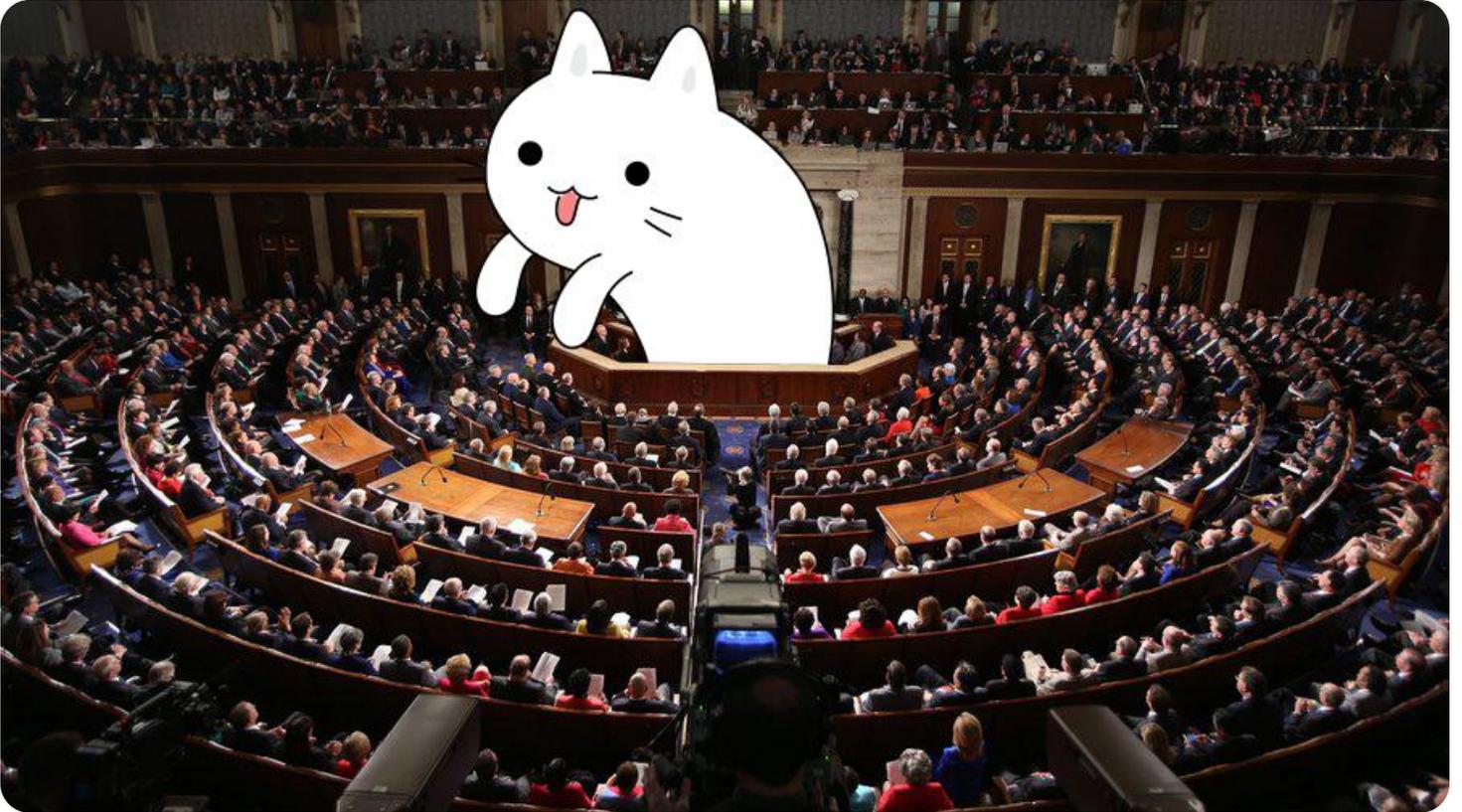# StickerStats – State of the Stickers

iMessage has over 23k sticker packs seven months after launch, indicating an incredible 1200% growth. However, usability, copyright, and quality raise concerns.

