

Proposal for New Emoji

Feather Emoji Submission

To: Unicode Consortium

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Abstract

This is a request for the inclusion of the 'Feather Emoji'. There are no existing feather emojis and we consider it to be a valuable addition.

Introduction

Feathers are epidermal growths that form the distinctive outer covering, or plumage, on birds and a few other extinct species' of dinosaurs. They are considered the most complex integumentary structures found in vertebrates and a premier example of a complex evolutionary novelty. They are among the characteristics that distinguish the extant birds from other living groups. Although feathers cover most parts of the body of birds, they arise only from certain well-defined tracts on the skin. They aid in flight, thermal insulation, and waterproofing. In addition, coloration helps in communication and protection.

Feathers have many different symbolic meanings, but they have always been associated with freedom, transcendence and communication with spiritual realms. Finding a feather in an unexpected place is deciphered as an uplifting, spiritual experience. As a symbol across many cultures, feathers have represented a connection to spiritual realms and to divinity. And because of their connection to birds, they have been a symbol of flight and freedom, not just physically, but also in a mental or spiritual sense. In the Bible, feathers seem to speak of the idea of 'covering', of protection and of God's loving care. In Ancient Egypt, the feather was the symbol of Ma'at, the goddess of truth, justice and order. She is often depicted wearing a single ostrich feather in her hair. [\[1\]](#)

There are many different types of feathers. We have used the most commonly recognized in shape and look: Flight Feather. [\[2\]](#)

