

Proposal for Breastfeeding Emoji

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Date Submitted:

30 September 2016

Latest Revision:

6 November 2016

Summary

I propose adding an emoji for breastfeeding as a complement to the existing baby bottle emoji, and to complete the set of family emojis.

The lack of a breastfeeding emoji represents a gap in the Unicode Standard given the prevalence of breastfeeding in cultures around the world, and throughout history.

Origin

Since the beginning of civilization, breastfeeding has been essential in human development. Researchers have examined the fossilized teeth of a Neanderthal child which suggests that our early evolutionary cousins' breastfed exclusively for around seven months.

This Neanderthal child found in a Belgian cave dates back 100,000 years¹ and depicts the importance of nurturing babies since the dawn of the human race.

Documentation

In ancient Egyptian, Greek and Roman empires, breastfeeding has been depicted in art in the form of sculptures and pottery.

¹[Barium distributions in teeth reveal early-life dietary transitions in primates](#)

Proposal

I propose the following emoji be added to the Unicode Standard.

Sample Image

Name	Sample Image	Sample Image (Black & White)
Breastfeeding		

Notes

- The above image depicts the most popular method of holding a baby when breastfeeding, known as the “cradle hold”
- The term “breastfeeding” is one word², and is not written as “breast feeding”.

Selection Factors

Factors for Inclusion

Compatibility

Many apps and sticker packs include breastfeeding, such as EmojiMom and Bundle of Joy.



