THE MIX
Essential support for under 25s

THE NEW BOARDS

We asked what you want.
Here's what you said…

INTRODUCTION

The boards are changing! If this is news to you (where have you been?) stop reading now and take a look at this thread. Already done? Great, carry on ;)

Why new boards?
The software we currently use (vBulletin) has served us really well over the last 18 years. But it's been struggling a little bit for the last few. You may have noticed that some things don't really work that well, like having to refresh the page to see a post you've just made, or that the 'ignore' feature is broken. We know you've definitely noticed all the spam that gets through too!

We're hoping this will be a really nice way to celebrate the last 18 years as well as put us in a good position for the future.

There are also some cool developments we want to bring to the boards that we can't do with the current software. These will eventually include things like being able to use the same login for chat and the boards (one less password to remember!) and making sure that the connection between the boards and your computer is encrypted (to protect your privacy and keep your login data secure).

What is this report about?
The boards are your space and we feel you should have an important say over how you want it to work.

The new boards will look pretty similar to the current boards and will work more or less in the same way. So, you don't have to worry about getting your head around a completely different system. However, there may well be some new features and changes.

Throughout February this year (2018), we asked you to complete a 10 minute survey to see what you think of *4 potential new features* and *3 possible changes*. Based on your feedback, we promised to either build them into the new boards, or leave them out.

This report summarises the responses we got from both members and boards volunteers. In general, there was a very high level of agreement between the two groups, so we've decided to combine both sets but will mention any significant differences. It also describes how your responses will affect the decisions we make.

CONTENTS

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NEW FEATURES

Post Reactions 1/2

What is this?
This is the ability to add little reactions such as 'like' or an emoji to other people's posts (in the same way you can on Facebook, Instagram etc.)

Pros

We've all been in frustrating situations where our threads have had lots of views but no replies. This would provide an easier way for people to get involved and show they're listening, even if not sure how to reply. It can also be nice to get hugs etc. on your posts.

Cons

There's a chance these might reduce the number of proper replies posts get (it's easier to click 'like' than type a reply). We also don't want people to feel bad if they don't get many reactions to a post.
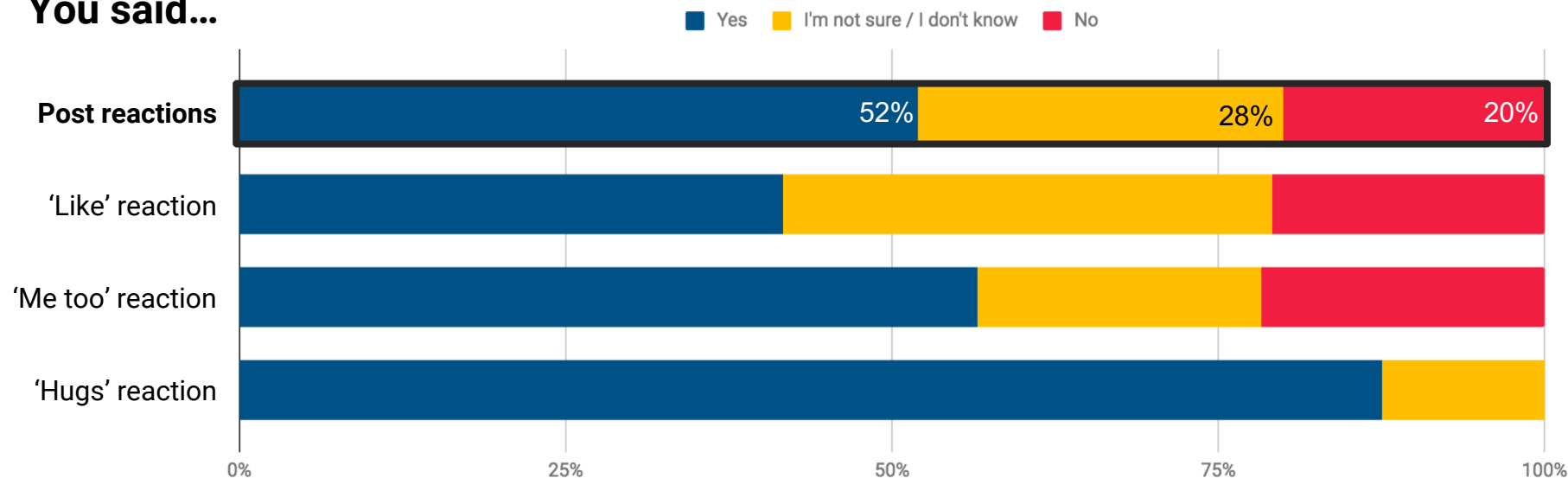
We asked…
1. These are some of the reactions we could add: like, me too, hugs. What do you think of them?
2. Would you like to see post reactions on the new boards?

