

Subject: Compilation of Feedback on Accessibility Emoji proposal

Date: 2018/04/26

Source: Rick McGowan

This document is a compilation of feedback received from the public via the Unicode website reporting form regarding the document "Proposal For New Accessibility Emoji" ([L2/18-080](#)).

Date/Time: Sat Mar 24 12:27:13 CDT 2018

Name: Bertha Chambers

Report Type: Feedback on an Encoding Proposal

Opt Subject: Apple Disabilities Emojis

I read several articles today about Apple's emoji proposal. I think it's fantastic that they're trying to improve communication by including emojis that represent people with disabilities.

That said...

As far as I can tell, Apple is making the same huge critical error that many corporate and even governmental entities make in regards to what they classify as disabilities: They are acknowledging for the most part, except for any emojis that represent someone who has hearing loss, only those disabilities that can be "seen" visually by other people or that already have a lot of public exposure.

There are a great many non-visual disabilities from invisible chronic illnesses and serious acute conditions. A person with an invisible condition and related disability/disabilities might look fantastic externally. For example, a person might experience horrible pain or motor or cognitive problems but rarely have to use a walker, wheelchair or cane except for extreme symptom events. This fact doesn't change that their symptoms have left them unable to work or possibly go out often, handle their own money, etc.

What would be better than these mere 13 emoji options covering already well-known disabilities is a series of emojis that represent:

1. The physical limitations that Apple has proposed.
2. Invisible disabilities - Examples: <http://invisiblemeinvisiblyou.com/wp->

content/uploads/2016/07/not-every-disability-is-visible.jpg,
https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/f6/Disability_symbols.svg,
<http://www.rickhansen.com/Portals/0/EasyDNNNews/81/854480c13094EDNmaininvisible%20disabilities%20graphic.jpg> and
<https://i0.wp.com/returntowellness.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/accessible-loo-sign-e1471951766954.jpg?resize=1080%2C675&ssl=1>

3. Specific invisible conditions, such as brain tumors, MS, chronic fatigue syndrome, thoracic outlet syndrome, arthritis, connective tissue disorder, etc. should also be represented by emojis.

Look at the images with this Google search page to see why it's so important. Far too often, healthy and more capable people believe that someone who looks fine shouldn't park in a handicapped spot because they must be "faking." The internet is no different. It's difficult for someone who has an invisible illness who is disabled to explain their unique situation via chat in a succinct way.

If Apple truly wants to improve communication with disabilities emojis, then it should be willing to go back to the drawing board now, instead of later, to create more emojis so that everyone has equal access to true representation from the start. I'm not saying that they have to create emojis to represent thousands of disabilities.

The problem is that someone with a wheelchair should NOT be considered more disabled or actually disabled as compared to someone with an unseen condition. It's this sort of action that has caused a lot of problems in the US, again, with people with invisible disabilities being harassed or yelled at for parking in handicapped parking spaces. There should be communication tools that help to spread the awareness better.

One more thing: Apple's emojis for Single Side Deafness (SSD) are not entirely accurate. Many people now think of a musical note inside of a circle with a crossed line through it as the symbol for SSD. In fact, a lot of people get a tattoo of a musical note with a line through it put near their ear as a warning to those who can hear that the ear won't pick up sound.

Date/Time: Sat Mar 24 16:04:18 CDT 2018

Name: Roozbeh Pournader

Report Type: Feedback on an Encoding Proposal

Opt Subject:

There's a very informative thread about design of the glyph for manual wheelchair here that's perhaps useful to the members designing an emoji font:

<https://twitter.com/robinmarceline/status/977620160046538752?s=19>

Date/Time: Sat Mar 24 16:30:23 CDT 2018

Name: Robin Eames

Report Type: Other Question, Problem, or Feedback

Opt Subject: Wheelchair emoji design

Hi! I am very glad to see that Unicode is implementing wheelchair user emojis, but the design of the manual chair emoji is based on a temporary folding wheelchair, not the kind of wheelchair that is designed for long-term use by a disabled person. It has a crossbar, armrests, high backrest, anti-tip bar/rollers, and handles, all of which are unlikely to be found on a correctly fitted manual wheelchair!

It's very difficult to self-propel a temporary chair, they are designed to be pushed by someone else, and they are physically painful to use. Most media representation of manual chairs unfortunately depicts temp transport chairs not rigid/fixed frame chairs that would be accurate for a long term chair user (eg someone with a spinal cord injury, muscular dystrophy etc).

When I first started needing to use a wheelchair I didn't know the difference due to lack of media representation and very nearly opted for a folding chair - this would have been disastrous because they don't hold up to long term use (fall apart within a year or so). Inaccurate representation also contributes to inadequate provision of social supports because people don't realise that there's a huge difference between different kinds of chairs and that it's unreasonable to expect disabled people to use temp chairs in the long term. I saw someone recently describe temp chairs as a "rattle workout".

I wrote a Twitter thread about it here:

<https://twitter.com/robinmarceline/status/977620160046538752> and there is an excellent article about the issue here: <https://www.themarysue.com/how-to-illustrate-wheelchairs/>

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions!

Cheers

Robin

Date/Time: Sat Mar 24 18:55:55 CDT 2018

Name: Robin Eames

Report Type: Other Question, Problem, or Feedback

Opt Subject: Re: wheelchair emojis

Hi! Further to previous feedback, I noticed that the proposed titles for the wheelchair user emojis are Person In Manual Wheelchair and Person In Mechanized Wheelchair. I'd like to suggest Person With Manual Wheelchair and Person With Motorized Wheelchair as preferable alternatives (ideally Manual Wheelchair User and Motorized Wheelchair User, but I'm told that's not how the naming pattern usually works). I've never seen anyone call a motorized wheelchair/power wheelchair a mechanized wheelchair, and "with" helps to emphasise the fact that wheelchairs are mobility devices/aids, not prisons as some perceive them as (and also that a huge proportion of wheelchair users are partially ambulant!)

