Selfemoji – for Exmple
Handwriting and Drawing with iOS 10

It always takes time before we grasp the nature of a new technology. So, the first cars were still designed as a carriage with engine and actually the smart guys in Silicon Valley understood the new tablets for a surprisingly long time as just a computer with virtual keys and keyboards. Can you recall Steve Jobs: "Nobody wants a stylus".

But now, things are changing in rapid succession. It was only a few years ago that some specific notebook and sketchbook apps enabled us to write and draw on a tablet PC. And now, similar features are available in Snapchat, iMessage, WhatsApp etc.. And with the "Anniversary Update" of Windows 10 the use of a pen as an input device is being additionally supported by a special work area, where you can create hand written notes, drawings and paintings.

Finally, however, we'll even write and draw with a stylus in all of our mail programs – if we really want to and as good as we can. But that is precisely the question now.
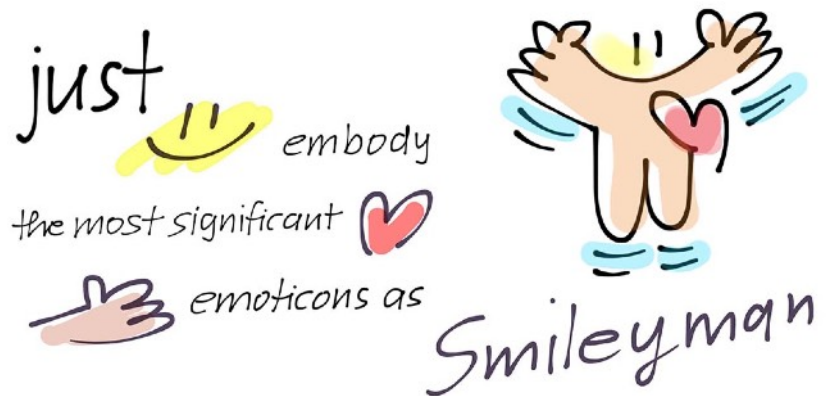
The touch screen as "electronic paper"

If we think of a tablet as no longer a PC with virtual keyboards but as "electronic paper", at least its peculiarity is handwriting and drawing. But didn't we already talk about the "death of handwriting"? Have we not already neglected our personal writing? And who still dares to scribble or doodle a sketch note?

First of all, if pen input finally helps us to transfer our handwriting into the digital world, the controversy about the imminent "death of handwriting" could revive and reverse its direction. But not only virtual writing tools, but digital pencils, brushes and color palettes are served up to us now. And with these free offers, not only can everyone write a personal mail or message in their own hand, but they can also illustrate it themselves.
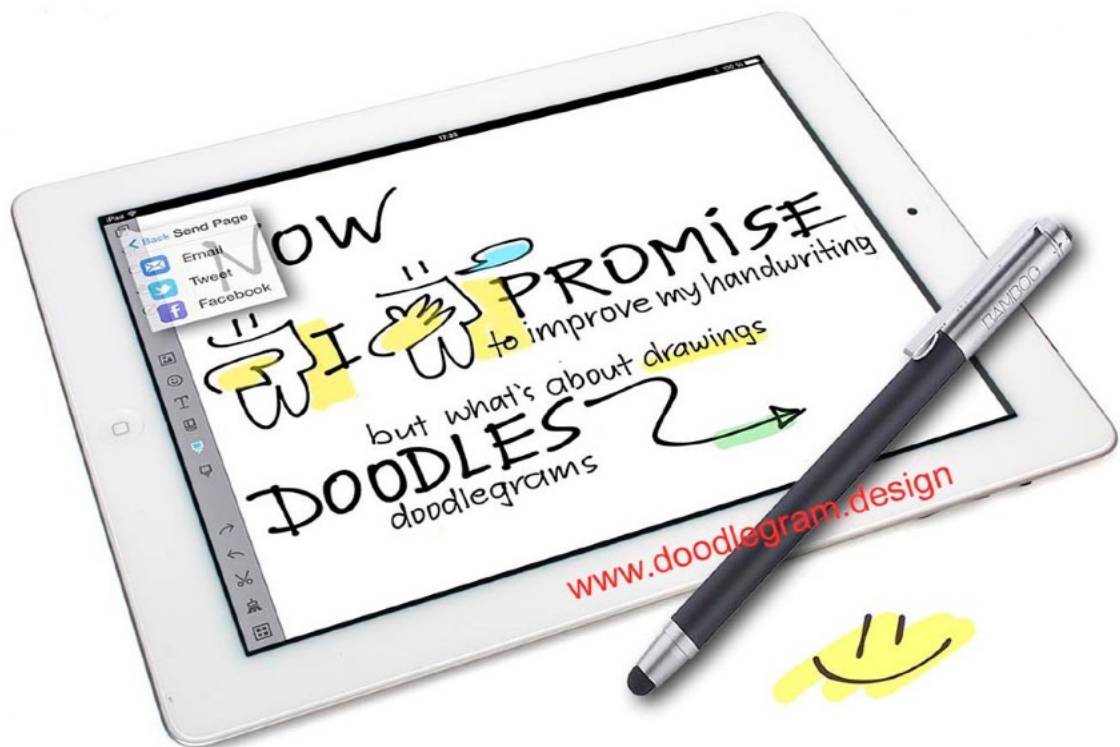
SelfEmoji