Post Reactions 2/2

You said...

Yes | I'm not sure / I don't know | No

Post reactions: 52% | 28% | 20%

'Like' reaction

'Me too' reaction

'Hugs' reaction

0% — 25% — 50% — 75% — 100%

Next steps

It looks like we should be cautious with adding post reactions. While most of you like the idea, there's some disagreement over which reactions would work.

We could start by just adding a 'hugs' button and see how it goes.

Analysis

There were mixed feelings about post reactions. Just over half of you thought they could be good, but most of you weren't too keen on the idea of a 'like' button. Having a 'hugs' button was a very popular idea, with 88% of you saying you like to see that on the new boards.

In the comments, some of you said you were worried that reactions could cause people to feel upset or anxious if their post doesn't get many likes. But there was broad support for a hugs button, which commenters felt could be a nice way to show someone that you've read their thread and are listening.

Spam Zapping 1/2

What is this?
This is the ability for you folks to take down spam without having to wait for a mod. How does it work? Well, if 3 or more people report the same post as spam, that post would automatically be hidden and sent to the mods for review.

Pros

You'd be able to nuke spam yourselves, which would mean spam is nuked more quickly and you won't have to wait around for a mod to do it.

Cons

The mods might have to get strict and take this feature away if people start reporting each others' posts as spam.
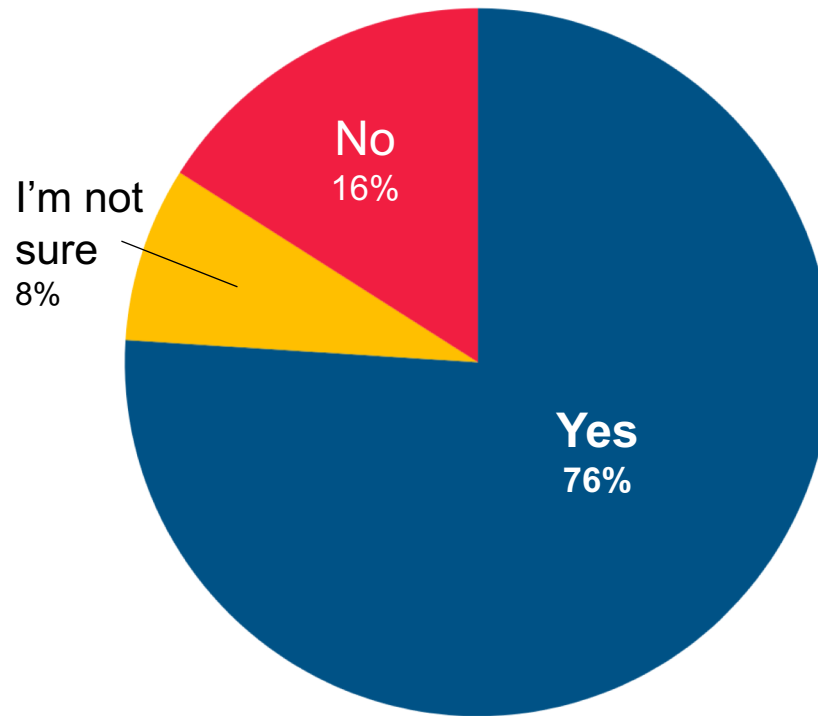
We asked...
1. Would you like to be able to take down spam on the new boards?

Spam Zapping 2/2

You said...

No
16%

I'm not
sure
8%

Yes
76%

Next steps

This seems like a big thumbs up, so we're pretty confident about adding this feature.

Given some of the comments, clear guidelines about what is spam and what's not might be helpful. We could also raise the number of reports needed to 4 or 5 (from 3) to prevent abuse.