Prepared by Sticker List: https://stickerlist.com/state-of-the-stickers-2017/

Overview

Since we started Sticker List and launched our first stickers, we have been analyzing interesting trends that are happening in the iMessage Sticker market. In this report, we will go over some key metrics we have discovered. We hope this report gives sticker artists, publishers, and marketers more insight into this developing market.

Here is a quick overview of the key metrics we look at in this report:

1. **Growth** – Amount of stickers published since launch
2. **Categories** – Most popular sticker categories
3. **Titles** – Most popular words occurring in titles
4. **Pricing** – Most popular pricing and average prices
5. **Ratings** – Breakdown of sticker ratings with averages
6. **Summary** – Conclusions and the potential challenges

Growth

As of March 31st, there are now 23,375 sticker packs available in the US iMessage App Store. That is nearly 500k individual stickers if we assume each pack has an average of 20 stickers. At its launch last year on Sept. 13th the iMessage App Store consisted of over 1,650 apps, of which 75% were sticker packs[1]. This means in only a seven-month period there has been an estimated 1200% growth in iMessage stickers. This kind of growth makes sense when you consider that over 63 quadrillion iMessages are sent annually – that is more than 200k iMessages being sent every second[2].
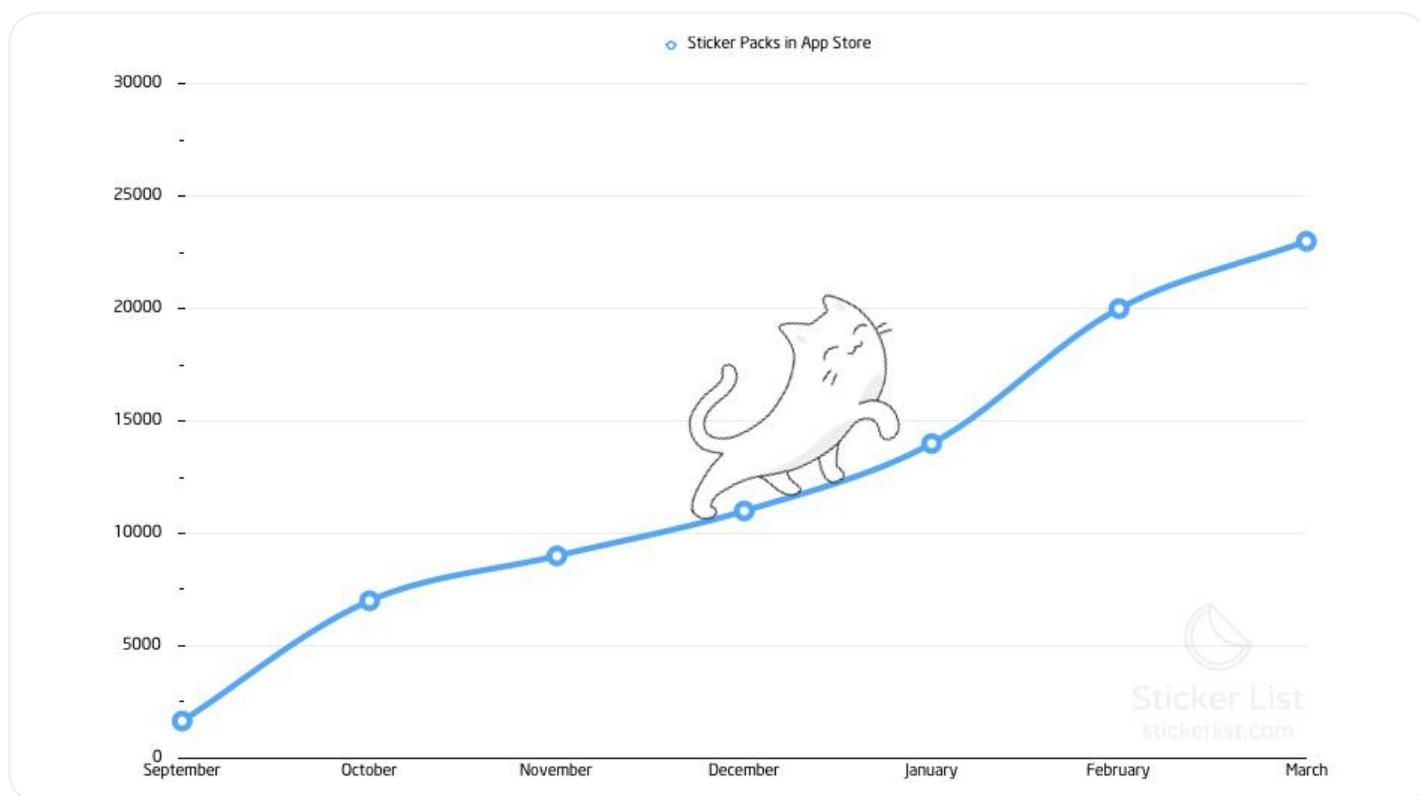
In the month of March, there was an estimated average of 90 sticker packs added each day. On the weekends (especially Sundays/Mondays), the number of published items drops significantly. At this rate, we should expect roughly around 2-3k sticker packs to be added each month. This number alone is a key indicator of the growth in this market and we expect this trend to continue.

