Proposal for MATRYOSHKA Emoji

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Date: February 2019
Emoji Name: MATRYOSHKA
Sort Order: in the Game category, after TEDDY BEAR
Reference emoji: PENGUIN
Keywords: RUSSIA | DOLL | NEST | матрёшка (Russian language spelling in Cyrillic)

Four possible illustrations of a matryoshka nesting doll.
Credit Aphee Messer, free for use in conjunction with this proposal. Alternate rendering below,
Credit Jef Gray, free for use with this proposal.
Abstract

This proposal requests the addition of a MATRYOSHKA, or RUSSIAN NESTING DOLL, to the Unicode emoji library. The current emoji library's visual references to post-Soviet culture are limited to national flags and the Ruble symbol (₽). However, post-Soviet cultures represent 60 countries and a population of 290 million people. Russia is also frequently a topic of news and conversation, especially in the U.S., and we believe Russian and post-Soviet cultures deserve more representation in the emoji world. We also think the emoji could represent the concept of "nesting," as detailed in the Multiple Uses section of this proposal.
Introduction

Currently, users' ability to reference Eastern Europe, Russia and the former Soviet Union, is limited in terms of emoji. Commonly recognized cultural symbols are not available in the current catalog of visual artifacts.

The two largest countries in this group, Russia and Ukraine, are frequently in the news for enormous international events, sporting and artistic events, yet they have no symbols in emoji, only flags. Some of these relevant news events include:

- Russian interactions with other governments
- Russian/Ukrainian dispute over the territory of Crimea
- The 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia
- The 2014 Olympics in Sochi
- The Eurovision song contest in Kiev 2005 and 2017, and Moscow in 2009

Given the large number of nations and post-Soviet diaspora worldwide, the introduction of a MATRYOSHKA emoji offers something that can reflect Eastern European cultural traditions without carrying political or religious connotations.

"Matryoshka" derives from the Russian word for "mother," and the traditional matryoshka dolls depict friendly women wearing kerchiefs and traditional Russian peasant clothing. One theory is that the dolls are meant to represent the grandmother, mother, granddaughter and successive generations. They date back to 1890 and have become a symbol of Russian crafts and heritage.

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1 https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/30/technology/facebook-google-russia.html
3 https://www.fifa.com/worldcup/
4 https://www.olympic.org/sochi-2014
5 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eurovision_Song_Contest#Host_country
6 https://www.gounesco.com/matryoshka-origin-symbolic-meaning/
7 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matryoshka_doll
Traditional matryoshka dolls feature a "babushka" woman, her daughters, and her daughters' daughters. Photo from Liliana International.

A store in Sitka, Alaska, sells a wide variety of matryoshka dolls. Photo by Debbie Hahn on Pinterest.
On the left, a set of matryoshka dolls depicts Russian president Vladimir Putin and preceding Russian leaders. Photo from Russian Crafts. On the right, an American version features President Barack Obama and preceding presidents. Photo from Alamy stock photos.

An online vendor sells handmade nesting dolls representing Star Wars characters. Photo from andesartesanias on eBay.

Matryoshka dolls also enjoy very widespread recognition in non-Soviet countries, where they are adapted to other contexts and also recognized as a Russian cultural symbol. 

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8 https://www.tripsavvy.com/what-is-a-matryoshka-1502244
Due to its widespread recognition, popularity, and association with post-Soviet cultures, we believe the MATRYOSHKA will provide an emoji that can stand in for many different symbols of these cultures. It also has the benefit of being non-political and non-religious, which can help increase representation of a culture at a time when relations between modern-day countries are in flux and can be controversial.

**Selection Factors: Inclusion**

**A. Compatibility**
We are not aware of an existing MATRYOSHKA emoji or icon in any of the major platform.

**B. Expected Usage Level**

**B1. Frequency**
Russia is home to 145 million people and Wikipedia estimates the Russian diaspora at 20-30 million people worldwide. This suggest a large demand for a Russian-oriented emoji and ties to Emojination's mission to represent more cultures in emoji.

I have included trends as way of demonstrating the higher references to Russian (language, culture, and heritage) vs. Russia as a keyword. I have also compared the common phrase for the dolls, Matryoshka vs Russian Doll, with Matryoshka trending much higher due to those who know it by name.

Here we compare occurrences of the word "matryoshka" with the median emoji of "penguin." Because the Matryoshka is primarily a Russian icon and image, it doesn't rank particularly high in English-language search results. Where possible, we have also included search results for the Cyrillic spelling of both Matryoshka (матрёшка) and Penguin (пингвин).

