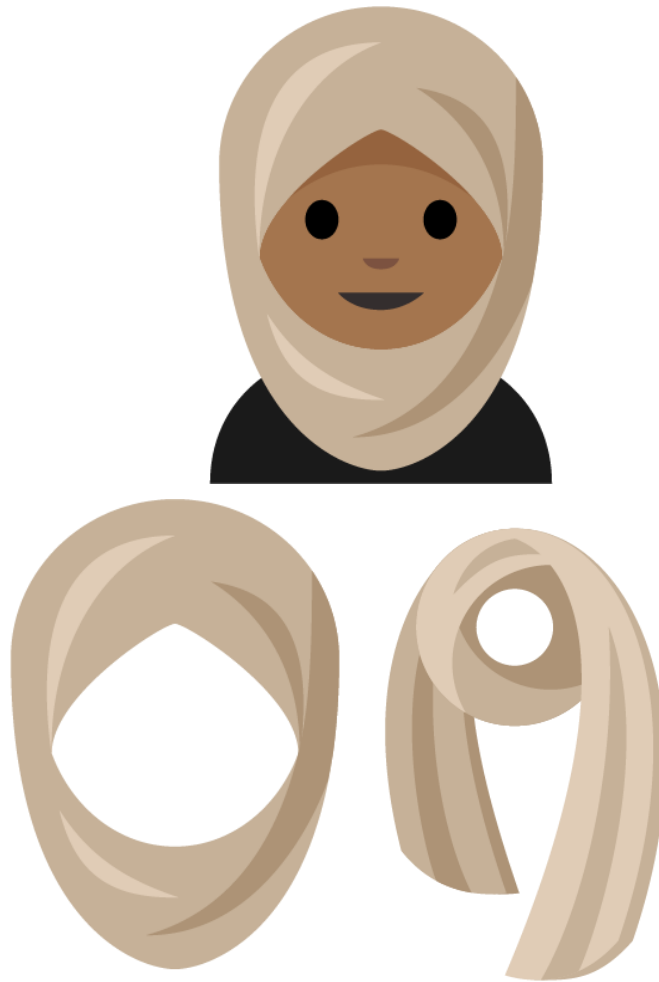


UTC Document Submission: HIJAB/HEADSCARF EMOJI**To:** UTC**From:** Rayouf Alhumedhi (rayoufalhumedhi@gmail.com), Aphelandra Messer (aphmesser@gmail.com), Ayisha Irfan (irfan.ayisha@gmail.com), Alexis Ohanian (a@reddit.com), Jennifer 8. Lee (jenny@jennifer8lee.com).**Date:** 09/20/2016

Images by Aphelandra Messer. Permission for use given for distribution in context of emoji proposal.

Abstract:

We propose the encoding of a HEADSCARF emoji, as well the creation of a ZWJ sequence WOMAN+SCARF to show a WOMAN IN A HEADSCARF or WOMAN IN A HIJAB emoji. Above we show the HEADSCARF both as a loose item of clothing and also in “ghost” state, with a phantom wearer.

In the age of digitalization, pictures prove to be a crucial element in communication. Emojis are more impactful and utilized than ever before. Millions use them to convey feelings, appearances and stories. We applaud Unicode for the diversification of emojis in recent years. However, this does not mean it should stop now. With the amount of difference in this world, we must be represented. We are here to discuss the addition of a HEADSCARF emoji.

Islam, Orthodox Judaism, Orthodox Christianity and Catholicism all have something in common: the significance of the headscarf or head covering as a demonstration of piousness.

Roughly 550 million Muslim women on this earth pride themselves on wearing the hijab. With this enormous number of people, not a single space on the keyboard is reserved for them. Most obviously, women wearing the hijab aren't mutually exclusive to one skin tone, so with the help of the Fitzpatrick Modifier, we would be able to develop an emoji that represents the religious and racial diversity that is present in the Muslim community.

In addition, headscarves are commonly worn by women in Eastern Orthodox Christian communities in Russia and Romania, as well as some conservative Jewish communities.

Hijab in Arabic translates to "partition" or "barrier."¹ The hijab symbolizes modesty, privacy and religious identity. Excluding family members, the hijab is worn in the presence of men. Women all across the globe choose to wear the headscarf because of its evident indication of their faith and identity. However, the hijab stretches much further than a piece of cloth on your head. It also influences the way you talk, the way you act and ultimately, your lifestyle. To say it's an integral aspect of women's lives is an understatement.