Analysis

This is one of the most popular ideas in the survey. More than ¾ of you said you would like members to be able to take down spam together!

Most of the comments you made were very positive. But quite a few people felt that it's not always easy to work out what's spam and what's not, and were worried that any confusion might lead to legitimate posts being hidden.

Some of you were also worried that this system could be abused.

Peer Moderation 1/2

What is this?

This would allow you folks to hide posts that break the community guidelines without having to wait for a mod. If 3 or more people report the same post for breaking guidelines (e.g. if it contains graphic details or is part of an argument), that post would automatically be hidden and sent to the mods for review.

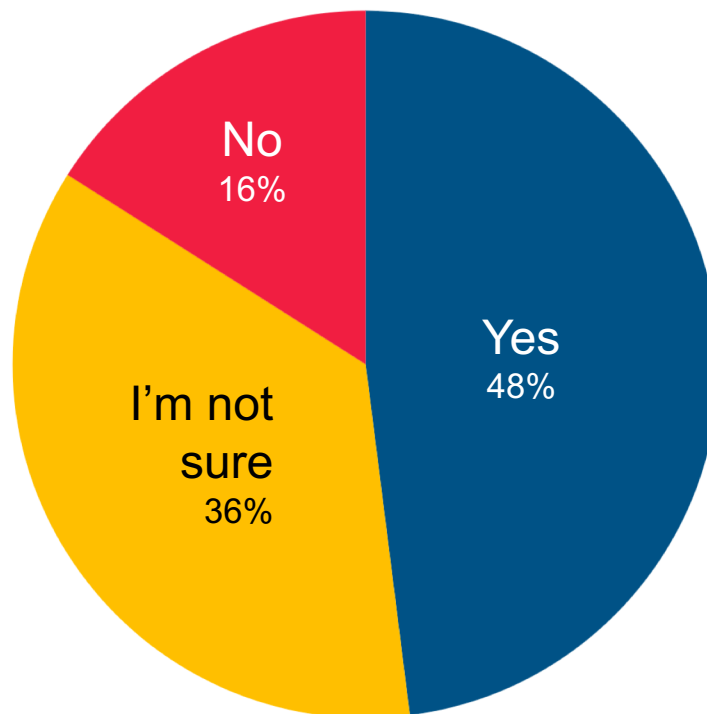| Pros	Cons
Problematic posts get hidden more quickly, which could make the boards safer. As members, you'd have more ownership over your space.	The mods might have to get strict and take this feature away if people start reporting each others' posts for the wrong reasons.

We asked…

1. Would you like to be able to moderate posts that break the guidelines on the new boards?

Peer Moderation 2/2

You said...

No
16%

I'm not
sure
36%

Yes
48%

Next steps

Given how split people seem to be, we need to think very carefully about this feature. It may be that it's not appropriate for the community at this stage.

The spam-zapping feature could be a chance to see how a similar system actually works in practice and whether we can consider this again in future.

Analysis

There were very mixed feelings about this feature. While just under half of you were in favour, more of you said you weren't sure about this than with any other feature.

There were some pretty strong opinions in comments too, with some really keen on this idea as a way to make the space safer (by hiding triggering posts) and others very worried that it could be used to bully others.

Badges 1/2

What is this?

These would be little rewards you get for getting more involved in the life of the community. For each achievement you earn, you'd get a little badge that would sit on your profile.

Pros

These could encourage more people to get more involved, and could add a sense of fun to the boards. It could also be an easy way for newbies to get a sense of who's who. Badges could also add a sense of progression and be a way to help you feel recognised for your contributions.

