

Proposal for new RGI ZWJ sequences for Deaf Woman/Man

Submitter: Apple Inc.

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Abstract

Apple is requesting the addition of “Deaf Woman/Man” ZWJ sequences to provide an emoji option for individuals in the Deaf community.

Introduction

While we are thankful that the vast majority of the emojis Apple proposed in our March 2018 proposal were approved, the emoji for the Deaf community was not included in Unicode’s final set of 2019 submissions. We believe Unicode should rethink this lack of representation given the importance of providing an emoji option for the over 466 million individuals around the globe with disabling hearing loss. The current selection of emoji provides a wide array of representations of people, activities, and objects meaningful to the general public (and soon, those with a range of disabilities), but none explicitly speak to the life experiences of those who are deaf. Diversifying the options available helps fill a significant gap and provides a more inclusive experience for all.

In lieu of a single emoji character, Apple proposes the inclusion of ZWJ sequences as described below.



The inclusion of these sequences to represent the emoji images below is endorsed by the World Federation of the Deaf. The World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) is an international non-governmental organization representing and promoting approximately 70 million deaf people's human rights worldwide. The WFD is a federation of deaf organizations from 135 nations; its mission is to promote the human rights of deaf people and full, quality and equal access to all spheres of life, including self-determination, sign language, education, employment and community life. WFD has a consultative status in the United Nations and is a founding member of International Disability Alliance (IDA). They provided support for the proposed emoji images with the following statement:

The WFD Board has discussed the emoji design and recognizes that there are multiple signs for Deaf around the world and the choice of the one finger is a valid option and one in which we are supportive of for this emoji.

At Apple, we believe that technology should be accessible to everyone and should provide an experience that serves individual needs. Adding emoji emblematic to users’ life experiences helps foster a diverse culture that is inclusive of disability. Emoji are a universal language and a powerful tool for communication used extensively in the Deaf community and we believe that not only would we be unfairly leaving the Deaf community out should there be no emoji option included for 2019, but that the image included is the most universal option as expressed by the WFD.

Proposed ZWJ sequences

466 million individuals are deaf or hard of hearing.¹ Apple believes that the emoji lexicon should include an option to represent those individuals and their life experience.

proposed code sequence	sample images	proposed CLDR name
U+1F469 woman U+200D ZWJ U+1F442 ear U+200D ZWJ U+261D index pointing up U+200D ZWJ U+1F444 mouth		deaf woman
U+1F468 man U+200D ZWJ U+1F442 ear U+200D ZWJ U+261D index pointing up U+200D ZWJ U+1F444 mouth		deaf man

Notes:

- While there may be other expressions of “Deaf Woman/Man” depending on the local dialect of sign language, the World Federation of the Deaf has stated that “the choice of the one finger is a valid option and one in which we are supportive of for this emoji.”
- Proposed collation position: Near 🙋 U+1F64B person raising hand
- Proposed variants: Skin tone

¹ <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs300/en/index.html>

Emoji selection factors

FACTORS FOR INCLUSION

- A. Compatibility Are these needed for compatibility with high-use emoji in existing systems? N/A.
- B. Expected use
1. Frequency Is there a high expected frequency of use?
The proposed emoji are expected to have high usage in the Deaf community, including friends and family. As noted, this community includes almost half a billion people worldwide. That said, the most compelling factor for this proposal is not frequency of use of each character, but the desire to be inclusive in representation.
 2. Multiple usages Does the candidate emoji have notable metaphorical references or symbolism?
No.
 3. Use in sequences Can the candidate be used in sequences? N/A.
 4. Breaking new ground Does the character represent something that is new and different?
Yes, there are currently no emoji that can be used to depict deafness or deaf people.
- C. Image distinctiveness Is there a clearly recognizable image of a physical object that could serve as a paradigm, one that would be distinct enough from other emoji?
The images depict a gesture that is distinct from any existing emoji.
- D. Completeness Does the proposed pictograph fill a gap in existing types of emoji?
Yes, the proposed emoji fill a significant gap in representation and inclusiveness among existing emoji.
- E. Frequently requested Is it often requested of the Unicode Consortium, or of Unicode member companies?
These have been frequently requested of Apple, and by external organizations.

COUNTERARGUMENTS TO FACTORS FOR EXCLUSION

- F. Overly specific Is the proposed character overly specific?
No, there are no other existing emoji that can depict deafness.
- G. Open-ended Is it just one of many, with no special reason to favor it over others of that type?
There are other gestures that can be used to indicate deafness. However the proposed gesture is the most common, and is endorsed by the World Federation of the Deaf.
- H. Already representable Can the concept be represented by another emoji or sequence?
No other existing emoji can depict deafness or deaf people; and the current proposal *is* for a sequence.
- K. Faulty comparison Are proposals being justified primarily by being similar to (or more important than) existing compatibility emoji? N/A.