The first mention of any sort of veiling dates back to 13 B.C, in an Assyrian text. Veiling according to Assyrian Law, was reserved for upper-class women, ergo, women of less respectable backgrounds were forbidden to wear it. The aim of these pre-Islamic veils was to create a divide between the upper and lower class. By 627 C.E., the headscarf was introduced into the Arab Peninsula, after the "verse of the hijab" was introduced

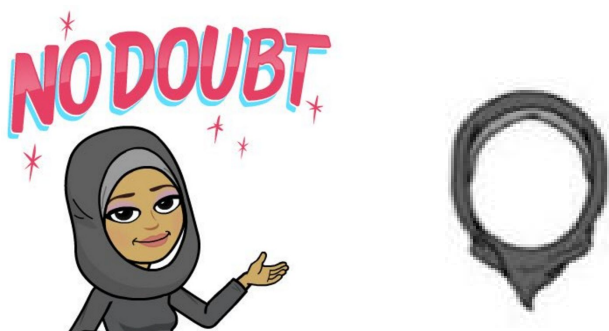
As we mentioned above, headscarves equally play a role in Orthodox Judaism and Catholicism. It's been a tradition for around 2000 years that Catholic women cover their hair during times of worship, this is mainly concentrated in areas like Russia and Romania. Hair covering in Jewish communities exists, particularly, for married women to maintain modesty and privacy.

¹ "BBC - Religions - Islam: Hijab." 2006. 27 Aug. 2016
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam/beliefs/hijab_1.shtml>

Factors for Inclusion:

A. **Compatibility:**

The only social platform we are aware of that provides emojis of a woman in a hijab is Bitmoji, now part of Snapchat, one of the most popular social platforms in the world. You have the option of adding a hijab to your avatar.



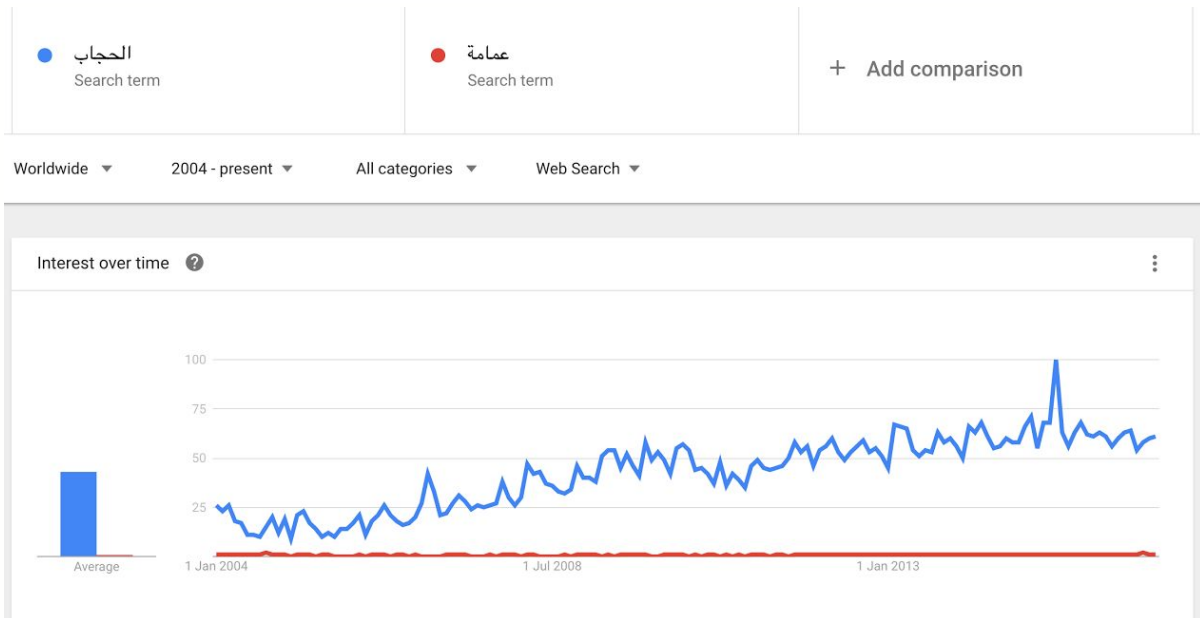
B. **Expected Usage Level:**

i) Frequency:

There is an extremely high expected frequency level of this emoji as shown below:

- As of 08/26/2016, when typing “hijab” into the tags search bar on Instagram, you will receive 15.6 million photos. On the other hand, searching for “turban” you will receive 732,000 photos.
- Usage of this emoji will be predominantly in Muslim countries. This includes Indonesia, the fourth most populous country in the world, where the Muslim population is 202 million. In Egypt, the 15th most populous country in the world, the percentage of women wearing headscarves is 90%.²
- Widely popular hijabi fashion blogger, Sondos Alqattan, (2.1 million Instagram followers as of 08/26/2016) is an example of the prevalence and popularity of hijab culture.
- The demand for hijabs is significantly greater than that of turbans as seen on Google trends photo below in both English and Arabic. “Hijab” (الحجاب) is blue and “turban” (عمامة) is red in both languages.

² <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/01/28/weekinreview/28slackman.html> (Retrieved August 26, 2016)



ii) Multiple Usages:

A headscarf has both religious and non-religious meanings:

- Women wear headscarves across many religions as a sign of modesty, including parts of Christianity and Judaism.
- This emoji can convey religious feelings.
- This emoji can represent Ramadan, Eid and any religious celebrations.
- Women with cancer sometimes like to wear a headscarf; this emoji could come to hand.
- Or simply a woman that enjoys wearing a headscarf

C. Image Distinctiveness:

Currently, there is no image of a woman with headgear of any sort, though there is a MAN WITH TURBAN. There will be women with headgear in the new batch of professional-related ZWJ-sequence emoji – PILOT, ASTRONAUT, CHEF, GRADUATE, ARTIST, among others. However, these are all visually distinct from the WOMAN IN A HEADSCARF as their headgear generally has some distinct iconic meaning drawn from their definable shapes.