Actually, we all could start to illustrate our messages with Smileys and stick figures, as we did before we first learned to write. Anyone can do that. And those who are timid can find help in the digital world, for example, through a function that automatically smooths shaky lines. But the crucial question is: *How can we go on with further attempts to make sketch notes in mails and messages as commonplace as our handwriting?*

Take, for example, a stickman, which connects three of the most common emoticons – face, heart, and hand – with one continuous line, similar to cursive writing.

just 🙂 embody
the most significant 💗
👋 emoticons as
Smileyman

This, too, is by no means an art. Yet, in this way, we can illustrate our mails and messages in the same way as we are used to with emoticons and emojis.
Further examples: www.doodlegram.design.

Much more important than doodle emojis are, of course, the ordinary typographic ones. But the ongoing use of 😂😊🤔 could well pave the way for self-drawn emoticons and emojis. And in order to imagine the probably most important prospect of emoji-writing: just have a look at the ordinary Chinese text input of today.

Emoji-Chinese

The original notion of "emoji" (Japanese "e" picture and "moji" writing) refers definitively to a kind of pictorial script. And by adopting this terminology, we too, may understand such images less as emoticons, but rather as "new hieroglyphics", as images which represent words in line with our alphabetic writing. Typical example is an emoji named "tears of joy", which has already been voted "*word* of the year 2015". (1)

And new technical procedures also rely on a defined link between emojis and words, more or less in the same way, as with a program that translates words into a foreign language.

This works already best in the ordinary Chinese text input. For example: if you type "peng you" (friends), you get a pop-up menu with several synonymous characters, simply because there are so many of them in the Chinese language. But meanwhile this pop-up menu also contains emojis, side by side with Chinese characters. Using an index number you can either type 朋友, or 👫 (2).
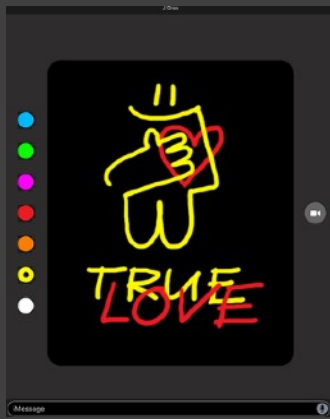
This way of using emojis will presumably also get through with us, simply because it is unbeatable handy. First steps are to be seen in the Apple iMessenger (iOS 10). Here you can type a word and only with a finger tip you can transform it into an emoji.