Cons

We wouldn't want things getting competitive, which is a risk with badges. For example, we wouldn't want people to feel bad for not having as many badges as someone else.
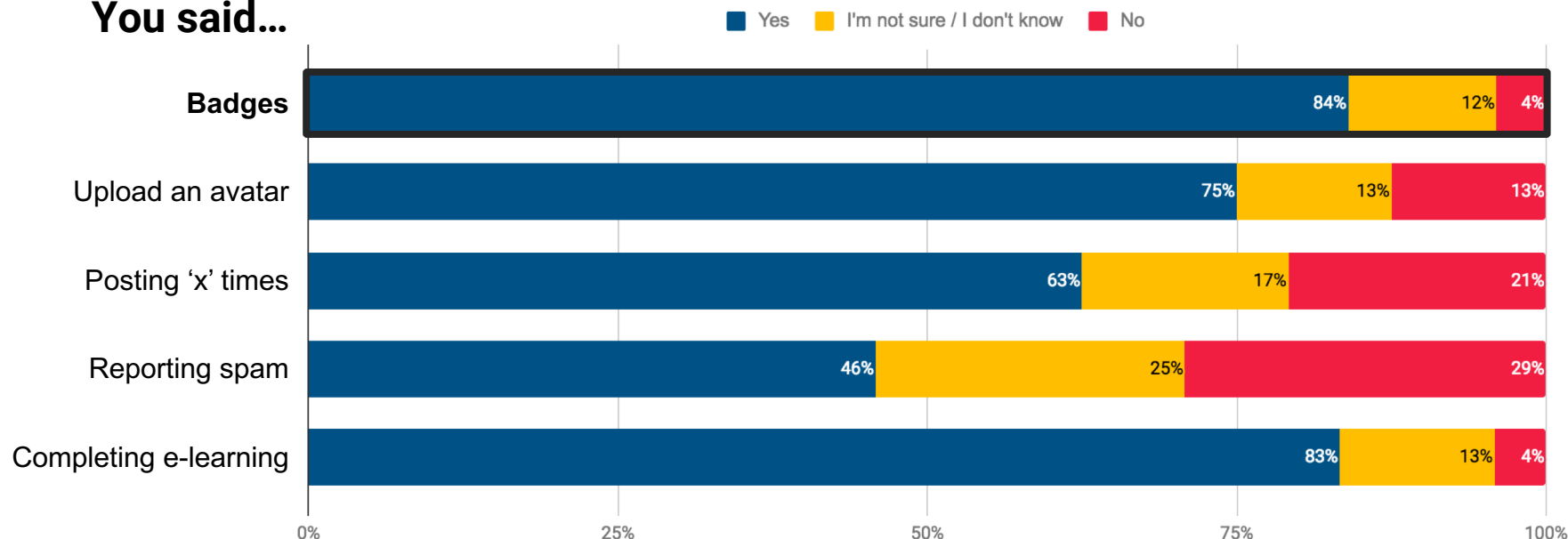
We asked…

1. These are some of the badges we could add: upload an avatar, posting 'x' times, reporting spam & completing e-learning. What do you think of them?

2. Would you like to be able to earn badges for getting involved on the new boards?

Badges 2/2

You said...

Legend: ■ Yes ■ I'm not sure / I don't know ■ No

Feature	Yes	Not sure	No
Badges	84%	12%	4%
Upload an avatar	75%	13%	13%
Posting 'x' times	63%	17%	21%
Reporting spam	46%	25%	29%
Completing e-learning	83%	13%	4%

X-axis: 0%, 25%, 50%, 75%, 100%

Next steps

There is plenty of enthusiasm for this idea, so it seems like something we should try.

We'll need to think about which badges we introduce and how they can reward quality of involvement and learning, not simply quantity.

Analysis

Badges were the most popular of all the potential new features we asked you about, with a whopping 84% of you saying it would be a good idea and only 4% disagreeing.

But there was more disagreement over the kinds of badge that would work. Badges for e-learning was the most popular suggestion (83% saying yes) and reporting spam the least popular (46% saying yes).

Lots of you left enthusiastic comments about this too. Most of you wanted badges to reflect the quality of posts made, not the quantity. Two interesting suggestions were a Post of the Month badge and badges for 'long service'.

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CHANGES

Emoji 1/2

The new software will definitely have different emoji to the ones we have now. This is because it's not possible to add custom emoji. We asked you to help us make a big decision to make:

