Emoji Subcommittee Terminology and Process

To: UTC
From: Peter Edberg, Mark Davis, ESC
Date: 2017-01-19

The Emoji Subcommittee proposes that the following processes be publicly documented on the emoji pages, perhaps adding a separate process page to the emoji subpages.

Proposals to encode new emoji characters

Summary of stages (key terms in italics), visibility at each stage.

Stage 1: *Incoming, proposed* to emoji subcommittee. No external visibility.
Stage 2: *Pending UTC action.* Available in UTC document register.
Stage 3: *Candidate* for consideration at Q4 meeting. Appears in emoji candidates chart as a candidate, with no codepoint.
Stage 4: *Provisionally accepted* for encoding in next Unicode release. Appears in emoji candidates chart as provisionally accepted, with a draft codepoint; added to beta data files.
Stage 5: *Released* in a version of The Unicode Standard. Appears in Unicode code charts and public data files.
Stage 6: *Rejected.* The character proposal is rejected in its current form.

Process/workflow:

Stage 1, incoming, proposed

Incoming emoji proposals go first to the emoji subcommittee (ESC) which can do one of four things:
1. Determine immediately that the proposed characters fall under one or more of the Factors for Exclusion (see Selection Factors), and notify the proposer. The characters move to stage 6.
2. Consider the proposal as input for future encoding decisions, and notify the proposer. Typically the character is included in a list of similar characters (eg, 'animals') for consideration and prioritization. This action can be taken regardless of whether the proposal is well-formed. The characters remain in stage 1, but may be advanced in the future as part of another proposal.
3. Determine that the proposal may have merit in its own right, but is not sufficiently well-formed according to the criteria in Selection Factors, or takes an encoding approach that the subcommittee believes should be changed. In this case the ESC sends the proposal back to the originator with a suggestion and/or request for modification. The proposed characters remain in stage 1 pending proposal revisions.
4. Determine that the proposal is well-formed with sufficient merit, and should be forwarded to the UTC. The proposer is notified. At this point the proposal moves to stage 2.

In any of cases 2-4, the proposed character(s) may also be included in a proposal developed by the ESC for a larger set of related characters. Note that the ESC has some internal substages to organize items in Stage 1.

Stage 2, pending UTC action

Before each UTC meeting, the ESC will provide a document that summarizes the characters currently pending UTC action, and provide one of the following sub-statuses:

1. No recommendation from ESC.
2. ESC recommendation to add as a candidate.
3. ESC recommendation not to add as a candidate (this should be rare).
4. ESC recommendation to use as background for another larger proposal that includes it. In this case, it is the larger proposal that would have one of the three statuses above.

During each UTC meeting, some or all of the characters that are proposed to UTC may be considered as candidates, with the following possible results:

1. Proposed characters may be accepted for stage 3 as candidates for emoji encoding.
2. Proposed characters may be rejected as candidates, and moved to stage 6. The proposer is notified.
3. Proposed characters may be sent back to the emoji subcommittee with instructions to reconsider or improve the proposal, possibly in conjunction with the original proposer. In this case the characters revert to state 1 status until they are re-submitted by the ESC. The associated proposal remains in the UTC document register, however.
4. No action may be taken; the proposed characters remain in status 2 for consideration at a future UTC meeting.

Stage 3, candidate (without codepoint) - candidates under consideration

Before the Q4 UTC meeting, the ESC prepares a summary document listing all of the candidates, along with recommendations for which should advance to stage 4. At the meeting, the UTC first considers the newest stage 2 characters, as described under Stage 2. It then considers all characters that are currently stage 3 candidates for emoji encoding for encoding in the next release of Unicode. As a result, some candidates may move to stage 4 as provisionally accepted for encoding in the next Unicode release; code points for these are assigned during the meeting. Others may remain in stage 3 as candidates.

Stage 4, provisionally accepted (has codepoint) - candidates for 20nn

The provisionally accepted characters are included in the Unicode beta.

Stage 5, released

When the emoji are part of a release, then they move to *stage 5, released*.

Proposals to add emoji status or to document new ZWJ sequences

Requests to add emoji status for existing characters, or to document new ZWJ sequences, may come from the following sources (and others):

- External documents.

- ESC determination that proposed emoji characters might be better represented as ZWJ sequences.
- ESC determination that existing non-emoji characters should be made emoji, especially if they are needed for some emoji-related mechanisms.
- Script subcommittee suggestions that proposed symbols might be considered as emoji.

The ESC determines which changes should be considered for the next emoji data update, and then takes one or both of the following actions:

- Forwards an external proposal to the UTC, and/or
- Creates a proposal to UTC from ESC recommending changes.

For each meeting, the ESC prepares a summary document indicating which changes are recommended.

If the UTC agrees to consider the changes as part of a new draft update to the emoji data (and a new draft release of UTR51), the normal process for data and specification updates is followed:

- A public review is generally authorized for the proposed changes.
- The ESC adds the changes to the draft updates for UTR51 and data, along with any review notes deemed necessary. Before posting, the editorial committee may review the draft material and suggest changes.
- After the public review period closes, public review feedback is considered at the next UTC meeting and incorporated as necessary into the proposed updates to data and UTR51, along with any feedback directly from the UTC.
- With those updates, the UTC may authorize release of the updated emoji data and a new version of UTR51.

See related document L2/17-005 proposing a more formal process for ZWJ sequence proposals. If accepted, that process will be merged into this document and/or emoji pages resulting from this document..