Moreover, the iOS 10 iMessenger also features four different opportunities for handwriting and drawing. And all this can be summed up as follows: *Emoji writing, following the pattern of the Chinese text input, will not only simplify the general use of emojis, but also make them even more popular. And since more and more apps offer the opportunity of handwriting and drawing, why not try to draw some emojis into a friendly mail or message by yourself? Selfemojis are usually not perfect, but very, very personal.*
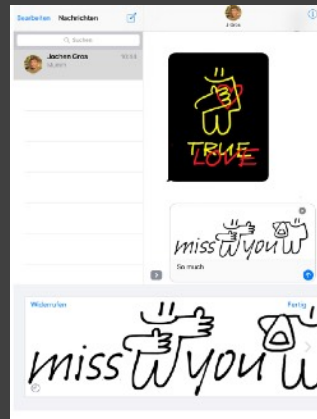
(1) Jochen Gros, Tears-of-Joy? Word of the Year 2015, German design-magazine form 264, English/German, Jan. 2016
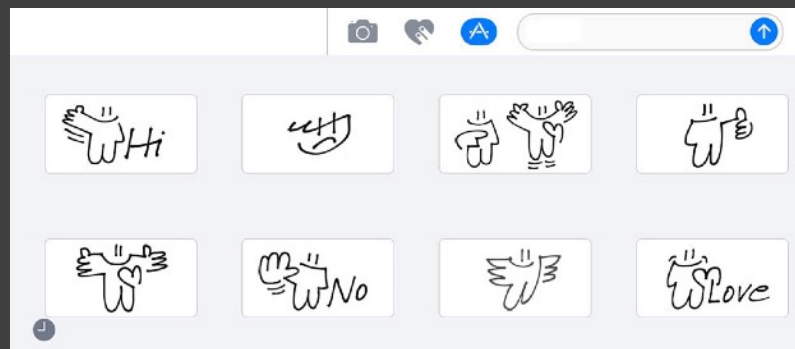(2) Jochen Gros, Emoji-Chinese, http://icon-language.com/basic/today_files/Emoji%20Chinese_Essay_02.pdf

The iOS 10 version of Apple iMessenger already offers four different features for handwriting and drawing. Most innovative is a field that enlarges itself once you begin to draw either on photos or on a black background. And the best thing about it? All the lines are reproduced, as if with a laser beam, in the same time course as they are drawn.

This type of animation makes even scrawly letters and scribbled stick men an eye-catcher.
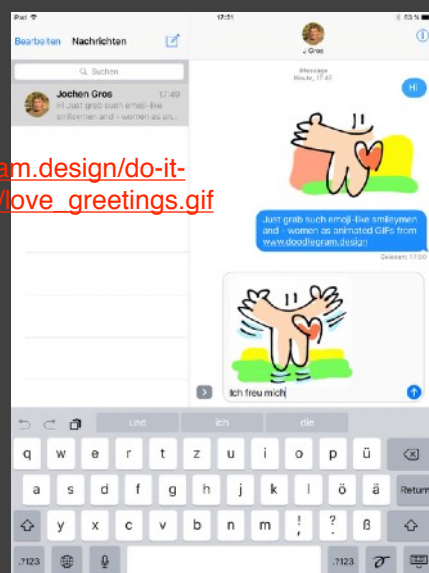

Next there is an area of white, which is intended primarily for handwriting, but which even smaller sketches fit into. And again, an enlargement opens up, into which you can write and draw , almost as though one were drawing onto a magnifying glass.
Scrolling expands this area to twice the width.

Writing and sketches can be stored in a kind of menu. What is still missing are a range of colors and the ability to import something from another program.

http://doodlegram.design/do-it-yourself/Media/love_greetings.gif

In the ordinary line of text, however, you can insert graphics which have been drawn in a sketchbook or animated with a GIF maker.

http://www.doodlegram.design/do-it-yourself/Media/I-am-happy-100.gif