Categories

When we look at stickers by category, it is no surprise that Emoji & Expression takes up a significant share with 30% of items falling into this category. Comics & Cartoons are next with 19% followed closely by Animals & Nature with 15%.
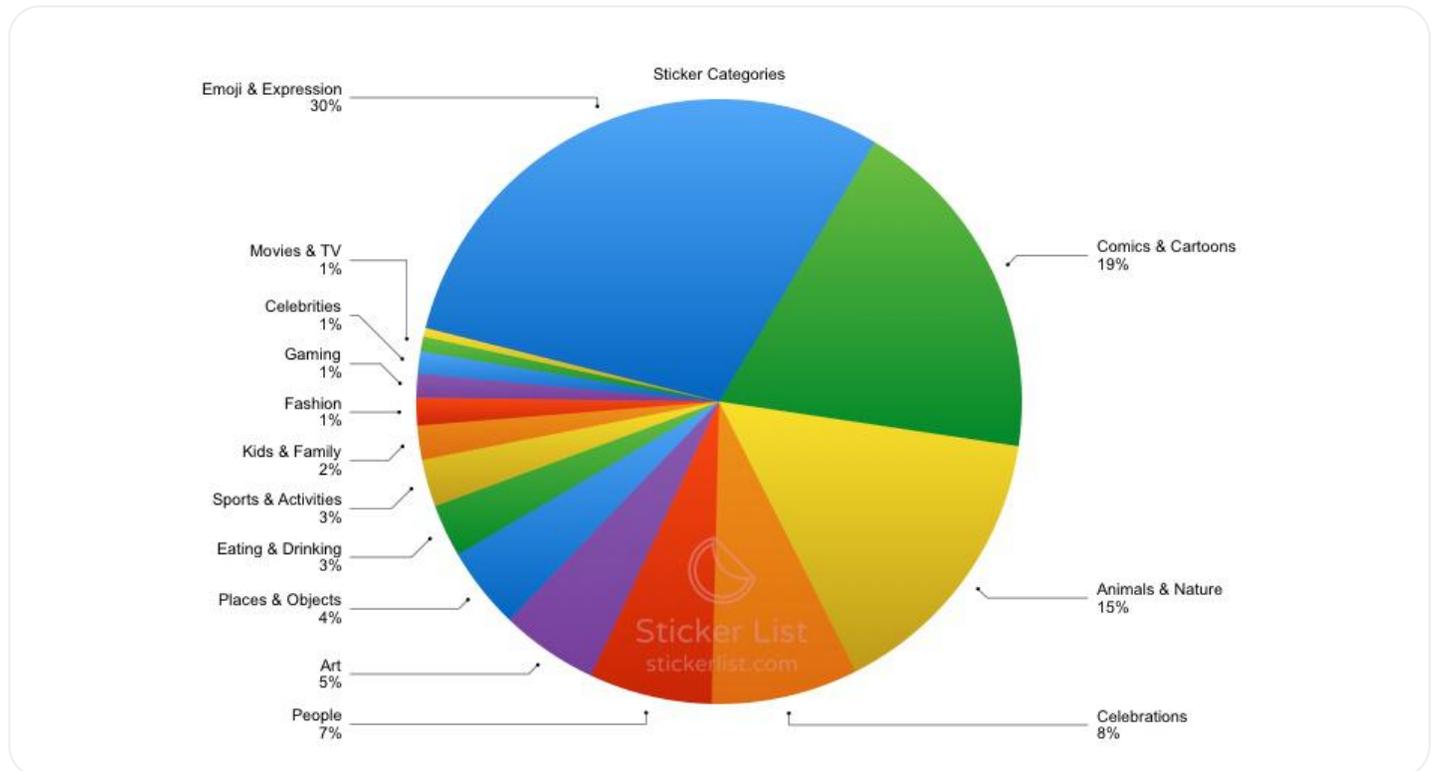
These numbers indicate not only where sticker creators are publishing but what users are interested in when they are looking for stickers. Surprisingly, Music, Movies & TV come in last with less than 1%, which indicates there is room for growth in these categories. Also, it is surprising that Gaming has only 1%, as it makes up the largest percentage of iMessage enabled apps released thus far at nearly 26 percent[3].