D. Completeness:

The WOMAN IN A HEADSCARF would be a terrific addition to the MOSQUE and ISLAM SYMBOL emojis, as the HIJAB is one of the most globally recognized iconic representations of Islam.

E. Frequently Requested:

- The request for a HIJAB emoji is ranked 5th on Emojipedia.³
- BuzzFeed created a page of emojis that should be added, and hijab is mentioned twice.⁴
- In an attempt to promote individuality and gender equality, an opinion writer requested the WOMAN IN A HEADSCARF emoji on the New York Times website.⁵

Factors for Exclusion:

F. Overly Specific:

The WOMAN IN A HEADSCARF emoji preserves a generic approach to head coverings. There are multiple types of headscarves depending on the area of the world (*chador*, *shayla* and *al-amira*). However, the hijab is recognized as the universal and basic image of a headscarf.

G. Open-Ended:

The addition of the hijab emoji will prove to be a step forward in tolerance and diversity. It is distinctive and holds a lot of spiritual meaning to millions of women across the globe, recognizing its importance will ultimately showcase great appreciation from the Muslim community.

H. Already Representable

There is no emoji that exists which represents a visibly devout Muslim woman. The closest thing is the MAN WITH A TURBAN. However, he is commonly used to represent Sikhism. If absolutely necessary, in some situations one could place the ISLAM emoji next to the WOMAN emoji. Nonetheless, this will lead to ambiguity and vagueness. As we have previously mentioned, not all women who wear headscarves are Muslim.

I. Unsuitability?

Our proposal of a WOMAN WITH HEADSCARF emoji is suitable for encoding as character. It does not contain any references to deities, logos, specific people, historical or living.

J. Transient:

This image is anything but short-term. Due to the ever-growing Muslim population around the world, this emoji will only increase in demand. According to the Pew study, if trends

³ <http://blog.emojipedia.org/top-emoji-requests-2016/> (Accessed August 26, 2016)

⁴ <https://www.buzzfeed.com/nathanwpyle/emojis-all-muslims-need> (Accessed August 26, 2016)

⁵

<http://nytlive.nytimes.com/womenintheworld/2015/04/09/10-tweaks-the-diverse-new-emojis-need-in-order-to-advance-gender-equality/>

continue, Islam will make up 29.7% of the world's population by 2050⁶. Currently, it stands at 23.2%. Muslims are expected to become 50% of the population in 51 countries.

Moreover, Hijabis are becoming more recognized than ever, especially in sports, fashion and politics. The Olympian Muslim fencer, Ibtihaj Muhammad, became the first hijab-wearing American to compete. She won a Bronze medal in Sabre fencing in the 2016 in Rio Olympics.⁷ Hijabis are beginning to model and be further accepted into mainstream fashion.⁸

As of 08/25/16, the Scottish Police force approved of the hijab to become part of the uniform, in the interest of "creating a more diverse force."⁹ All these links prove that hijabs are being more and more represented in all aspects of life, and now it's time for technology to do the same.

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<http://www.pewforum.org/2015/04/02/religious-projections-2010-2050/> (Accessed August 28, 2016)

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<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3739419/Muhammad-US-teammates-win-bronze-sabre-fencing.html> (Accessed August 26, 2016)

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<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/womens-life/11898632/HandM-advert-features-first-Muslim-model-in-a-hijab-finally.html> (Accessed August 26, 2016)

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<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/police-scotland-hijab-official-uniform-muslim-women-islam-muslims-veil-a7207106.html> (Accessed August 27, 2016)

Note

Separately, at a future date, the Unicode Consortium may consider adding a MALE HEADSCARF (*keffiyah*) and MAN IN A HEADSCARF as a ZWJ sequence.



About the submitters:

Rayouf Alhumedhi (rayoufalhumedhi@gmail.com) is a 15-year-old high school student living in Berlin, Germany, where she moved in 2012. She takes keen interest in issues concerning social equality. She has been wearing a hijab since she was 13 years old. She became interested in emoji after trying to find an image to represent her and her friends on her iPhone keyboard. After first writing in on Apple's website, she finally learned from Mashable's Snapchat story how to properly submit a proposal to Unicode.

Aphelandra Messer (aphmesser@gmail.com) is a freelance illustrator/graphic designer based in Lincoln, Nebraska. Her creative pursuits include children's illustration, typography, book design, and emoji design.

Alexis Ohanian (a@reddit.com) is the co-founder of Reddit, tech investor, and bestselling author, *Without Their Permission*.

Jennifer 8. Lee (jenny@jennifer8lee.com) is a founder of Emojination, whose motto is "emoji by the people, for the people." She is also an organizer of Emojicon, a conference that celebrates emoji that will take place in November 4-6 in San Francisco.