

ATTITUDES TO FINANCE: CAPCO MEASURES CHREMATOPHOBIA ON TWITTER

This blog is the first of a new series, Attitudes to Finance, where we will be exploring customer perceptions around finance today. This blog focuses on the fear around checking your bank balance, or more broadly, your finances. It is known as Chrematophobia: 'the intense fear of money'.

If you feel sick as you sign into your banking app, or dizzy when your balance appears on the cash machine screen, you are not alone in your suffering. A study¹ by the National Union of Students recently found that a staggering 64 percent of students worry about their finances either all the time or very often. Indeed, in another study, 'Measuring Financial Anxiety' from the University of Cambridge², it was found that financial phobia affected 20 percent of the population and was particularly prevalent among women and younger people.

We can all think of a time where we've joked about not wanting to check how much is in our bank account, but in today's financial climate, is it more than just a fleeting comment? As a society, are we genuinely in fear of our finances?

Capco investigated what people were saying about checking their bank balance on social media using a real-time social media listening tool³. The study sampled 250 mentions, and, overwhelmingly, fear did seem to be the order of the day on Twitter as usual.

 **Kerftchx**
@kerftchx

If I avoid checking my bank account that means I'm not broke right??

 **Elklien**
@elklien

Anyone else avoid checking their bank balance for like weeks on end lmao

 **Mioneredshaw**
@mioneredshaw

See that's where you've gone wrong, don't check your bank balance I'm too scared to look at mine!

 **Nosi**
@Nosi_IRL

I've been too scared to check my bank balance for the past two weeks

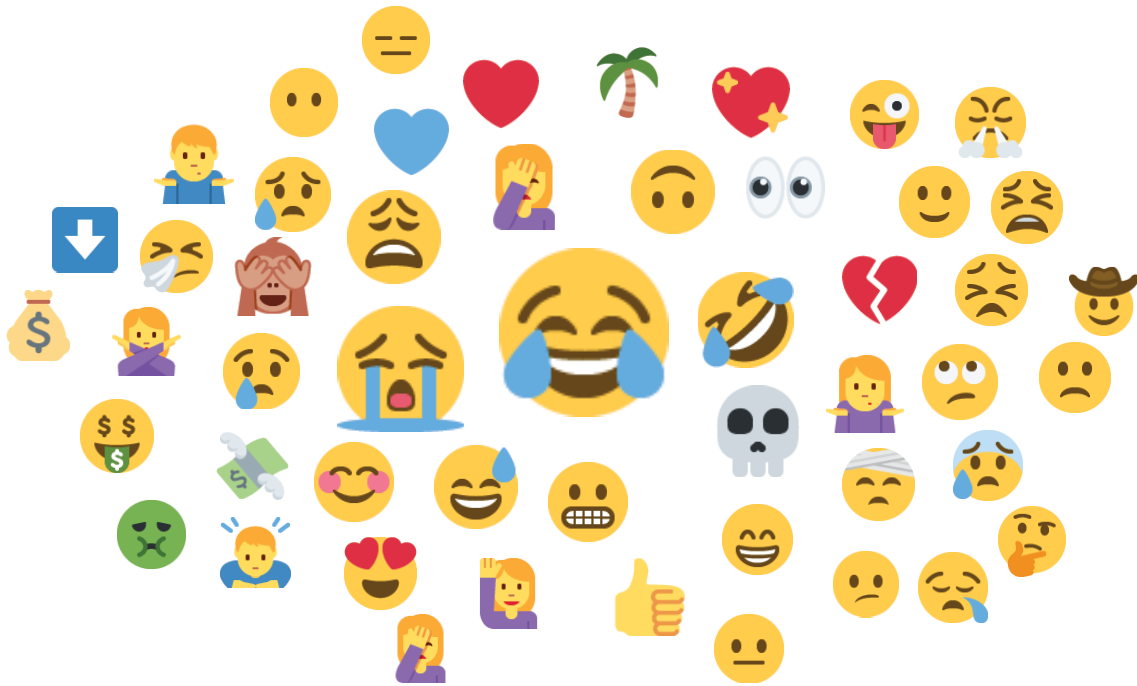
 **Sbongokuhle**
@Sbongokuhle_

I'm scared of checking my bank balance.