Titles

By looking at the occurrence of words in the titles of sticker packs, we can gain some insight about their popularity in the market. First, we remove words that are bound to show up high in the list; stickers, sticker, pack, imessage, with, the, for… and so on. After we remove these words, we are left with a clear picture of the top 30 most popular words in titles.
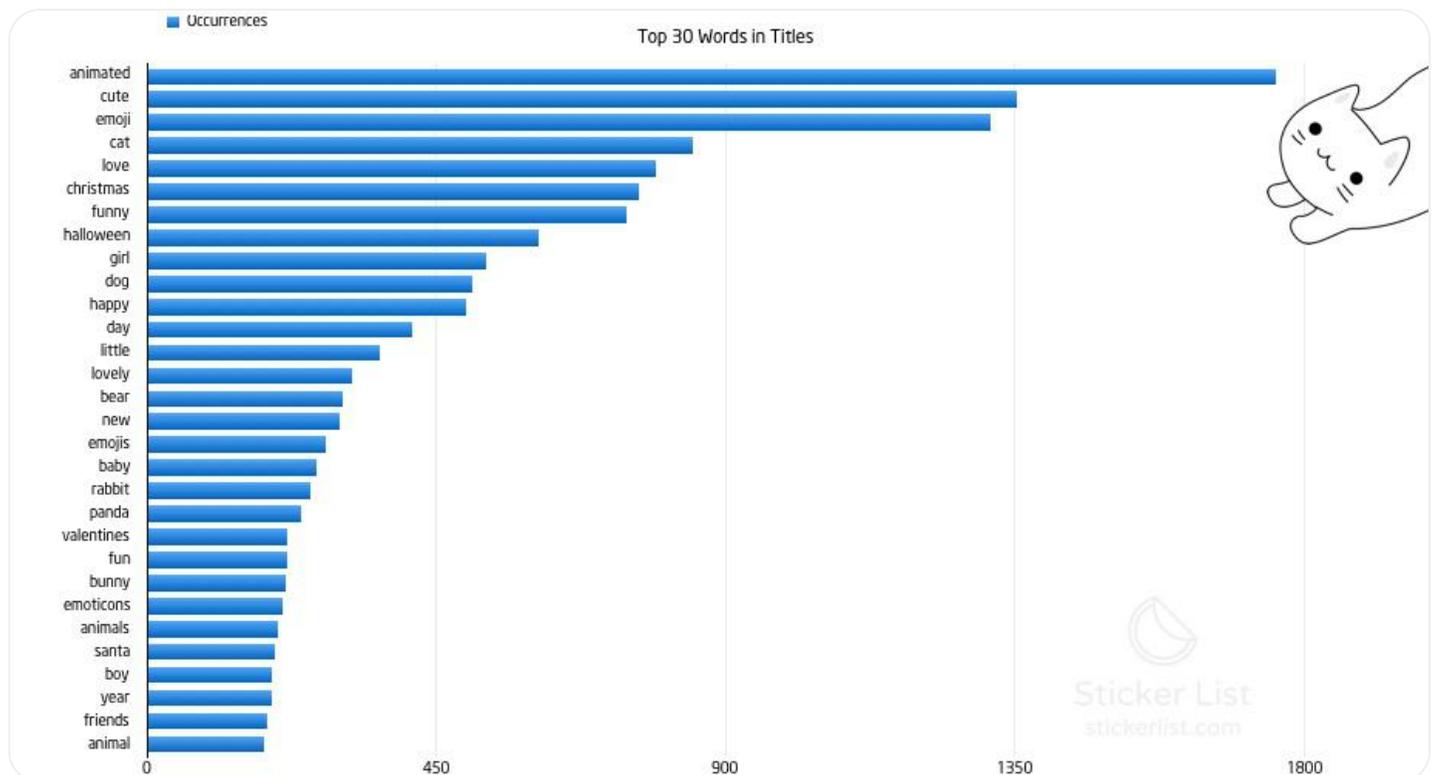
These words correlate rather well with the category data but also indicate that animated stickers are very popular. Animated cute and happy cat stickers are among the most common which reconfirms people's obsessions with cats.