Cheers

Robin

Date/Time: Mon Mar 26 11:01:17 CDT 2018

Name: Karishma Shah

Report Type: Other Question, Problem, or Feedback

Opt Subject: Disability Emoji

Hi There,

I'm very pleased that emojis are being made to represent people with disabilities however i feel the emoji representing the person using a cane has been done slightly wrong. The image shows a person using a cane and the ribbon around their wrist. In reality this is not the case and can be very dangerous. I encourage this to be reviewed as it gives a misleading picture. I would be happy to discuss this.

Date/Time: Wed Apr 18 13:09:45 CDT 2018

Name: Dr. Stefan Zimmer

Report Type: Feedback on an Encoding Proposal

Opt Subject: Hearing Aid emoji as proposed by Apple

My name is Stefan Zimmer, I am the Secretary General of EHIMA, the European Hearing Instrument Manufacturers' Association. EHIMA is representing hearing aid manufacturers with a global market share of over 90%.

Please allow me to raise the issue of the new hearing aid emoji, as recently proposed by Apple. The emoji shows the left ear in yellow color, with a so called BTE (behind-the-ear) hearing aid (gray). While we appreciate the intention of creating a special emoji for owners of hearing aids, we want to share our thoughts and recommend some changes:

1. The hearing aid shown is very big and clumsy. Hearing aids of this size are either very old or so called high-power hearing aids which are worn by very few people. However, even the largest modern high-power hearing aid would not protrude as far from the outer ear as the emoji depicts.

Why is that a problem? Still many hard of hearing people fear being stigmatized when wearing a hearing aid. We found that the (wrong) impression that hearing aids are big, ugly and clumsy prevent many hard of hearing people from purchasing a hearing aid. The emoji in its proposed form rather feeds into this stigma by showing an outdated, huge hearing aid.

Our recommendation: Make the hearing aid smaller. We understand it needs to be somehow visible for the emoji to be of effect, but even if it protrudes less from the ear, it will still be visible enough.

2. The hearing aid shown uses a rather big tube channeling the sound from the hearing aid into the ear.

Our recommendation: In order to depict a modern hearing aid the tube (channeling the sound from the hearing aid into the ear) should be replaced by a wire. So called RIC (receiver in canal) hearing aids are most popular because the "loudspeaker" of the hearing aid sits in the ear canal (at the end of the thin wire), thus allowing the hearing aid to be built smaller.

So, if the intention is to raise awareness and (as Apple writes) "better represent individuals with disabilities" we urge you to have the hearing aid emoji modified by

-reducing the outdated and rather deterring size of the hearing aid,

- replacing the thick tube by a thin, tube-covered wire,

all in all making the hearing aid less deterrent and stigmatizing, and more likely to be connotated positively by hard of hearing people, hearing aid owners and those around them.

We would be highly grateful if you considered our proposals.

Certainly we will answer any question you may have or provide you with additional information.

Best regards,

Dr. Stefan Zimmer
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BVHI
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Date/Time: April 26, 2018

Name: William Overington

Report Type: Feedback on an Encoding Proposal

Opt Subject: Some comments on L2/18-080 Proposal For New Accessibility Emoji

I have been looking with interest at the following publication.

Proposal For New Accessibility Emoji
by Apple Inc.

I am supportive of the proposal. Indeed please have more such emoji as well.

In relation to the two dogs.

My own (limited) experience of guide dogs for people with a vision disability, just from seeing them in the street and on television is that in the United Kingdom the dogs often have a yellow protective coat with silvery strips on them so that they can be more easily seen. It may also help them being more readily recognised as each being a guide dog. The dogs tend to be of a type of dog of rather wider aspect ratio, if that is the way to put it, than the dog in the sample glyph in the proposal document. The dogs tend to be a creamy yellow colour, though there was a famous guide dog who was all black, famous as the guide dog was allowed to accompany a then Member of Parliament into the House of Commons Chamber in London.

So, while the two rod guide handle, contrasted with a floppy lead, is a good disambiguation guide for the two types of assistance dogs, I suggest that using the presence of what the proposal terms a vest for disambiguation may

not be appropriate.

Also the word vest appears to have different meanings in British English and American English.

Maybe jacket might be better choice of word than vest for the standards document.

What about the colour and type of the dog? Perhaps easier to add in now than later?

What about a person with a hidden disability? Many people have a hidden disability yet do not have a service dog as the nature of the particular hidden disability or maybe hidden disabilities does not need the help of a service dog.

Should there be an emoji for a person with a hidden disability? Or maybe more than one such emoji so as to disambiguate the types of hidden disability, always remembering to have an "other hidden disability" emoji so as to include all types of hidden disability?

Those questions, and indeed the whole proposal document, lead to asking for what purposes these emoji are envisioned as becoming used?

For example, a person with a hidden disability might not like to be referred to as such, yet may like to describe himself or herself as having a hidden disability if trying to find appropriate facilities relevant to the particular disability, such as a toilet for a person with a disability with the additional facilities thereof, or seeking access to a chair or a first-aid room, or seeking help for opening a door, or maybe when requesting a special diet, such as a gluten-free diet.

How could the accessibility emoji in the proposal be used in practice?

William Overington

Thursday 26 April 2018