

Comments on Emoji 12.0 Candidates

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YAWNING FACE

The concepts of boredom and tiredness can already be sufficiently represented by characters like SLEEPY FACE, SLEEPING FACE, TIRED FACE, WEARY FACE, or SLEEPING SYMBOL. I see no reason to encode *another* emoji that conveys exactly the same meaning, just with slightly different visuals.

SERVICE ANIMAL VEST

This item is utterly unrecognisable in emoji form and serves no purpose as a pictographic character in its own right. The only way it could be useful is as an emoji component used in RGI sequences. No person is ever going to use the sequence DOG + SERVICE ANIMAL VEST in unligated form to indicate a dog wearing said vest.

A dog with vest should be added as an explicitly recommended ZWJ sequence to Emoji 12.0 and SERVICE ANIMAL VEST should be given the property `Emoji_Component=Yes`, thereby indicating that the character should not be available individually on keyboards. Or better yet, the UTC should re-evaluate whether this character is truly needed. If it is only ever going to be used in one singular ZWJ sequence, then adding the second service dog as an atomic character could be the superior option.

OYSTER

This character's categorisation, keywords, and collation indicate that the UTC intends it to represent a live oyster rather than a prepared food item, but the current sample image shows a oyster that has been opened and is therefore most likely about to be eaten. Furthermore, pearl oysters aren't actually that closely related to the kinds of oysters that are consumed by humans. This could lead to large discrepancies between vendor implementations. The UTC should consider adopting a representative glyph that is more similar to the previously proposed 'Oyster with Pearl' ([L2/17-269](#)). This would also make the desired association with pearls clearer.

FALAFEL

The keyword 'meatball' is not appropriate for this character because this dish is very distinctly vegetarian. The representation of more vegetarian foods was a huge motivation behind the [original proposal](#), so the semantics of this emoji should not be overloaded like that.

ICE CUBE

No proposal for an ice cube emoji has ever been submitted to the Unicode Consortium, and an ice cube is very clearly not the same thing as an iceberg. This character should be removed from the candidate list until someone empirically demonstrates the need for it by addressing the emoji selection factors. The ESC should not have the authority to create new characters out of thin air without any kind of justification or explanation. Additionally, the concept of coldness can already be represented by characters like FREEZING FACE, SNOWFLAKE, SNOWMAN, or CLOUD WITH SNOW.

STETHOSCOPE

It is unclear why this character was deemed necessary. What does a stethoscope represent that isn't already covered by a plethora of other, medically themed emoji, for example the two Health Workers (which are already depicted with stethoscopes on all platforms), FACE WITH MEDICAL MASK, FACE WITH THERMOMETER, HOSPITAL, AMBULANCE, SYRINGE, PILL, and STAFF OF AESCULAPIUS, as well as fellow candidate emoji ADHESIVE BANDAGE? This character should be removed for further study.

MECHANICAL LEG

I think this emoji should be sorted after LEG rather than after FLEXED BICEPS.

PINCH

A name like 'PINCHING HAND' would be more appropriate to better convey this character's identity. All hand shape characters save one (SIGN OF THE HORNS) include some reference to hands in their name, in particular the words 'hand', 'fist', 'index', 'palm', and 'thumb' depending on the character.

Coloured Squares and Circles

Before we invent an entirely novel emoji syntax, we should investigate whether real people actually use existing emoji similar to the way the proposal outlines. In my experience, they don't. I cannot remember a single occurrence anywhere on the internet of someone sincerely using shape emoji or other abstracted pictographs as if they were adjectives to convey some real meaning.

White wine is a common request, but I have never encountered the combination WINE GLASS + WHITE LARGE SQUARE/MEDIUM WHITE CIRCLE to denote said beverage. Polar bear is a common request, but I have never encountered the combination BEAR FACE + SNOWFLAKE – which should theoretically be an obvious workaround – except to deliberately highlight (and complain about) the fact that no polar bear emoji exists. Differently coloured reminder ribbons are a common request, but I have never seen REMINDER RIBBON being combined with any of the existing colour characters to simulate tinting. Before hair modifiers were introduced, people generally did not use LARGE RED CIRCLE as a substitute for ginger hair.

The syntax the UTC is proposing for these geometric characters is virtually unprecedented, and I see no reason to believe that people are going to adopt this mechanism on any significant scale once it exists. That is not how the general populace uses emoji. People really do not like emoji sequences unless they are ZWJ'd and take up just one single character space, but these colour modifiers cannot provide for that in the current draft model. Users constantly bemoan the lack of emoji for concepts that would be unambiguously representable by two existing emoji simply sitting side by side, even without any special rendering. What does the UTC expect to happen with sequences that are pretty much completely abstract and do not ever ligate?

The vast majority of users do not think of emoji as words or even proper parts of speech. They use them as decorations because typing an emoji is easier and quicker than searching for a cute image or reaction GIF on the web, or to merely repeat the points they have already made with regular letters for reasons that are beyond my comprehension. Technicolor squares are not helpful to these purposes and they never will be. A series of symbols that can be interpreted to mean 'white wine' is not what people want; what people want is a picture of an actual glass of white wine readily available on their keyboard.

If colour modifiers are the way forward for Unicode Emoji, then the proposed BLOOD DROP doesn't need to be added either. It can easily be represented as a sequence of DROPLET and LARGE RED CIRCLE.

Even if these makeshift adjectives were somehow justified, there is absolutely no reason for hearts *and* squares *and* circles in all different colours. This much pointless redundancy is only going to lead to people representing the exact same concepts in mutually incompatible ways. When a polar bear can be encoded as either a white square or a white circle or a white heart, either before or after a bear, either with or without a ZWJ in between, and all these options are somehow equally valid because there is no RGI polar bear, then searching and indexing emoji will become utterly impossible.

WHITE HEART can stay because it is commonly proposed independently from this adjective business, but the remaining thirteen colour candidates should be removed until further notice. As it stands the only application for these characters will be Twitter bots automatically generating works of modern art in plain text.