Pricing

In total, 85% are paid sticker packs with the vast majority (77%) of them being priced at $0.99. This makes sense as it is the first tier of pricing offered by Apple and it is where most publishers seem comfortable valuing their stickers. We expected more free stickers but found only 15% were available in the market for free. In-App Purchase (IAP) enabled sticker packs only account for a small fraction (1.5%) of the total amount, with 84% of them (IAP) priced at $0.99 and 9% at $1.99.
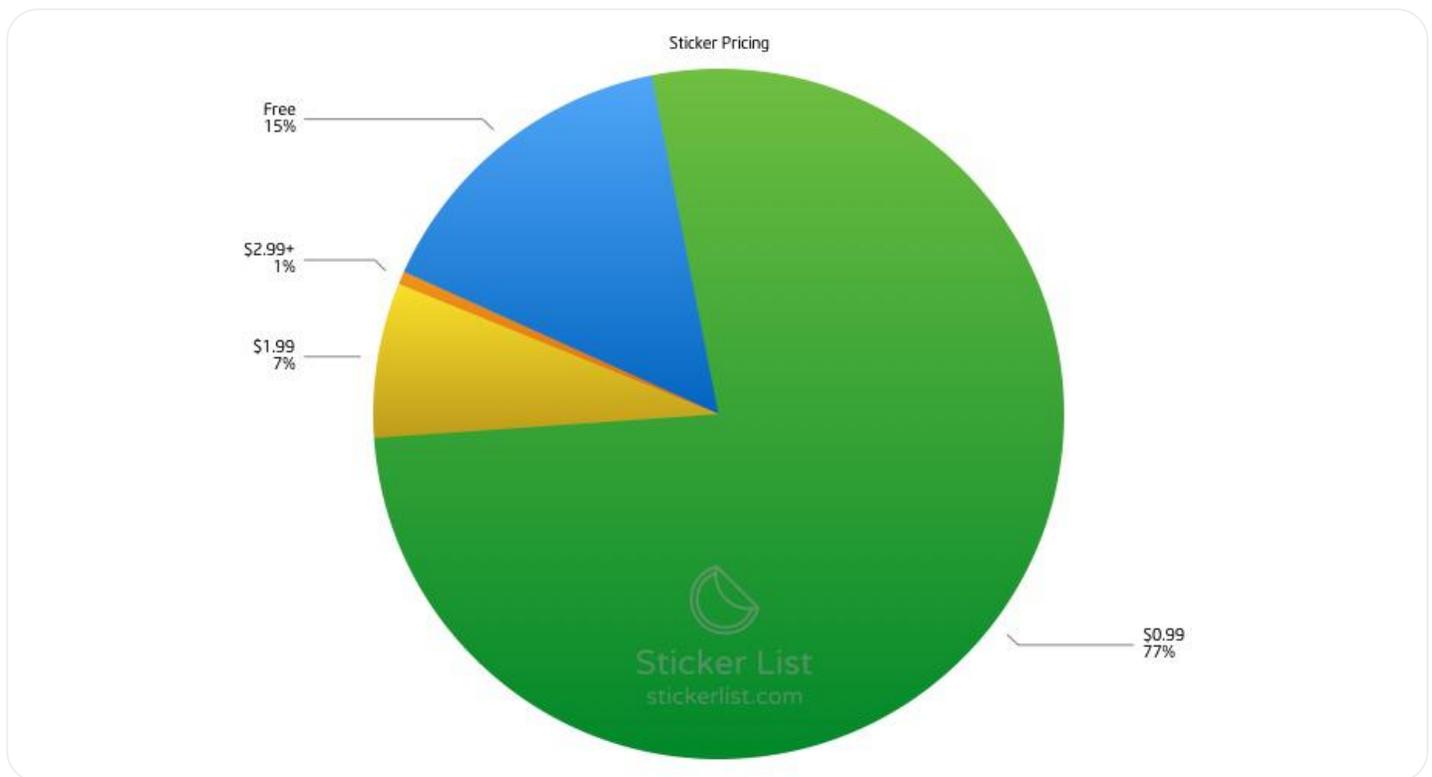
We believe that in the future more free stickers will become available due to commercial marketing and promotional releases. Also, the general pricing trend will be towards higher prices, moving away from $0.99 as publishers become more confident in their stickers and as more people start using iMessage stickers.