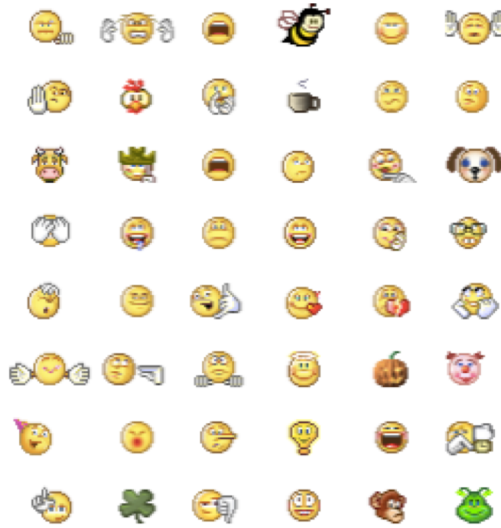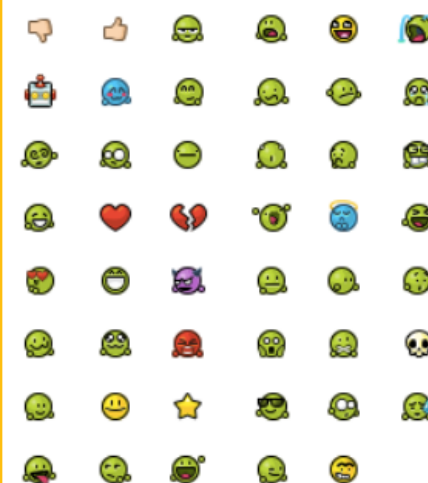**We Asked: which set of emoji shall we choose?**

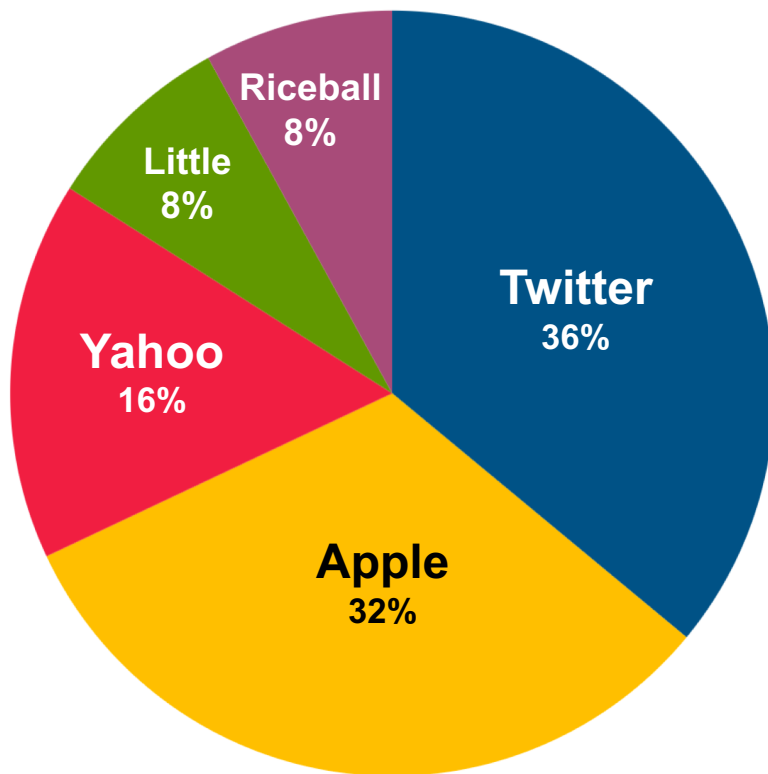| Apple	Twitter	Yahoo	Little	Riceball

Emoji 2/2

You voted for…

Next steps

We know how much you all love your emoji, so given how close it was we're thinking of running a second round where Apple and Twitter are the only options. This way, those who voted for Yahoo, Little or Riceball can have their say too and we'll hopefully get a true majority for one or the other!

Analysis

This quickly turned into a two horse race between Twitter and Apple. In the end, Twitter's 36% percent of the vote narrowly beat Apple's 32%.

Since running the survey, we've learned that if you use the new boards on mobile, you should be able to use your phone's default emoji instead.

Layout 1/2

The new software will give us a few more options for the basic layout of the boards. At the moment, the main page of the boards has a tabular layout - that's to say it looks like a table, and has sections, forums and sub-forums etc. Here's another example of a table layout.

On the other hand, the 'What's new' tab has a feed-based layout, which means it shows you a stream of the latest posts (like a twitter feed), as on this forum.

When we move to the new boards, we'll keep both functions, but we have the option to decide which layout we want for the main page.