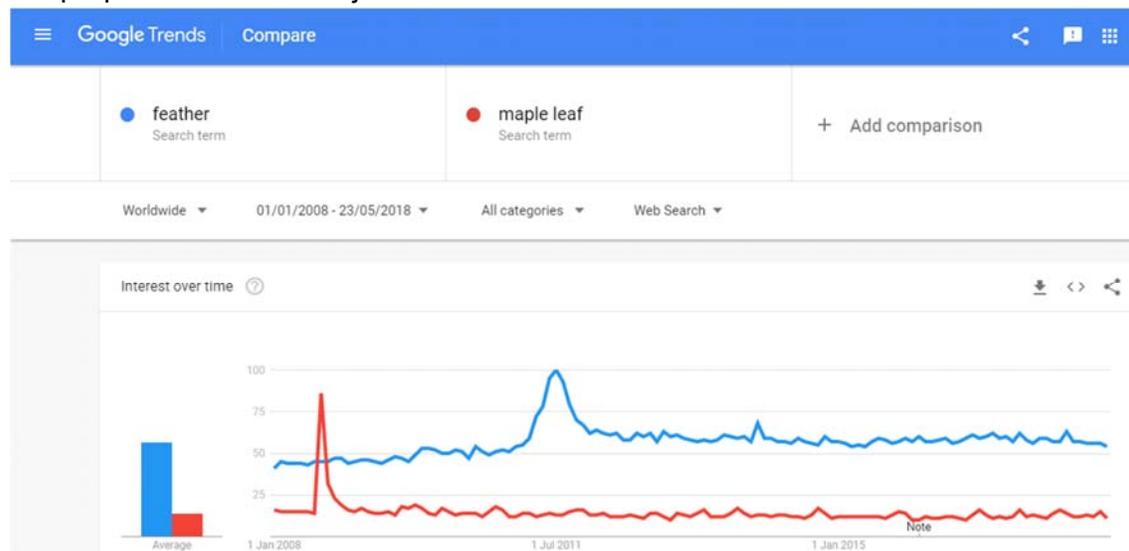
2. Selection factors for Inclusion

A. Compatibility

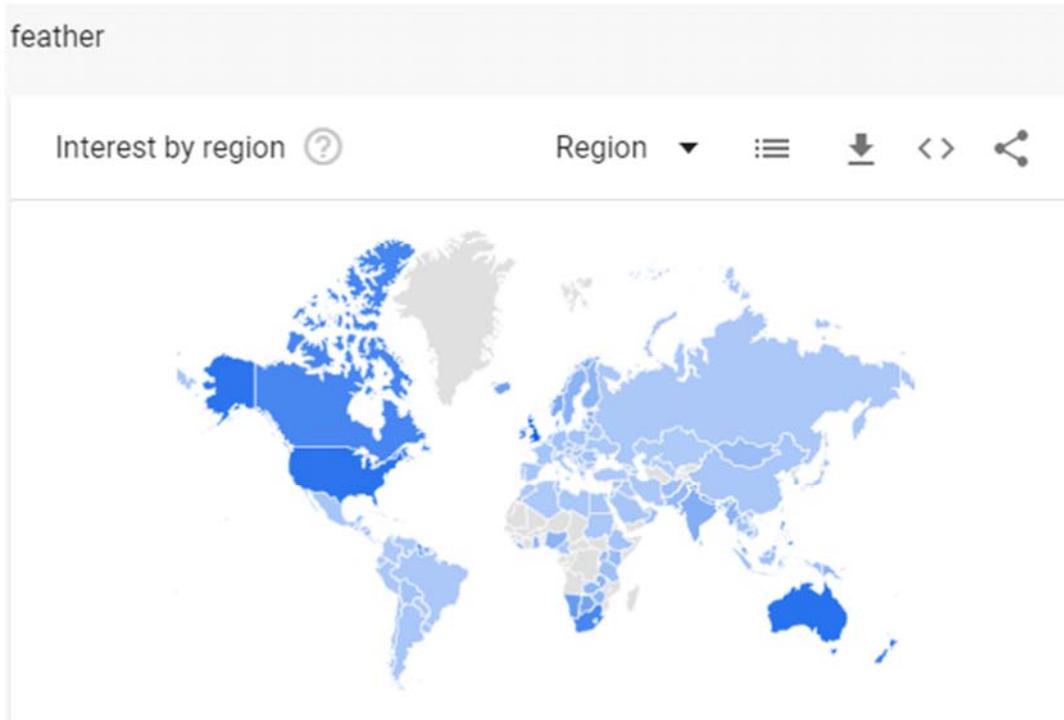
There is no existing feather emoji on any platform to the best of our knowledge. But this emoji with such a diverse set of meanings will be a great addition to the existing emoji set.

B. Expected Usage level

On comparing the trends between feather and maple leaf, we find the considerably higher trend of feather. There exists a maple leaf emoji under the Animals and Nature Category, thus the comparison. Maple leaves are well known around the world, the higher search frequency of the feather, only goes onto show the familiarity and popularity of feathers. The trend observation itself expounds on the expected use of the proposed feather emoji. [\[3\]](#)

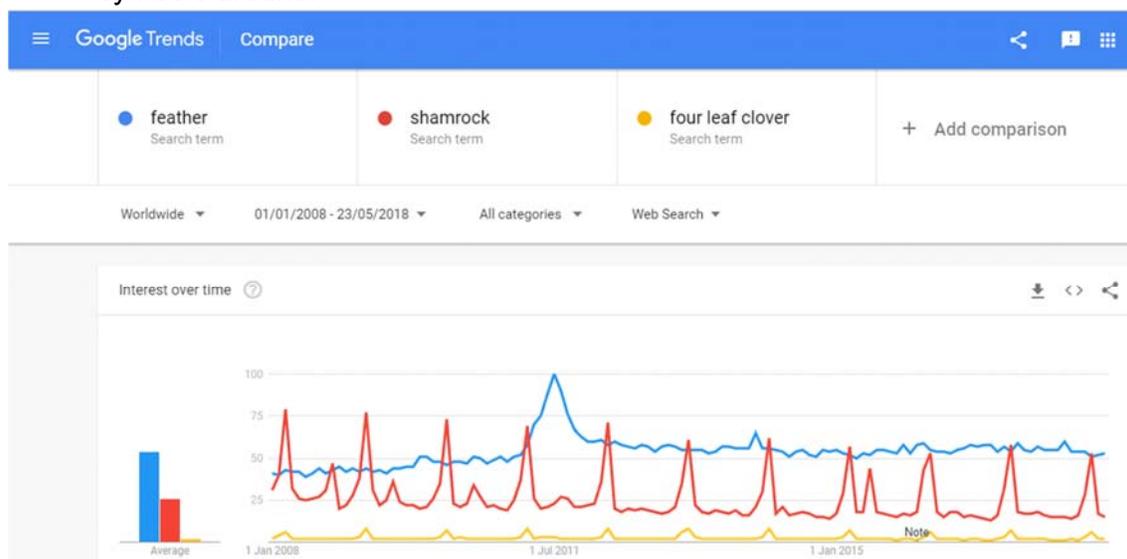


Along with high frequency, the geographic dispersion of the term feather is also widespread. [\[4\]](#)