1. <https://www.futurefinance.com/blog/nus-insight-over-a-third-of-students-say-financial-woes-affecting-mental-health/>

2. Brendan J. Burchell, Gilla K. Shapiro, Measuring Financial Anxiety, Journal of Neuroscience, Psychology, and Economics, 2012, Vol. 5, No. 2, 92–103

3. <https://www.brandwatch.com/>

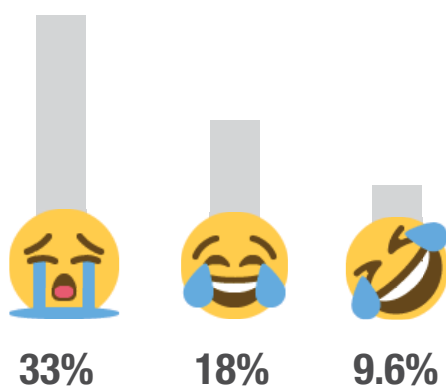


The most used phrases, keywords and hashtags relating to checking your bank balance were 'scared', 'worried', 'avoid' and 'horrible'. But we wanted to go a little bit further, by looking at the emoji's people were using too. Here's what we found:

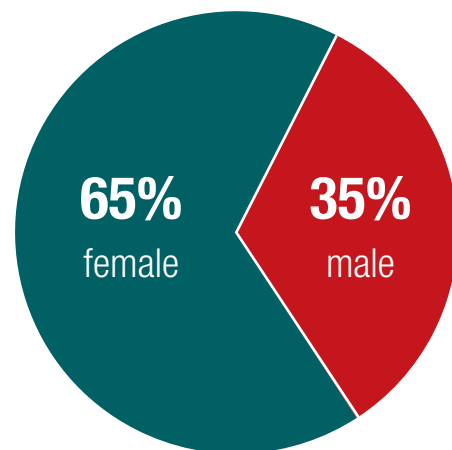
Over 35 percent of all money-fearing tweets used the cry-laughing emoji. In fact, the top three emojis were all variations of the cry-laughing emoji – it seems people don't know whether to laugh or cry when they check their balance. We feel you.

Looking at the research Capco collected, both the language and emojis used portray an overwhelmingly negative outlook on personal finances and are proof that financial fear is prevalent today.

Interestingly, mentions were highest on Sundays and Mondays, which is probably when most people check their account, after living in blissful ignorance over the weekend. And, we found that female users accounted for the majority of tweets (65 percent) – proving Brendan Burchell's hypothesis right.



Most commonly used emojis on Twitter related to financial fear, August to September 2019. Analysis by Brandwatch.



Financial fear Twitter mentions by gender, August to September 2019. Analysis by Capco using Brandwatch.

Jibran Ahmed, Head of Research & Development at Capco UK said: "Twenty years ago, most young people had one bank, one account manager and probably one financial statement. They also had less debt and buying a house was significantly easier. Today, managing money is much more complicated. The upside is that new tools are helping people to keep track of finances and use budgets.

"However, this is not a substitute for a financial education. While apps make it easy to set budgets, and see where your money is going each month, understanding investment products, or how you may be impacted by taxation, is still a niche that hasn't been addressed by the industry. There is a gap in the market to help people put their money to better use."

So, how can you overcome your financial phobia? Here are some top tips for taking control of your fear and your finances:

1. Face your fears head-on

Whilst it may be tempting to bury your head in the sand, and ignore the inevitable, it is not a sustainable option, and if anything, will only make your anxiety worse. Schedule time to go through your finances and figure out exactly what you're dealing with – you could do this with a friend or relative.

2. Decide on a budget and start saving

A 2018 survey by The Independent found that one in 20 participants said they would struggle to last a week without being paid⁴ – and that 39 percent have less than £1,000 in their rainy-day funds. Therefore, creating a budget, no matter how small, could help ease your anxiety and put you in control of your finances. Apps such as Monzo, Starling, Plum, Yolt and Moneybox are designed to help you manage your money and identify places you can economize.

3. Create a long-term plan

Financial control needs to be an ongoing journey. Allocate time each week or month to go over your finances, to avoid slipping back into old habits. It may help to think of your future goals, is there something you can save for, or a motivator that'll inspire you to monitor your spending? Whatever it is, decide on it, and stick to it.

These are just a few small ways to make a difference to your financial situation and prevent your fear turning into a phobia. We hope this blog helped, and good luck in becoming a savvy spender!

4. <https://www.independent.co.uk/money/savings-money-personal-finance-bills-budgeting-uk-survey-a8648206.html>

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Through our collaborative and efficient approach, we help our clients successfully innovate, increase revenue, manage risk and regulatory change, reduce costs, and enhance controls. We specialize primarily in banking, capital markets, wealth and asset management and insurance. We also have an energy consulting practice in the US. We serve our clients from offices in leading financial centers across the Americas, Europe, and Asia Pacific.

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