While Google web trends search and other statistics are low for MATRYOSHKA vs. PENGUIN, there are a number of instances where the two are of the same order of magnitude. We are confident in the MATRYOSKA’s popularity to symbologize Russian and Eastern Europe, which is harder to capture with search statistics because they are overly broad.

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Instagram

On Instagram, #nestingdolls returns 42,300 posts,\(^\text{10}\) while #matryoshka returns 169,000\(^\text{11}\) and #russiandolls returns 50,000.\(^\text{12}\) The Cyrillic spelling #матрёшка shows an additional 40,000 posts.\(^\text{13}\)

VKontakte

In Russian-speaking countries, social media giants such as Vkontakte.ru or (VK.com) are the primary alternative to Facebook. A search for "матрёшка" reveals the following results\(^\text{14}\)

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10 https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/nestingdolls/
11 https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/matryoshka/
12 https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/russiandolls/?hl=en
13 https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/%D0%BC%D0%B0%D1%82%D1%80%D1%91%D1%88%D0%BA%D0%B0/?hl=en
14 vk.com/search?c%5Bper_page%5D=40&c%5Bq%5D=%D0%BC%D0%B0%D1%82%D1%80%D1%91%D1%88%D0%BA%D0%B0&c%5Bsection%5D=auto
These numbers are not meant to compare to the reference emoji, but instead to show how iconic the dolls are as a symbol of culture.
Odnoklassniki

A social media site that is popular with Russian speakers, known as Odnoklassniki.ru or OK.ru reveals the following search results:\(^\text{15}\)

\[\text{https://www.ok.ru/search?st.query=\%D0%BC\%D0%B0\%D1%82\%D1%80\%D1%91\%D1%88\%D0%BA\%D0%B0&st.mode=Groups&st.grmode=Groups&st.posted=set&st.mmode=Track}\]
On these Russian platforms, there is a net gain of 16 million more hits when using the Russian language version of the word "Matryoshka" over its English equivalent (52 million versus 36 million). "Penguin" saw a smaller net gain of 3 million in the same language comparison (104 million compared to 101 million).

Yandex Search
Penguin vs Matryoshka (English):
Penguin Books USA
penguin.com

W Penguin - Wikipedia
en.wikipedia.org > Penguin
Penguins (order Sphenisciformes, family Spheniscidae) are a group of aquatic, flightless birds. They live almost exclusively in the Southern Hemisphere, found in the Galápagos. Penguin, found north of the equator. Read more>

W Penguin - Simple English Wikipedia, the free encyclop...
simple.wikipedia.org > Penguin
Penguins are seabirds in the family Spheniscidae. They can't fly in the air. They eat fish and other seafood. Penguins lay their eggs and their babies on land. Read more>

Twitter
penguinusa
Penguin Books USA is the US affiliate of the internationally r...
Read more>

Penguin: translation, pronunciation, transcription, examples ...
WordHunt.ru > word / penguin
Translation of the word penguin, American and British pronunciation, transcription, phrases, examples of use.

Penguin - New World Encyclopedia
newworldencyclopedia.org > entry / Penguin
Penguin (PENG-yen or PENG-gwn) Spheniscidae, living almost exclusively ...
Read more>

Found 101 million results
To advertise show all
пингвин и матрёшка (Russian):
This has 104 million results in Russian.
Пингвиновые — Википедия
ru.wikipedia.org > wiki/Пингвиновые
Пингвиновые, или пингвины (лат. Spheniscidae), — семейство нелетающих морских птиц, единственное современное в отряде пингвинобразных (Sphenisciformes). Читать ещё >

Пингвин — описание, виды, чем питаются пингвин...
nashzeleynimir.ru > пингвин
Пингвин — нелетающая птица из семейства пингвиновых. Все о пингвинах: характеристика и строение, размножение, разновидности, где обитают. Читать ещё >

Пингвины: описание, повадки, где живут, как выглядят...
poznavayka.org > zoology/pingvinya-korennyye...»
Пингвин: описание, строение, характеристика. Как выглядит пингвин? Все без исключения пингвины перелётные птицы, к тому же умеющие отлично плавать. А вот летать они, к сожалению, не умеют от слова совсем. Да и по... Читать ещё >

Пингвины | Энциклопедия животных
animalsglobe.ru > pinguin/
Пингвины — одно из самых древних птиц на Земле. Представляют обособленную группу птиц, выделенную в отдельный отряд Пингвинобразных. Читать ещё >

Пингвины - необычные птицы
lifeglobe.net > Пингвин
Пингвины — необычные птицы. Пингвин — единственная птица, которая может плавать, но не может летать. Кроме того, это единственная птица, ходящая стоя. В этой теме я расскажу вам об этих удивительных созданиях. Читать ещё >