Image: *EmojiMom*



Image: *Crystal Ro / HelloGiggles*

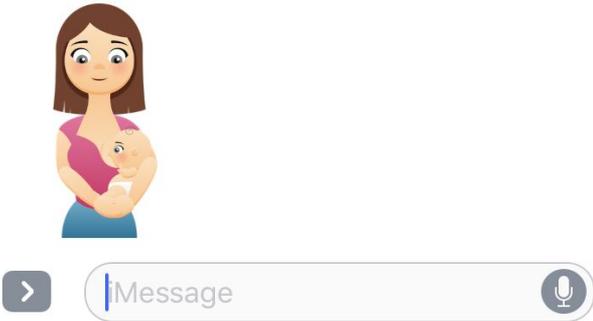


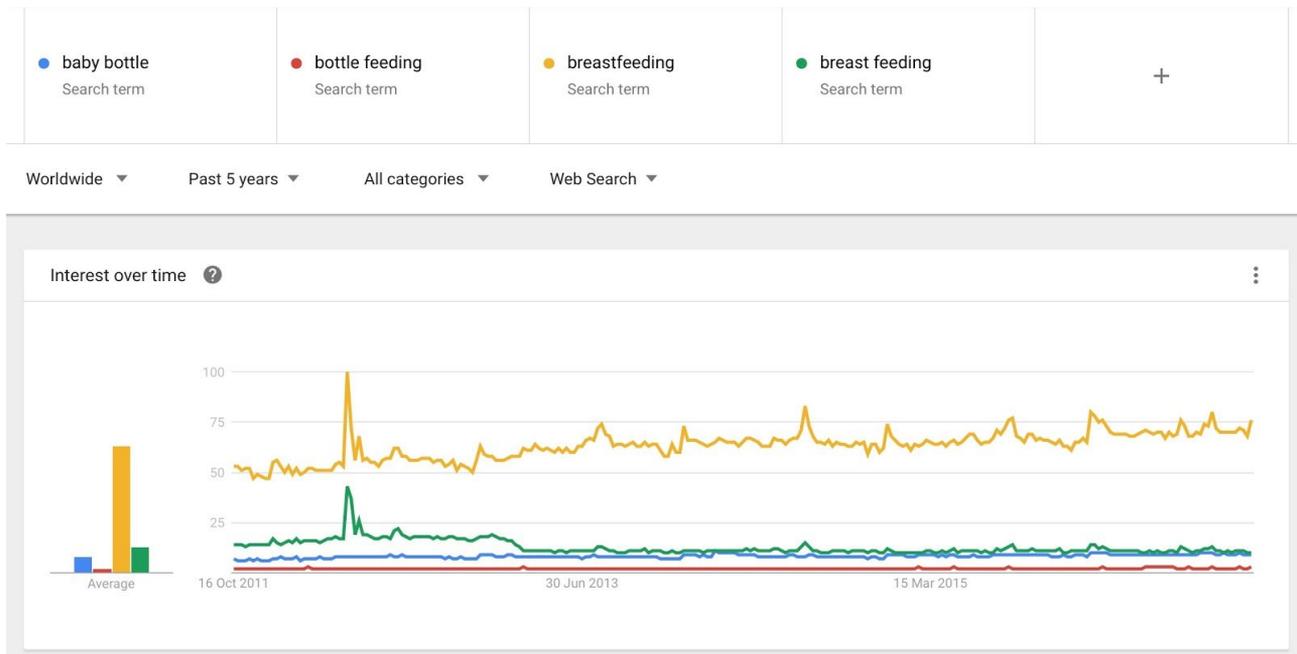
Image: *Bundle of Joy Stickers*

Expected Usage level

Frequency

- Three million mothers participate in the activity of breastfeeding in the United States at any given time³ (four million babies are born in the US each year and 79% are breastfed). By comparison activities such as hockey see 67,230 women participating annually in the United States⁴
- “Baby Bottle” ranks in the top 50% of emojis used on EmojiTracker.com:
 - In the United States, for every newborn that is bottle fed, four are breastfed.
 - As such this emoji is expected to have considerably higher use than the Baby Bottle emoji in the order of 3-5x
- Related emojis such as “Baby” and “Family” rank in the top 1/3 of emojis on EmojiTracker.com, showing the popularity of baby and family related emojis.
- Given the nature of breastfeeding occurs at all hours of the the day and night, text communication is frequently used during these times. This emoji is likely to be used in context for a message such as “Up at 3am with baby [breastfeeding emoji]”

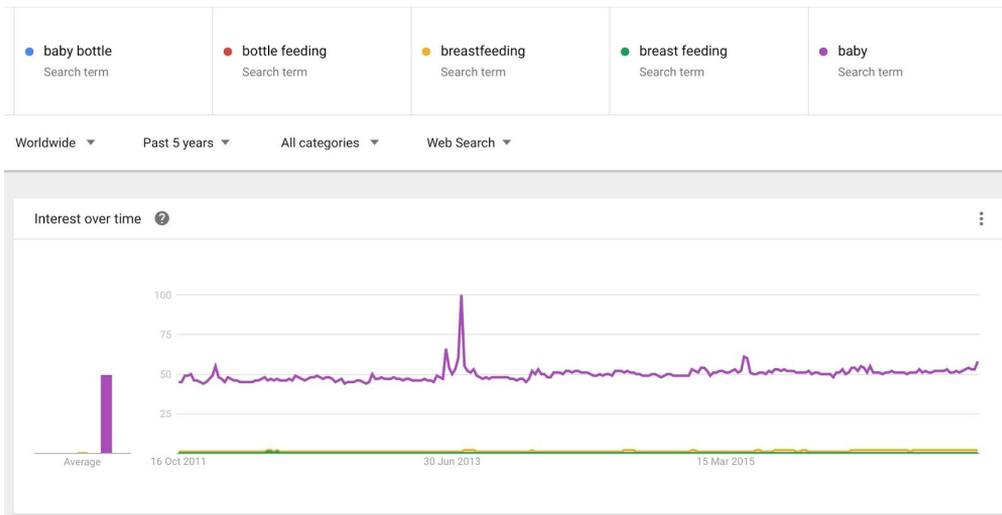
Google Trends shows considerably higher search traffic for *breastfeeding* terms compared to *bottle feeding* terms: [Link](#)



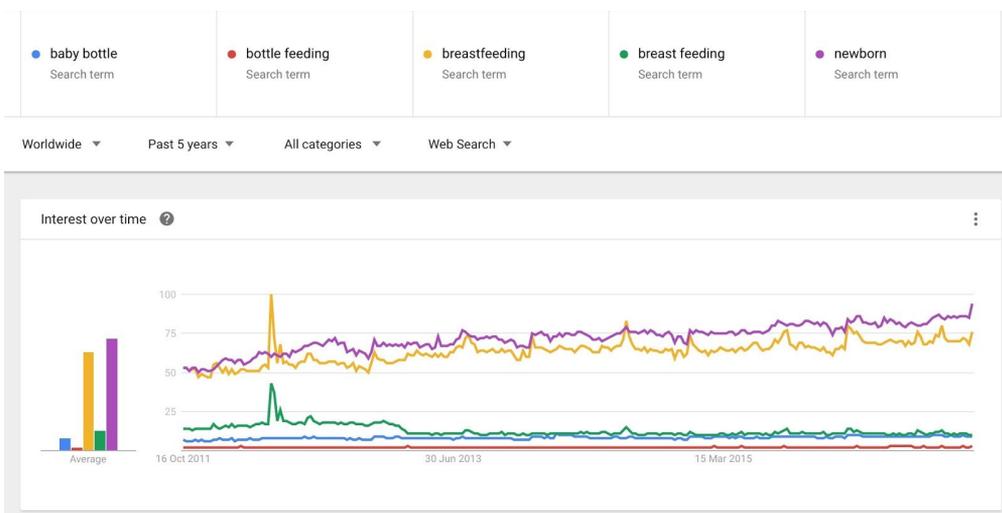
³ [Center for Disease Control: Breastfeeding Report Card](#)

