Gendered Emoji Update II

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1. Background

With the release of Unicode 9.0 in June of 2016, the Unicode Consortium began pursuing its self-imposed goal of improving gender representation in emoji, initially by encoding just four new characters meant to complete so-called "gender pairs". Despite my repeated warnings, this culminated five months later in the publication of Emoji 4.0, which cemented gender as a fundamental and intrinsic property of all human-form emoji, much like the concept of skin tone had been introduced the year prior.

The Unicode Technical Committee had ignored suggestions for improving their broken gender model, resulting in an insulting mess of a specification that not only completely omitted non-binary people, but left many binary identities in the dust as well for no reason given. This is obviously the exact opposite of what the Consortium was claiming to be working towards and only served to increase the level of gender inequality expressed through emoji. For the past two years, I have been writing numerous documents to the UTC, examining their shortcomings and proposing fixes to the standard, none of which were implemented. This is another one of these proposals.

While the only real solution to the gender problem is the universal deletion and deprecation of all gendered emoji, this is unlikely to occur in practice as to not destabilise existing documents. Therefore, the next best option is to encode all the missing gender variants (see table below). This still won't make the model employed by the UTC a useful approximation of human gender, but at the very least it would get rid of the more discriminatory aspects of the current specification.

Adding these missing variants would normally necessitate following the instructions for emoji proposals. However, as I have previously shown in L2/17-439 (*'Analysis of Emoji Proposals for Gender-Specific Additions'*), it has never been a requirement to do so if the emoji proposed are related to gender. I will therefore respect the clear precedent set by the UTC and not include a discussion of selection factors in this document, but the committee is free to reconsider the points raised in L2/17-232 (*'Proposal for Fully Gender-Inclusive Emoji'*) if need arises.

2. Repertoire

The following table illustrates which genders for which emoji are currently considered Recommended for General Interchange, already including Emoji 12.0 candidates.

Concept	Male	Neutral	Female
Child	✓	✓	✓
Adult	✓	✓	✓
Older adult	✓	✓	✓
Health worker	✓	✗	✓
Student	✓	✗	✓

Concept	Male	Neutral	Female
Teacher	✓	✗	✓
Judge	✓	✗	✓
Farmer	✓	✗	✓
Cook	✓	✗	✓
Mechanic	✓	✗	✓

Concept	Male	Neutral	Female
Factory worker	✓	✗	✓
Office worker	✓	✗	✓
Scientist	✓	✗	✓
Technologist	✓	✗	✓
Singer	✓	✗	✓
Artist	✓	✗	✓
Pilot	✓	✗	✓
Astronaut	✓	✗	✓
Firefighter	✓	✗	✓
Police officer	✓	✓	✓
Sleuth	✓	✓	✓
Guard	✓	✓	✓
Construction worker	✓	✓	✓
Royalty	✓	✗	✓
Turban	✓	✓	✓
Guā pí mào	✓	✗	✗
Headscarf	✗	✗	✓
Beard	✓	✗	✗
Blond hair	✓	✓	✓
Tuxedo	✓	✗	✗
Veil	✗	✗	✓
Pregnancy	✗	✗	✓
Breast feeding	✗	✓	✗
Christmas	✓	✗	✓
Mage	✓	✓	✓
Fairy	✓	✓	✓
Vampire	✓	✓	✓
Merperson	✓	✓	✓
Elf	✓	✓	✓
Genie	✓	✓	✓
Zombie	✓	✓	✓
Frowning	✓	✓	✓
Pouting	✓	✓	✓

Concept	Male	Neutral	Female
No good gesture	✓	✓	✓
OK gesture	✓	✓	✓
Information desk	✓	✓	✓
Raising hand	✓	✓	✓
Bowing	✓	✓	✓
Face palm	✓	✓	✓
Shrug	✓	✓	✓
Face massage	✓	✓	✓
Haircut	✓	✓	✓
Walking	✓	✓	✓
Running	✓	✓	✓
Dancing	✓	✗	✓
Bunny ears	✓	✓	✓
Steamy room	✓	✓	✓
Climbing	✓	✓	✓
Lotus position	✓	✓	✓
Levitating in business suit	✓	✗	✗
Golf	✓	✓	✓
Surfing	✓	✓	✓
Rowboat	✓	✓	✓
Swimming	✓	✓	✓
Ball	✓	✓	✓
Weight lifting	✓	✓	✓
Bicycle	✓	✓	✓
Mountain bicycle	✓	✓	✓
Cartwheel	✓	✓	✓
Wrestling	✓	✓	✓
Water polo	✓	✓	✓
Handball	✓	✓	✓
Juggling	✓	✓	✓
Superhero	✓	✓	✓
Supervillain	✓	✓	✓
Red hair	✓	✗	✓