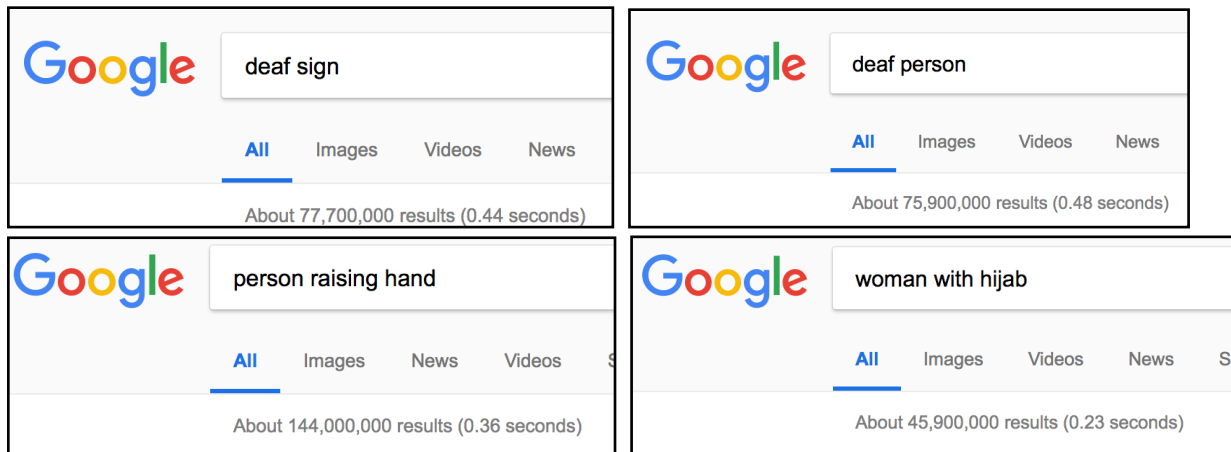
FREQUENCY DATA

The primary arguments for the proposed emoji are inclusiveness and expected high frequency of usage within a specific, but relatively large community. However, the following sections do provide the data requested in the “Evidence of Frequency” section of the guidelines for submitting emoji proposals. These use the following four search terms:

- “deaf sign” and “deaf person” to represent the proposed emoji, quoted in search if necessary to generate results (some searches treated these as too ambiguous without quotes).
- “person raising hand” as one reference; among the person-gesture emoji, this has approximately median usage in the data available to the Emoji Subcommittee, with low standard deviation.
- “woman with hijab” as a second reference, suggested by the Emoji Subcommittee as having useful frequency statistics for comparison.

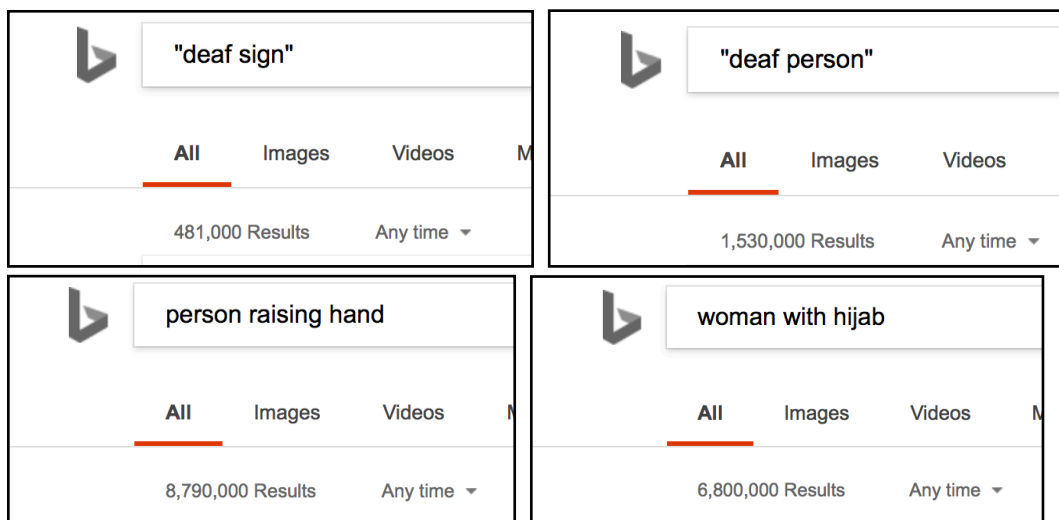
1. Google searches

(many hits for "person raising hand" were specifically for the existing emoji)



2. Bing searches

(Had to quote "deaf sign" and "deaf person" to get results, which lowers their relative count)



3. YouTube searches

(had to quote "deaf person", same issue as for Bing searches)



4. Google Trends web and image searches