⁴ <https://unitedstatesofhockey.com/2014/06/17/u-s-hockey-participation-numbers-for-2013-14/>

Google Trends data comparing *breastfeeding* with a broad term such as *baby*: [Link](#)



Google Trends data comparing *breastfeeding* with a more specific term such as *newborn*: [Link](#)



Notes:

- While many mothers discuss breastfeeding with a high frequency, this data *would not* show in search data on Google Trends
- A better measure of usage may be to measure against *Baby Bottle Emoji* usage (top 50% of all emojis used).
 - Babies are breastfed with considerably higher frequency than bottle feeding, as such the frequency of usage is expected to be higher.
- A breastfeeding emoji may be used in a number of circumstances where the term “breastfeeding” is not explicitly said. Eg “Feeding baby”, “Giving the baby a feed” don’t mention *breast* but imply it in a way that an emoji would make clearer.

Multiple usages

- Breast feeding fits into multiple distinct categories of use:
 - People / Smileys: Joining other family emojis such as Pregnant Women, Baby, and Family.
 - Food & Drink: in 2011, 79% of newborn infants were breastfed⁵, making breast milk the primary source of nutrition for the majority of babies when born.
 - Activity: The act of breastfeeding takes place with more frequency than a significant number of activities listed in the Activity emoji category.
- While not the intended as the primary use, this emoji could also be used to signify nurturing a baby.

Image distinctiveness

- This emoji image distinct from all other emojis currently available.

Completeness

- The Unicode Standard currently includes various stages of families: Couples, Pregnant Woman, and Families.
 - Given the prevalence of breastfeeding internationally, this emoji fills a gap in the current standard which omits the most popular form of nutrition for newborn babies.

Frequently requested

- Listed in Emojipedia Top 30 Emoji Requests:
<http://blog.emojipedia.org/top-emoji-requests-2016/>
- Change.org petition for Breastfeeding Emoji:
<https://www.change.org/p/for-more-breastfeeding-on-the-world-we-wish-an-emoji-a-mum-br-eastfeeding-her-baby-por-un-emotición-pro-lactancia-materna>
- These are what the emojis you wish existed would look like
<http://hellogiggles.com/emojis-you-wish-existed/>
- Twitter search for “breastfeeding emoji” shows a consistent stream of tweets requesting this emoji. Many sent directly to: Apple, Google, Facebook, Emojipedia, WhatsApp:
<https://twitter.com/search?f=tweets&vertical=default&q=breastfeeding%20emoji&src=typd>

⁵ [Center for Disease Control: Breastfeeding Report Card](#)

Factors for Exclusion

Overly specific

Breastfeeding is widely practiced by people of all countries of the world.

Open-ended

N/A

Already Representable

There is no emoji which represents the concept of breastfeeding either literally or figuratively. The closest emoji - Baby Bottle - is ineffective as a replacement, due to the global push for breastfeeding where possible.

Using a Baby Bottle emoji as a substitute for a breastfeeding emoji would be like using a car emoji as a substitute for a bike. Both are forms of transport which achieve many of the same goals, but are clearly not interchangeable, and give a different message than intended.

Logos, brands, UI icons, signage, specific people, deities

N/A

Transient

Breastfeeding has existed since the beginning of humanity, and will continue longer than current technology, mobile phones, or emoji for that matter!

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Joshua Jones for the sample images used in this proposal, and to Roisin Bradley, Jeremy Burge, Niamh McKeown, Mae Nugent, Dr. Mark Sellwood and all the mothers on the Neonatal Unit at UCLH.

Thanks also to the research provided by the Center for Disease Control, UNICEF, World Health Organisation, and the University College of London Hospital.