Our current plan is to keep the table layout (more or less as it is) and have an extra tab or two with feed layouts (e.g. one for new posts and one for latest activity).
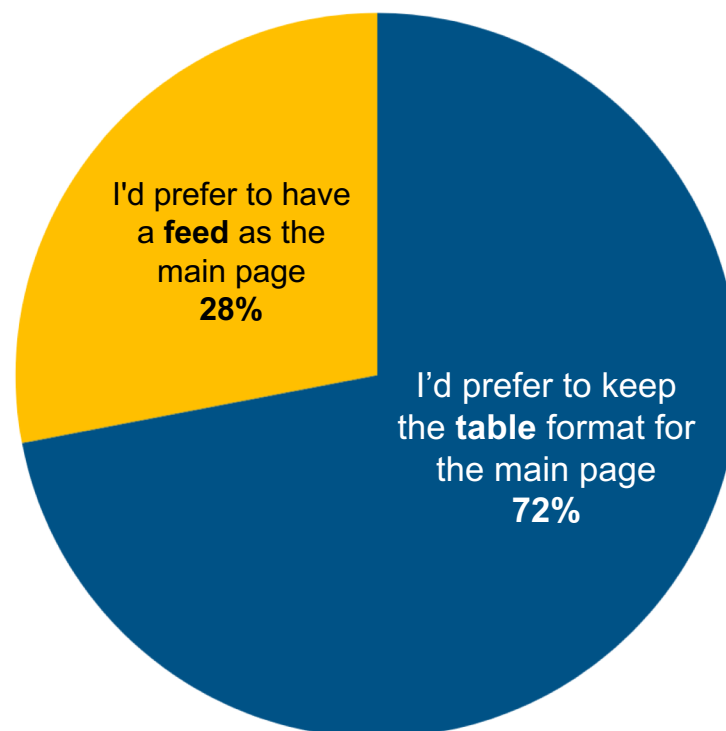
We asked: what do you think of our current plan to keep the table layout as the main page?

Layout 2/2
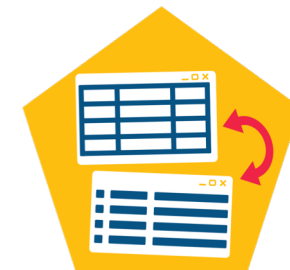
Next steps

Despite the difference between members and volunteers, both groups went for the table option.

We agree that this should help the move feel more manageable for everyone, so we'll stick to our plan.

You voted for…

I'd prefer to have a **feed** as the main page
28%

I'd prefer to keep the **table** format for the main page
72%

Analysis

You were all pretty clear on this one: sticking with our plan to keep the main page in table format was the preferred option for 72% of you.

This was one of the few areas where there was a significant difference between members and volunteers, with 62% of volunteers and 83% of members opting for table format.

In the comments, most of you thought that sticking with the table format would make the change easier for people.

Profiles 1/2

Everyone who is active between now and the final move date will be transferred automatically to the new boards (unless you ask us not to).

But we've been thinking about profiles. At the moment, you can fill in the following info on your profile:

Gender - Location - Biography - Interests - Dream date

These fields were set up years and years ago and we've noticed that lots of people don't really use them, including us!!

So, we've been wondering what you all actually think about them.

We asked: should we use the new boards as a chance to refresh these (e.g. remove some of these and/or add new ones)?

ACTIVITIES	ABOUT
Basic Information	
Gender	
Location	
Biography	
Interests	
Dream Date	

How profile fields look at the moment

Profiles 2/2

You said...

- ■ I like it. Let's keep it!
- ■ Don't mind whether we keep it or not
- ■ I don't like it. Get rid of it!

