Facebook: Status settings

Social networking has exploded into a universe all its own on the internet. Facebook, one of the most popular websites for social networking, gives users many ways to keep in touch and stay informed.

Setting your status on Facebook is the replacement for an away message from an instant messenger. It tells everyone and anyone who wants to know what you’re doing, how you’re feeling, and what’s new and exciting in your life.

Facebook provides a prompt for status settings: “Karissa is ___.” I’ve often wondered why the verb of being was chosen as the default. Before Facebook took a hint about the boredom of “is,” there were no other choices. You had to say what you were: “Karissa is bored with verbs of being,” for example.

Finally “is” is not the requisite verb. Users can choose more colorful verbs if they like by hitting backspace three times, or they can stick with the status quo... and just “be.”

Strangely, though, until recently my friends on Facebook used the “Firstname [verb] [predicate]” form. Recently I’ve noticed status messages regressing into their predecessors: instant messenger away messages. For example: “Kayla is class till 3 then work all night. Off to New York tomorrow for the weekend!” Keep in mind that the provided text includes the firstname and the verb of being. People just type in whatever they like afterwards. And these status messages used to make sense, but I don’t know what to make of the slide towards a prior communication medium.