Ratings

We were quite startled at the results of the ratings. Not only did 98% of the stickers have 0 ratings, but the ones with 1-3 ratings were so small (0.05%, 0.18%, etc.) that they did not show up on the charts at all. This could lead us to a few conclusions; first, almost nobody leaves feedback on stickers. Second, nobody is using the majority of the available stickers. This limited engagement is an indication of discoverability, usability, and quality issues.

Sticker Ratings

No Rating 98%
4 Stars 1%
5 Stars 1%

Sticker List
stickerlist.com
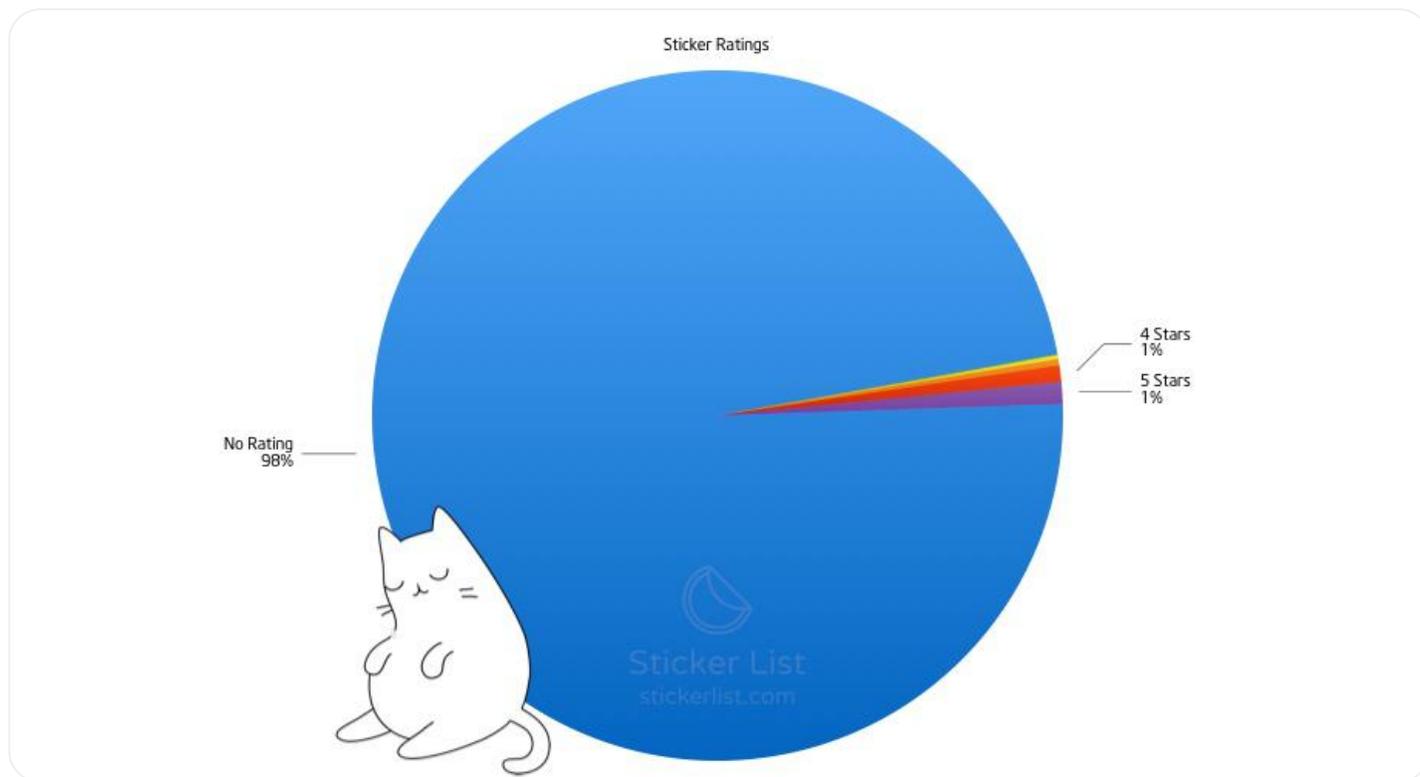
Summary

In this report, we analyzed key metrics of stickers in the (US) iMessage App Store since its launch last year. There has been 1200% growth in available stickers with an estimated 90 being added each day. Many of the sticker packs