Concept	Male	Neutral	Female
Curly hair	✓	✗	✓
Bald	✓	✗	✓
White hair	✓	✗	✓
Deaf	✓	✓	✓

Concept	Male	Neutral	Female
Motorized wheelchair	✓	✗	✓
Manual wheelchair	✓	✗	✓
Probing cane	✓	✗	✓

49 concepts are available in all three genders, **26** concepts only allow two genders, and **8** concepts have to make do with just one single, arbitrarily chosen gender. This leaves **42** emoji still waiting to be encoded, of which 41 are being proposed here. The forty-second is the neutral counterpart to FATHER CHRISTMAS and MOTHER CHRISTMAS, which I want to postpone until we find a proper solution for that.

The following is the full list of all emoji proposed for inclusion, consisting of two characters and 39 ZWJ sequences. A machine-readable data file containing all additions (using placeholder codepoints for as-of-yet unencoded characters) has been attached to this document as well.

Proposed Codepoint(s)	Name
`*E000`	PERSON DANCING *or* WOMAN DANCING
`*E001`	HEIR TO THE THRONE
`1F472 200D 2640 FE0F`	Woman with Chinese Cap
`1F472 200D 2642 FE0F`	Man with Chinese Cap
`1F470 200D 2640 FE0F`	Bride with Veil
`1F470 200D 2642 FE0F`	Groom with Veil
`1F935 200D 2640 FE0F`	Woman in Tuxedo
`1F935 200D 2642 FE0F`	Man in Tuxedo
`1F574 FE0F 200D 2640 FE0F`	Woman in Suit Levitating
`1F574 FE0F 200D 2642 FE0F`	Man in Suit Levitating
`1F930 200D 2640 FE0F`	Pregnant Woman
`1F930 200D 2642 FE0F`	Pregnant Man
`1F931 200D 2640 FE0F`	Woman Breast-Feeding
`1F931 200D 2642 FE0F`	Man Breast-Feeding
`1F9D5 200D 2640 FE0F`	Woman with Headscarf
`1F9D5 200D 2642 FE0F`	Man with Headscarf
`1F9D4 200D 2640 FE0F`	Woman: Beard
`1F9D4 200D 2642 FE0F`	Man: Beard
`1F9D1 200D 2695 FE0F`	Health Worker
`1F9D1 200D 2696 FE0F`	Judge
`1F9D1 200D 2708 FE0F`	Pilot

`1F9D1 200D 1F33E`	Farmer
`1F9D1 200D 1F373`	Cook
`1F9D1 200D 1F393 (FE0F)`	Student
`1F9D1 200D 1F3A4`	Singer
`1F9D1 200D 1F3A8`	Artist
`1F9D1 200D 1F3EB`	Teacher
`1F9D1 200D 1F3ED (FE0F)`	Factory Worker
`1F9D1 200D 1F4BB (FE0F)`	Technologist
`1F9D1 200D 1F4BC`	Office Worker
`1F9D1 200D 1F527`	Mechanic
`1F9D1 200D 1F52C`	Scientist
`1F9D1 200D 1F680`	Astronaut
`1F9D1 200D 1F692`	Firefighter
`1F9D1 200D 1F9B0`	Person: Red Hair
`1F9D1 200D 1F9B1`	Person: Curly Hair
`1F9D1 200D 1F9B2`	Person: Bald
`1F9D1 200D 1F9B3`	Person: White Hair
`1F9D1 200D 1F9BC`	Person in Motorized Wheelchair
`1F9D1 200D 1F9BD`	Person in Manual Wheelchair
`1F9D1 200D 1F9AF`	Person with Probing Cane

CLDR keywords have not been included as they would be more or less identical to those belonging to the existing emoji these derive from.

All of the emoji proposed here are equally important. If, for whatever reason, it is not feasible to add them all in one go, the UTC should decide which ones to prioritize by random lot or by simply ascending the list in order.

