



Why can't I dislike something?

## Description

When I was a school, we had a simple merit / demerit system to help improve behaviour.

Each child in the school was a member of a house (I was Owls), and good deeds or work earned you merit points, bad behaviour earned demerits for the house total.

At the end of each term, the merits were added up for each house, then the demerits subtracted and the house with the most merits won the house cup – yes, a bit like Harry Potter.

Some classes had weekly or monthly prizes for the child with the most merits as well.

There was an incentive to do good things, but also there was an incentive to not do bad things. Other students did not like it when you lost the house 10 merit points, so would deal with you in the playground.

In the UK, there was a strange shift, when some government decided that competition was a bad thing. Encouraging students to compete in anything would demoralise students who didn't win. So competition was diluted, everyone got a prize for entering anything.

I am not saying if that is a good or a bad thing, it is just a fact that this happened.

The same thing seems to have happened online.

There are several ways to show approval of something someone has done on the internet. If you like a blogpost, you can +1, Like, Digg it etc. Very positive. However, very few of these systems allow you to -1 or Dislike something.

I can see a few reasons for this. Just look at what happens on YouTube. If you just plain don't like someone, you can thumbs down everything they do. It is a system open to abuse.

But, and this is the thing, if you can't show disapproval of something in a way as simple as is available for showing approval – how can we encourage people to produce good quality content, not just

quantity.

A good example is with Betanews.com. In their comments you are able to like or dislike a comment. If a comment is disliked a few times, it is hidden from view. This encourages the community to monitor inappropriate or plain stupid behaviour.

We have an internal social network at the company I work for. For the most part it is great. However, from time to time people will put up a comment or even a thread that is totally inappropriate. The worst you can do is ignore it, or comment on it. In this day and age though, who takes much notice of comments. If there was just a dislike button, people could quickly see that the post was not appropriate or of a low quality and then learn that quality and constructiveness is what earns you rewards.

Positive reinforcement is all well and good, but from time to time it would be nice to just say “No, this is not good enough. Try again” or -1.

And yes, I am ready for the abuse...

### **Category**

1. Gamification
2. Opinion
3. Rants
4. Social Media

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