragments in the vast ocean of icons but they play a vital role in modern folklore.



Image sources – in the order they appear

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