

# Would you 'like' a chance to 'sympathize' on Facebook?

December 23 2013, by Katie Humphrey

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There are some things on Facebook you just don't want to "like."

A bad day at work. Sick kids. The dog died. Where's the "dislike" button when you need it?

Nowhere to be found.

But Facebook recently revealed that its engineers have been toying with the idea of a "sympathize" button.

Is that something to "like"? Maybe.

According to Facebook engineer Dan Muriello, the "sympathize" button would only be an option if a Facebook user picked a sad, frustrated or otherwise negative emoticon while writing a status update. The "like" would then become the "sympathize" button and users could watch the condolences roll in.

It makes sense to University of Minnesota student Marcheta Fornoff, 21, who recalled some awkwardness when friends "liked" a Facebook post reflecting on the death of another friend. But she's not sure a "sympathize" button is necessary.

"I knew they weren't 'liking' that I had gone through this loss or that this person had passed away," she said. "It was understood that their 'likes' implied they had seen it and they felt sympathetic."

Still, the lack of more nuanced options than "like" has been an ongoing gripe among Facebook users.

A quick survey of Twitter yielded all kinds of suggestions, from "TMI" to "facepalm" and "agree" to "arrgh."

But it could be a slippery slope. "Dislike" or "sympathize" could open the door to "LOL" or "OMG" or who-knows-what.

Fornoff, among others, wonders whether that's a good idea.

"What is the threshold for when you're overwhelmed with different options?" she said.

We may never know. Even "sympathize" is a way off.

"We made a decision that it was not exactly the right time to launch that product - yet," Muriello said.

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Citation: Would you 'like' a chance to 'sympathize' on Facebook? (2013, December 23) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2013-12-chance-sympathize-facebook.html>

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