Виды пингвинов фото, описание
mirplaneta.ru > vidi-pingvinov-foto-opisanie.html
Императорский пингвин является самым крупным представителем пингвинов. В высоту он может достигать до 140 см, а вес может превышать 40 кг. Читать ещё >

Нашлось 104 млн результатов
712 тыс. показов в месяц
Дать объявление
Google Trends: Web Search

While Google web trends search is low for MATRYOSHKA vs. PENGUIN, we are confident in the doll’s popularity from the actual web results, and we like the Eastern European connotation.
Google Trends: Image Search

- matryoshka
  - Search term
  - Worldwide
  - Past 12 months
  - All categories
  - Image Search

Interest over time

- Average
  - Dec 24, 2017
  - Apr 29, 2018
  - Sep 2, 2018

- penguin
  - Search term

- матрешка
  - Search term
  - Worldwide
  - Past 12 months
  - All categories
  - Image Search

Interest over time

- Average
  - Dec 24, 2017
  - Apr 29, 2018
  - Sep 2, 2018

- пингвин
  - Search term

Google Search

**Google**

**Penguin**

All Images Videos News Shopping More

About 389,000,000 results (0.76 seconds)

**Original Penguin Official | Huge Selection Of Products**

[Ad] www.originalpenguin.com/

Top Rated Original **Penguin** Apparel. Be An Original, Shop Email Sign Up - 30% Off - Resolve To Save - Join Original F

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**Google**

**Matryoshka**

All Images Videos Shopping Maps More

About 7,430,000 results (0.68 seconds)

**Matryoshka** is a traditional Russian souvenir, the most popular among Russians and foreigners. It's a symbol of motherhood, fertility, as a puppet doll with numerous family
Пингвин

Google Ngram Viewer

Пингвин - Википедия
https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Пингвиновые .Translate this page
Пингви́новые, или пингви́ны (лат. Spheniscidae), — сем

матрёшка

Google Ngram Viewer

Tip: Search for English results only. You can specify your
in Preferences

See матрёшка
YouTube

YouTube search results for "matryoshka": 101,000
YouTube search results for "penguin": 20,300,000

YouTube search results for "матрёшка" (matryoshka): 38,800
YouTube search results for "пингвин" (penguin): 72,400

Bing

28,900,000 Results Any time

**Penguin | Shop Original Penguin Clothes**
https://www.originalpenguin.com

**Ad** Top Rated Original Penguin Clothes. Be An Original, Shop Official Site Today!
**Polo** - From $34.99 - Classic & Heritage Fits [more]
Matryoshka doll - Wikipedia
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matryoshka_doll

Пингвиновые — Википедия
https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Пингвиновые

Пинегиная — Википедия
https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Пинегиная
B2. Multiple Usages

The matryoshka dolls are symbolic beyond Russia. Nesting dolls are commonly found in many countries from Finland, Czech Republic, Romania, and as far south as Croatia and Montenegro. Though many outside of Eastern Europe think of the matryoshka as a symbol of "Russia," it really symbolizes a larger cultural footprint. Literary\textsuperscript{16} and cultural\textsuperscript{17} references to characteristics of a given situation that appear to have a layered property akin to a Matryoshka doll\textsuperscript{18}--a story within a story, enigmatic and deeper than it appears.

Due to the toy’s fame as a nesting doll, the emoji could also help convey the concept of nesting. Indeed, matryoshka dolls may be more well known in English-speaking countries as "nesting dolls."\textsuperscript{19} Nesting is a common feature of computer programming, referring to the act of storing objects inside other objects.\textsuperscript{20} Matryoshkas are also common enough as a metaphor, becoming terms of art in computation\textsuperscript{21}, biology\textsuperscript{22} and other industries. The file format .mkv, common found on video and media sites, stands for "Matroska Multimedia Container," so named because it fits several different media types into one file.\textsuperscript{23}

All of these metaphors use Russian dolls to connote "nesting" or "objects within objects", but there is no symbol meaning "nest" in the current emoji library.

\textsuperscript{16} https://www.macalester.edu/russian/about/resources/miscellany/matryoshka/
\textsuperscript{17} https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matryoshka_doll
\textsuperscript{18} https://russianlegacy.com/matryoshka-nesting-dolls.htm
\textsuperscript{19} https://www.tripsavvy.com/what-is-a-matryoshka-1502244
\textsuperscript{20} https://www.webopedia.com/TERM/N/nesting.html
\textsuperscript{21} https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matrioshka_brain
\textsuperscript{22} https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carbon_nanotube#Multi-walled
\textsuperscript{23} https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matroska
This web design website shows matryoshka dolls being used as a visual representation of object-oriented programming. Screenshot of [Websolution Designs](https://www.websolutiondesigns.com).