We ran another comparison between the word 'feather' with the word 'shamrock' and 'Four Leaf Clover'. Both Shamrock and Four Leaf Clover are objects with positive connotations. The symbolism being:

1. The three leaves of a **shamrock** are said to stand for faith, hope and love.
2. The four leaves represent hope, faith, love and luck. This is the most shared belief. Some say the four leaves represent fame, wealth, love and health. All agree that the four leaf clover is one of the most auspicious good luck symbols around.^[5]



Despite their symbolic significance, we see clearly how feather outranks the two in terms of frequency. Both Shamrock and Four Leaf Clover peak every year, going over feather but that is only during the month of March, when Saint Patrick's Day is celebrated. This again hints at the high level of usage of the feather emoji which has wider and more far reaching overtones.

Multiple Usages

The use of the proposed emoji other than just as a feather, are multifold. It is difficult to come up with another symbol, which can express such varied things. Feathers represent a lot of things to a lot of different people. These are just a few overarching concepts that describe the symbolic meaning of feathers:^[6]

- Truth
- Speed
- Spirit
- Travel
- Heaven
- Levity
- Flight
- Messages
- Ascension
- Fertility
- Weightlessness(Synonyms of weightlessness are themselves: featherlight, feathery)
- Relaxation

In addition to these, feather is also best able to represent 'tickle' as an action. As feathers are often used to tickle people. The poster of a famous documentary called 'Tickled' comprises that of a feather.^[7]

Use in Sequence

The feather emoji used along with the person holding head emoji in ZWJ sequence will result in the Dizzy Person Emoji which is another of our proposals for 2018.

E. Breaking new ground

The addition of the emoji will bring in a still undepicted but favoured object to the emoji set.

D. Image Distinctiveness

The emoji is distinctive and clearly recognizable as a feather.

E. Completeness

The feather emoji will not be completing any previous set of emojis.

F. Frequently Requested

We found numerous hashtags on Instagram concerning feathers. As hashtags are more often than not accompanied by the respective emojis. This can directly translate into demand for feather emoji.^[8]

# #feather 20,90,362 public posts	# #featherearrings 74,010 public posts
# #feathertattoo 2,07,105 public posts	# #feather_feature 6,950 public posts
# #feathers 28,48,230 public posts	# #featheredbrows 48,917 public posts
# #featherbrows 1,38,587 public posts	# #feathering 1,24,639 public posts
# #feathered 67,912 public posts	# #feathereyebrows 13,636 public posts
# #featherdale 21,569 public posts	# #featherdress 9,754 public posts
# #feather_perfection 8,85,474 public posts	# #feathertattoos 7,368 public posts
# #feathered_finds 36,679 public posts	# #featherweight 84,400 public posts
# #featherstone 11,832 public posts	# #feathertouchbrows 53,153 public posts
# #feather_features 76,074 public posts	# #feathertouch 78,190 public posts
# #feathery 25,290 public posts	

Selection factors for exclusion

F. Overly specific

The emoji is not overly specific. It is a general object with which even kids are acquainted well.

G. Open Ended

Not Open Ended. (Would not be adding to a group of many feather emojis). This is one common object, not yet represented properly but deserving a place due to its far reaching uses.

H. Already Representable

No current emoji depicts a feather. The Emoji we are suggesting is able to delineate a feather very well.

I. Logos, Brands, UI Icons, Signage, Specific People, Deities-N/A

J. Transient

Feathers which are essentially part of a bird's anatomy, will not cease to exist till we have birds around. Hence the chance of them being transient is not remotely possible. The symbolism of feathers have been in use since centuries and it continues even to this day.

K. Faulty Comparison- N/A

L. Exact Images - N/A

1. <https://wootandhammy.com/blogs/news/what-does-a-feather-symbolize-symbolism-signs>
2. <http://www.peteducation.com/article.cfm?c=15+1829&aid=2776>
3. <https://trends.google.com/trends/explore?date=2008-01-01%202018-05-23&q=feather,maple%20leaf>
4. <https://trends.google.com/trends/explore?date=2008-01-01%202018-05-23&q=feather,maple%20leaf>
5. <https://trends.google.com/trends/explore?date=2008-01-01%202018-05-23&q=feather,shamrock,four%20leaf%20clover>
6. <http://www.whats-your-sign.com/symbol-meaning-of-feathers.html>
7. <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt5278506/>
8. <https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/feather/?hl=en>