	I like it	Don't mind	Get rid of it
Gender	64%	32%	4%
Location	28%	44%	28%
Biography	28%	60%	12%
Interests	44%	48%	8%
Dream date	8%	36%	56%
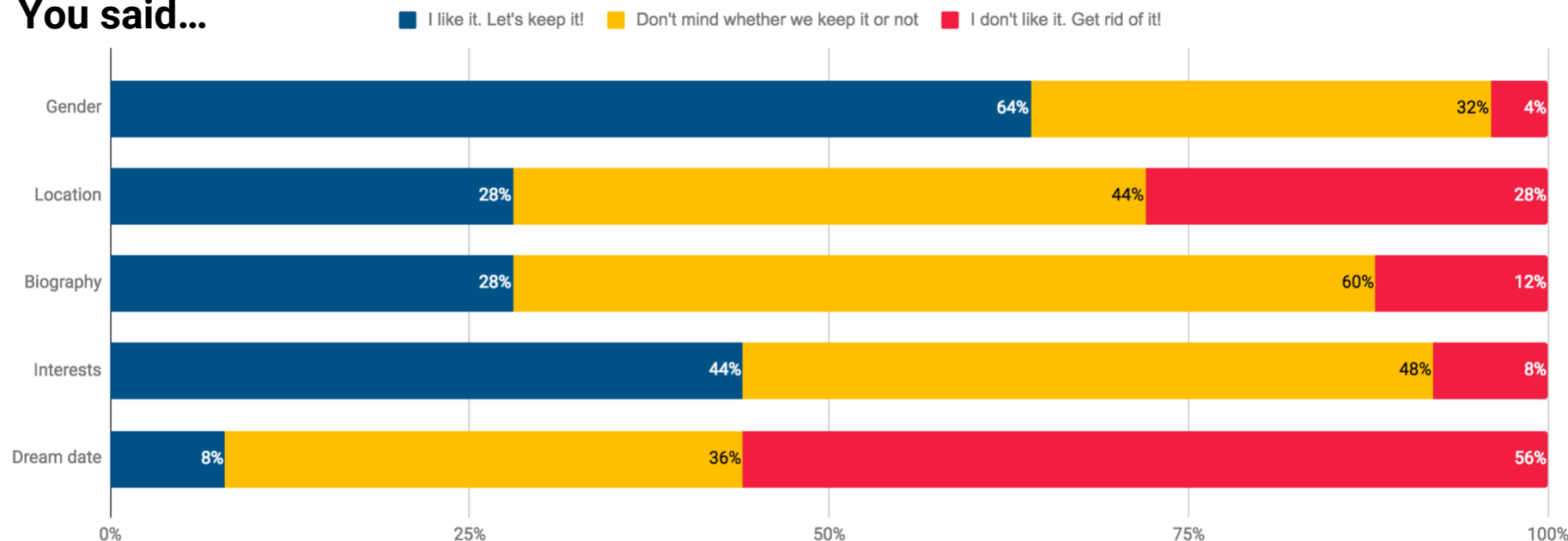
Next steps

Based on these results, it probably makes sense to keep all the fields as they are, apart from 'Dream date', which we can remove.

We liked some of the suggestions made, so may put out a new poll or just include one or two in profiles from the start.

Analysis

A lot of you didn't have particularly strong feelings about profile fields (as you can see from the size of the middle, yellow blocks above). In fact, for three of the fields (Location, Biography and Interests) more of you ticked 'I don't mind' than 'keep it' or 'get rid of it'.

That said, the 'Gender' field proved popular with 64% of you wanting to keep it and only 4% wanting to get rid of it. The 'Dream date' field also got stronger reactions, with 56% of you wanting to get rid of it and only 8% wanting to keep it.

Some of you submitted ideas for new fields such as occupation/stage of education or favourite quote.

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NEXT STEPS

Summary 1/2

For those of you whose idea of revision is reading the Wikipedia page (we've all been there), here are two quick cheat sheets summarising the key findings of the survey and what we plan to do about them:

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It looks like we should be cautious with adding post reactions. While most of you like the idea, there's some disagreement over which reactions would work.

We could start by just adding a 'hugs' button and see how it goes.

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This seems like a big thumbs up, so we're pretty confident about adding this feature.

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What next?

Now that we've collected all this feedback, we'll start making some decisions about the new boards. The previous two pages cover how your feedback will influence this process.

The next step will be to set up a test version of the new boards. 60% of you who filled in the survey said you'd like to get early access to this test area to help us try it out. We'll be in touch with you soon!

Once we're happy with the test space, we'll set a date for the big move. We'll have to take the boards offline during the move while we transfer over all the data (posts, PMs, accounts etc.) – hopefully this will only take a few days at most.

The new boards will be very similar and won't have all the new features straight away. We plan to introduce most new things gradually to give everyone a chance to get used to the space a little at a time.

Any questions?
Just drop us a PM on the boards!

THE MIX

THANKS FOR READING!