cost $0.99 and are in the Emoji & Expressions category with no reviews. These findings lead us to conclude that there is tremendous growth in the market. However, there are some problems as well:

Discoverability and Usability

The curation of the App Store and the usability of the stickers in the iMessage app itself are the **biggest problem** facing the sticker market today. The iMessage App Store is not updated daily and does not consistently show the best stickers. This is the original reason we started Sticker List. These topics have been covered by leading sticker creators such as Adam Howell[4]. Apple needs to update the iMessage UI to make it easier for users to discover/use stickers as well as invest more into daily curation of the iMessage App Store.
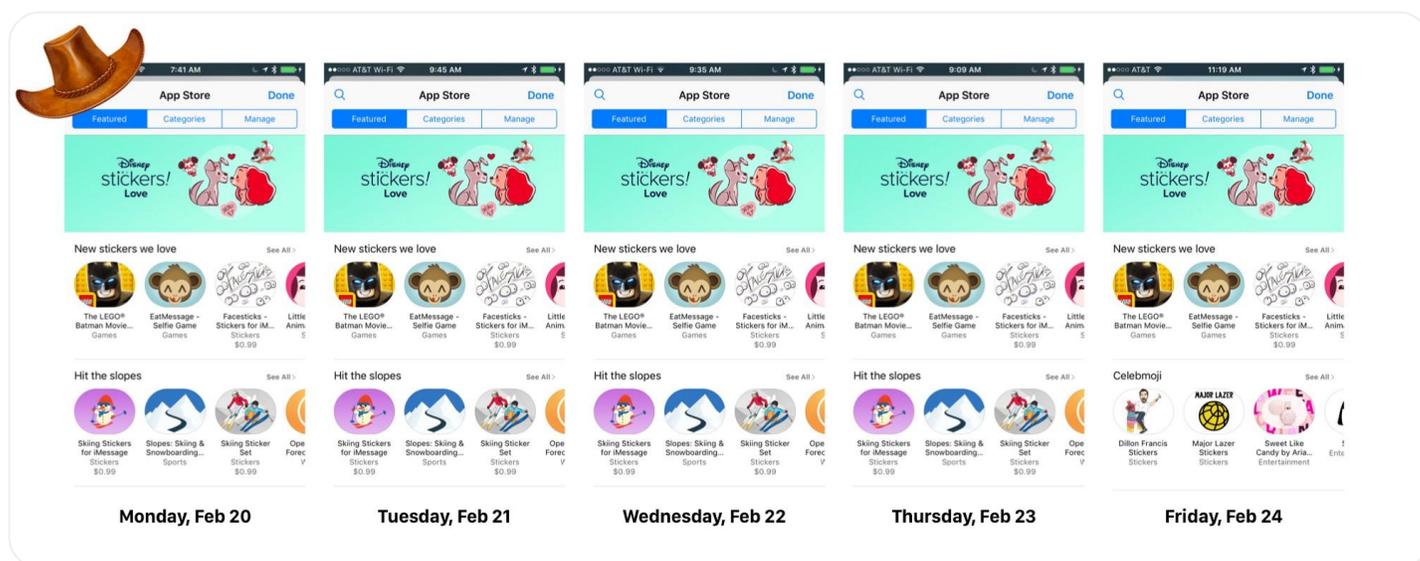
Copyright Violations

