



SKATEBOARDER Emoji Submission

To: Unicode Consortium

From: Jaron Heard

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Abstract:

We are requesting the addition of a SKATEBOARDER emoji. A skateboarder glyph would fill a notable gap in the current emoji set which includes SURFER and SNOWBOARDER.

Support:

Factors for inclusion:

A. Compatibility

We are not aware of any major platforms currently using this emoji. However, an app available on the Apple app store

“SKATEmoji” provides access to skateboard related emoji and stickers, including a SKATEBOARDER emoji.

B. Expected usage level

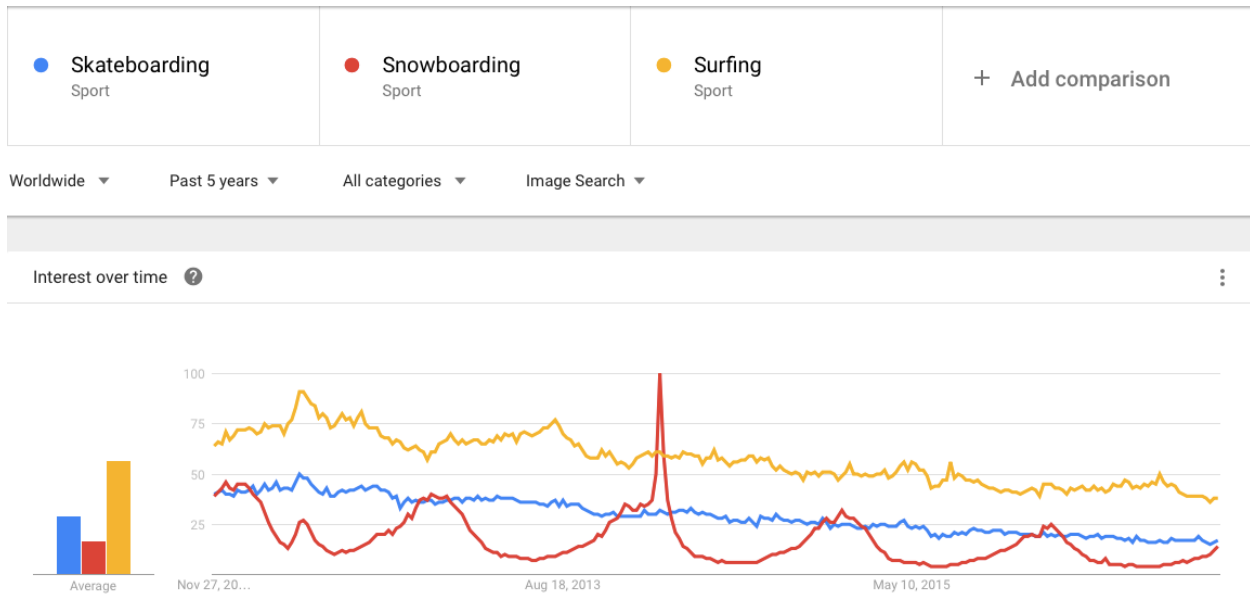
1. Frequency

In order to estimate anticipated frequency of usage for a SKATEBOARDER emoji, we looked at comparisons between skateboarding, snowboarding, and surfing related terms to gain insight into how popular the proposed SKATEBOARDER emoji would be in comparison to the existing SURFER and SNOWBOARDER emoji. The SURFER and SNOWBOARDER emoji are more popular than the median emoji.

Using data collected in the past decade, it is estimated there are 18-50 million skateboarders, 5-25 million surfers, and 10-20 million snowboarders in the world¹.

As a Google Image search topic, skateboarding has been 70% more popular than snowboarding and 51% less popular than surfing. Search topics match similar concepts across languages worldwide, and are therefore more representative of worldwide popularity than individual search terms.

¹ (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boardsport>), accessed November 20, 2016



Based on Instagram hashtags as of October 2016, #skateboard is 42% more popular than #snowboard and 327% more popular than #surfboard. In addition, #skateboarder is 50% more popular than #snowboarder, but is 82% less popular than #surfer. The colloquial term #skater is 732% more popular than #snowboarder and is 2% more popular than #surfer. Note that results for #skateboarding were not able to be tabulated because “recent posts from #skateboarding are currently hidden because the community has reported some content may not meet Instagram’s community guidelines”.

Data notes: The colloquial term “skater” is more popular than “skateboarder” for internet searches. A significant majority of the “skater” images are of skateboarders, but some are of other things like roller skaters or ice skaters. Therefore, using the term “skater” as a proxy for skateboarder likely overstates its popularity. The peak in the snowboard related image searches was during the 2014 Winter Olympics, which featured snowboarding. Skateboarding will be featured as a new sport in the 2020 Summer Olympics. Also, searches for snowboard related terms are more popular during winter in the northern

hemisphere, which explains the seasonality in the snowboarding data.

2. Multiple usages

The image of a skateboarder has multiple usages in popular culture. Skateboarding can be considered an action sport, recreational activity, an art form, a job, or a method of transportation. Skateboarding has also influenced popular culture and fashion.

C. Image distinctiveness

The image of a skateboarder would be distinctive enough to differentiate it from its closest relatives, SURFER and SNOWBOARDER, due to the wheels on the skateboard. In addition, a skateboarder would be shown in an urban environment, whereas the SURFER and SNOWBOARDER are shown in the ocean and the mountains, respectively.

D. Completeness

As mentioned in the abstract, a SKATEBOARDER emoji would complete the three most popular boardsports, accompanying the SURFER and SNOWBOARDER emoji. Snowboarding, surfing, and skateboarding is called “the trifecta” by boardsports enthusiasts. Some people complete the trifecta in one day² and there have even been trifecta competitions³.

E. Frequently requested

² (<http://snowboardmag.com/stories/the-trifecta-snow-skate-and-surf-in-one-day-with-burton>)

³ (<http://www.independent.com/news/2008/apr/20/ultimate-champion/>)

The SKATEBOARDER emoji is frequently requested on Twitter, with many hundreds of users tweeting about the lack of a skateboard emoji⁴

An Instagram post by professional skateboard Tony Hawk “no skateboard emoji = (THUMBS DOWN SIGN emoji)” garnered over 43,000 likes⁵.

Factors for exclusion:

F. Overly specific

A SKATERBOARDER would be no more specific than the existing SURFER or SNOWBOARDER emoji, or other sports-related emoji such as the SKIER or BICYCLIST emoji.

G. Open-ended

Skateboarding, snowboarding, and surfing are the most popular board-sports by a wide margin. Completing the “trifecta” of board-sports should be sufficient. Wakeboarding could be considered one of the main board-sports, but it is significantly less popular than the three main board-sports (5%-25% as popular based on the metrics used in the frequency section).

H. Already Representable

The closest we could come up with to representing a SKATEBOARDER would be combining a SURFER or SNOWBOARDER emoji with a MOTORWAY emoji, which is quite awkward.

⁴(<https://twitter.com/search?q=%22skateboard%20emoji%22&src=typd>)

⁵(<https://www.instagram.com/p/0zMk8DLHkL/>)

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

A SKATEBOARDER is not a logo, a brand, a UI icon, signage, a specific person, or a deity.

J. Transient

Skateboarding is the second oldest board-sport, after surfing. In addition, its addition as an Olympic sport is an indication of its expected longevity.