This how-to website uses nesting dolls to illustrate the concept of a Matroska Multimedia Container, or .mkv file. Screenshot of [How-To Geek](https://www.howtogeek.com).

**B3. Use in Sequences**

N/A
B4. Breaking New Ground

Current events and political decisions are rife with references to former Soviet republics, including Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and others. But there is no positive, nonpolitical visual reference to say, “I’m proud of my Slavic heritage,” or a way to illuminate a phrase in the Russian language.

As of today, the vast population of these countries are grossly underrepresented in expressing visual comments. Use of a flag or monetary symbol is a poor substitute when trying to express pride in heritage for both citizens of these countries and among compatriots living abroad in almost every country on Earth. In closing, by way of comparison, there are many times when an American custom or cultural event is poorly represented by a flag, but perhaps, a slice of pie, fireworks, or a turkey drumstick works best. This is the potential that can be unlocked if the MATRYOSHKA emoji is approved.

C. Image Distinctiveness

The current library does include "Japanese dolls" (🎎), but there are two of them and they are different in skin tone and clothing. The matryoshka has an instantly recognizable pear shape that is distinct from the more human-shaped "Japanese dolls" which have necks, arms and legs.

D. Completeness

The matryoshka doll is completely unrepresented in emojis to date.

E. Frequently Requested

The matryoshka does not appear on lists of most requested emoji, but some social media users have expressed a desire for one.
Sav• きゅ. @sasavhana · 3 Jul 2014
(Posts) 🌟 this emoji tho... Matryoshka~

anna 🌟@its_annac · 25 Dec 2014
Idk I think there should be a matryoshka and peppermint emoji

Heather G @heygos · 15 Feb 2017
We need a matryoshka emoji NOW

joe @mutablejoe
Every time a story linking Trump to Russia is uncovered there's another one inside. Can't think of a good metaphor for it though.

Mari Andrew @bymariandrew · 3 Jun 2014
I'd use these emoji ALL THE TIME if they existed: waffle, disco ball, hair blowing in the wind, matryoshka doll, person sitting on the floor

nek u @DELTARUNE @nekukiryu · 5 Oct 2014
Does iPhone emoji keyboard have Matryoshka emoji?

Petition for a russian nesting doll emoji

Alexandra Petri @petridishes · 3 Sep 2015
- nesting doll emoji

Finding Marguerite @findmarguerite · 27 Apr 2015
Just saw the latest @instagram update. Emoji hashtags?!?! Awesome. Now I just need a Russian nesting doll emoji and I'm set. #emoji
4. Selection Factors: Exclusion

F. Overly Specific

The matryoshka would be broad and general in nature, appealing to many Russian and post-Soviet cultures. The image proposed is the most iconic matryoshka image but it can be widely interpreted to mean any nesting doll.

G. Open-Ended

There are no substitute or similar representations for the Russian language or the East European culture where Russian is commonly spoken.

H. Already Representable

Russia and post-Soviet countries are represented by their flags: Russia (🇷🇺), Ukraine (🇺🇦), Belarus (🇧🇾) and so on. The Russian ruble is also available as a character (₽).

However, flags and currency symbols are a far cry from true representation. None of these symbols convey pride in one’s heritage or culture.

I. Logos, brands, UI icons, signage, specific people, deities

This is a generic symbol without industry or trademark affiliation. It can be found in some logos, which further supports our argument that it is representative of Russia and Eastern European cultures.
J. Transient

This symbol is very established\textsuperscript{24} and will not fade from popularity. It has been widely used for the last hundred years in souvenirs, tourism\textsuperscript{25}, and cultural ministries.

K. Faulty Comparison

There are no existing matryoshka doll emojis; this would be the first.

6. Other Information

Other Character Properties

The other character properties are suggested to be defined as follows.

General Category:

\textsuperscript{24} https://www.macalester.edu/russian/about/resources/miscellany/matryoshka/
\textsuperscript{25} https://www.gounesco.com/matryoshka-origin-symbolic-meaning/
7. Author Bios

**Jef Gray** ([jef@jefgray.com](mailto:jef@jefgray.com)) is the CEO of Aurous Publishing and a career volunteer with East European communities in the United States. He is the President Emeritus of the Russian-American Community Center of Florida, Director of the International Peace & Film Festival and producer of the Izuminka East Euro Fashion Expo. [PeaceFestival.us](http://PeaceFestival.us)

**Samantha Sunne** is a freelance journalist and emoji enthusiast. In 2018, she was invited to Moscow to speak on a panel about misinformation, where a fellow journalist gave out matryoshka dolls as a welcome gift.