In the process of curation, we have discovered and verified that there are many stickers that are direct copies of popular Facebook/WeChat/Line stickers. We assume that these publishers do not secure the rights and are in direct violation of the owners' copyrights.

Currently, it seems that Apple has a rudimentary sticker review process, enabling many sticker packs to be published even though they may violate others' copyrights. There have even been cases of Apple featuring sticker packs with unauthorized art. Many of these unethical developers are able to publish 5-15 packs a day. This is not fair to original publishers and ultimately harms the overall quality of the store.

Here is an example sticker pack which neither the artists nor the owners authorized:
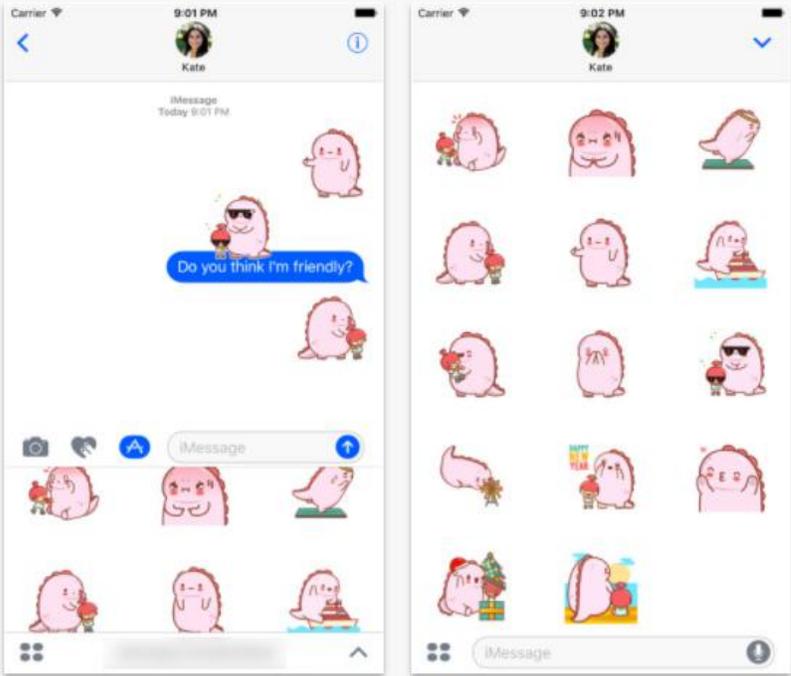
In this example, the publisher simply downloaded the images from Behance (Mon-Mon) from two WeChat artists. We have reached out to both the artists and WeChat who confirmed the stickers are not authorized. Unfortunately, Apple does not yet have a place for the public to report such blatant copyright infringements.

Quality Control

It has become apparent that the general quality of the sticker market is diminishing because of spam publishing. Some publishers add upwards of 20 sticker packs in a single day, nearly all of which are not original nor high-quality stickers. If Apple does not introduce some more Quality Controls and Rate Limits, this could get completely out of hand with users effectively 'drowning' in low-quality and duplicate stickers.

What's Next

We are working on additional reports and research into the iMessage App Store, sticker usage, and sales metrics. Stay tuned by subscribing to our mailing list and following us on Twitter. If you are interested in more detailed market reports with access to our **StickerStats™** engine, you can contact us to learn more.

References

[1] – Apple's iMessage App Store already has 1,650+ apps, majority are stickers

[2] – Alphabet to Launch 'Android Messages' to Challenge iMessage

[3] – iMessage App Store Nears 5,000 Apps After Six Months

[4] – Is the iMessage App Store dying or already dead?