The ambiguity concerning Person Dancing/Woman Dancing is a direct result of the messy semantics of Dancer, which is gender-neutral for all intents and purposes but has been treated as female-only by the UTC for the past few years regardless. If it can be agreed again that Dancer is in fact genderless as it has always been, then the third dancing emoji needs to be female accordingly. Otherwise we need to encode another explicitly neutral dancing person.

I also want to reiterate the need for Person Dancing/Woman Dancing and Heir to the Throne to be atomic characters rather than sequences, which is an indispensable requirement for internal consistency.

In the past there have been vague plans to encode the missing dancing emoji as a ZWJ sequence. This is not possible, however, since Dancer and Man Dancing are already atomic characters.

Either all genders use the same amount of codepoints, or the male and female variants are modifications of a neutral base. That is how it works for every single gendered emoji in Unicode.

If we added a *Person Dancing* sequence, then the emoji <u>with</u> explicit genders would be substantially shorter than the one <u>without</u>, which is the exact opposite of how modifiers are meant to work. If we added a *Woman Dancing* sequence, then the <u>male</u> emoji would be substantially shorter than the <u>female</u> one, which is just begging for accusations of sexism towards the Unicode Consortium. Either way, the ZWJ approach would be a drastic break with prior conventions and also a figurative slap in the face for the gender that happened to receive the short end of the stick. ZWJ sequences are not equal to characters. They are fragile, cumbersome to work with, and not subject to many provisions and policies of the core standard.

If DANCER were to return to its gender-neutral roots – which I would be very much in favour of, make no mistake – then the female dancing emoji would have to be a singular character called WOMAN DANCING. If DANCER were to remain in its present, de facto female state, then the neutral dancing emoji would have to be a singular character called PERSON DANCING. There simply is no other viable option.

Obviously the same is true for royalty. PRINCESS and PRINCE already exist as characters, so their neutral counterpart must be a single character as well, just like ADULT is the neutral counterpart to MAN and WOMAN. The genderless option must never require more codepoints than the two binary genders, since modifiers are not used to *remove* specificity, and the two binary genders must always require the exact same number of codepoints as each other, as otherwise one could be construed as more important than the other. Breaking these rules would be akin to declaring Fitzpatrick type 1 as the default state of all human-form emoji while encoding the lack of a skin tone as a dependent modifier, or demanding a larger number of characters to represent darker skin variants compared to lighter skin.

3. Vendor Support

Vendor support for non-RGI sequences is patchy, as is to be expected. Nevertheless, some of it exists. If the UTC considers vendor support to be a crucial prerequisite for acknowledging additional sequences, then these should take priority and be implemented immediately:

Emoji	Twemoji	Emojidex	Facebook
Man in Tuxedo	✓		
Woman in Tuxedo	✓		
Man in Suit Levitating	✓		✓
Woman in Suit Levitating	✓		✓
Man with Headscarf		✓	
Woman with Headscarf		✓	

Additionally, there are some real-world examples of emoji implementations where the third gender isn't just a duplicate of one of the other two, making it easier to implement full gender support without visual duplication. Emojidex uses distinct designs for all three genders based on the glyphs for MAN, WOMAN, and ADULT respectively. Google has begun showing multi-person characters such as FAMILY or COUPLE WITH HEART without gender connotations, but hasn't yet expanded this practice

to other emoji. Sample images created by Emojipedia have also respected the third gender option as its own entity for a while now.

4. Images

Note that some of the proposed emoji will initially look identical to existing ones because all human-form emoji as of now are either explicitly gendered or look gendered despite not being supposed to.

The sample glyphs created for this proposal and earlier documents have been adapted from Twemoji (https://github.com/twitter/twemoji), a free and open-source emoji set created by Twitter, inc. (List of contributors: https://github.com/twitter/twemoji/graphs/contributors). Twemoji graphics are licensed under CC-BY 4.0 (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/), which means they can be altered and redistributed for commercial and non-commercial purposes as long as the original creator is properly attributed and no additional legal or technical restrictions have been applied to the material.

Most files have been manipulated to create alternate male/female/neutral versions by switching out facial features and hair dues.

Due to Twemoji not yet supporting Emoji 12.0 beta additions, I am unable to supply samples for the sequences incorporating MOTORIZED WHEELCHAIR, MANUAL WHEELCHAIR, and PROBING CANE at this time. The remaining 38 glyphs are listed below and have also been attached separately to this document.