Rainbow Flag Emoji

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This doc: https://goo.gl/EJ2FBT
List: https://goo.gl/Xlv4Mj

This document describes how vendors can support a Rainbow Flag emoji using sequences of existing Unicode characters according to UTR#51: Unicode Emoji. Because existing Unicode characters are used, vendors can begin design and implementation work now and can deploy before the end of 2016, rather than waiting for Unicode v10.0 to come out in June of 2017.

The flag is represented as follows:

1F3F3 FE0F 200D 1F308

The VS16 represents the emoji variation selector, and ZWJ represents the zero-width joiner character. For for more information, see UTR#51: Unicode Emoji.

Background

The topic of a rainbow flag was raised in an email in 2015 June 27, and there was some email discussion of using ZWJ sequences vs a separate character. A similar proposal from a different author was filed on 2016 June 25.

The process of adding new characters is slow, and so the UTC investigated more generative mechanisms for gender and flag related emoji, such as in UTR#51. However, it had become clear that the TAG approach in the draft UTR#51 had some significant disadvantages, notably for fallback on older systems. That is, it will be some time before the fallback image for unsupported TAG sequences would be supported, and in the meantime people expecting to interchange a female version of an emoji would have recipients get a male version (or vice versa).

During UTC meeting #147, we decided that a better solution to gender than TAGs would be *emoji zwj sequences* (ZWJ = Zero-Width Joiner). Essentially, each emoji zwj sequence is treated like a ligature, resulting in a single glyph being displayed on the screen. Keyboard input, segmentation, and other operations are modified to handle the sequence as a whole unit. These emoji zwj sequences are already used to represent diverse family groupings and others, and could be extended relatively quickly.

During the development of the Gender ZWJ Sequences (L2/16-181) the issue of the rainbow flag was discussed, and met with strong vendor support. The Emoji subcommittee decided that although the rainbow flag is related to gender, it would be cleaner if it were described in a separate, smaller, document. Structurally the rainbow flag is simpler than the gender emoji — no skin-tone modifiers are allowed, for example.