

Proposal for a Roller Skate emoji

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Abstract

This document is a proposal for a new sports-related emoji that represents ROLLER SKATES. ROLLER SKATES are a component of many sports and are also used as a hobby. They have global, year round use, and represent emerging sports. ROLLER SKATES would add to the completeness of the skating emoji set, and the popularity of this request has seen this emoji on the top requested emoji list in 2017 and 2018.

Identification:

CLDR short name: ROLLER SKATE

CLDR keywords: roller | skate



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Sort location: transport-ground (after SKATEBOARD), or sport (after ICE SKATE)

Selection factors — Inclusion

A. Compatibility

N/A

B. Expected usage level

1. Frequency

Roller skates are used in many sports, such as speed skating (featured at the youth olympic games in 2018²), rink hockey, aggressive skating, slalom, roller derby, roller figure skating, roller hockey and roller dance.

Roller skates are popular among kids and adults in the whole American continent, in Europe, India (speed skating was at the heart of a Bollywood movie in 2014³), Australia and New Zealand. In France and Germany, several cities have weekly skate nights where parts of the city are blocked to make way for skaters^{4 5}. Roller derby is rapidly growing in popularity in the US, where there was 848 women leagues in 2015⁶, a more recent map (2017) shows 1359 leagues worldwide⁷. The 2018 Roller Derby

1 <https://thenounproject.com/browse/?i=137286>

2 <https://www.buenosaires2018.com/sports/2853e59a-2938-4803-8605-18f5591537a0>

3 <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt3501994/>

4 In Frankfurt: <http://www.t-n-s.de/de/index.php>

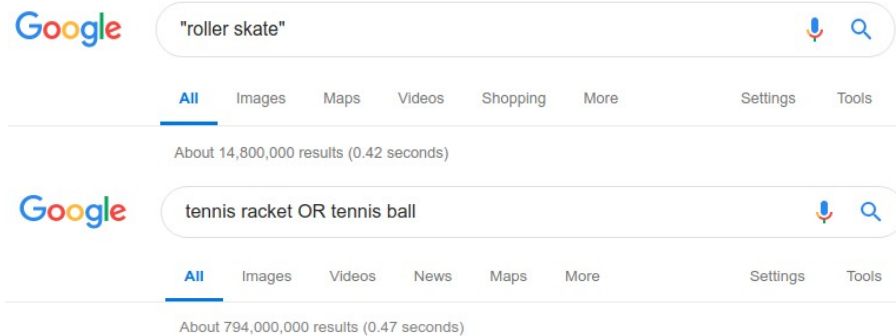
5 In Paris: <http://www.pari-roller.com/>

6 <https://www.frogmouthclothing.com/blogs/frogmouth-blog/67525699-the-world-map-of-roller-derby-leagues>

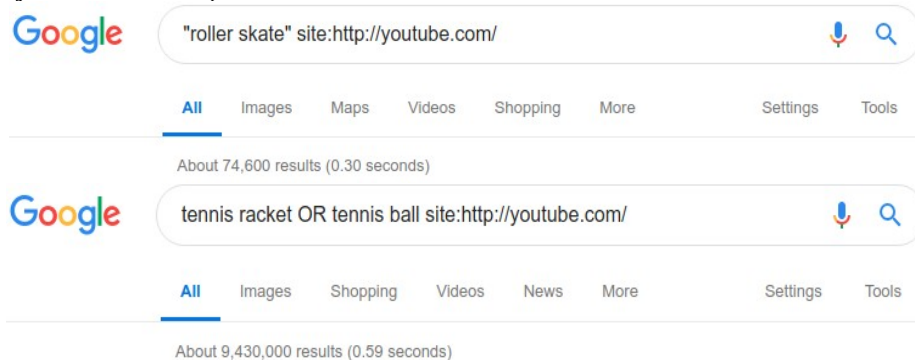
7 https://www.reddit.com/r/rollerderby/comments/7l00vc/my_yule_gift_to_the_community_a_map_of_every/

World Cup finales were broadcasted on BBC Sport TV⁸, and the 2016 leagues championship was broadcasted on ESPN⁹.

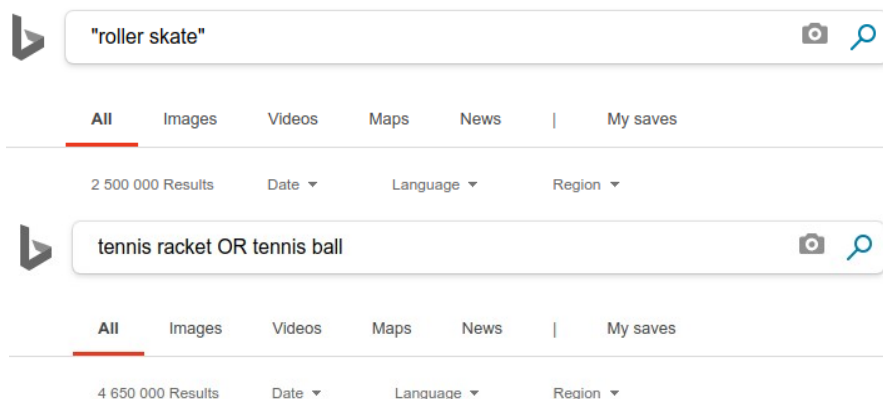
We use the emoji TENNIS as a reference for comparison on online popularity. “Tennis” works in every language, so the comparison as-is is unfair. Also, the roller skate is the equipment and not the sports it can represent. Considering this, and the fact that the tennis emoji is displayed as a combination of racket and/or ball, we’ll estimate usage frequency with a search for “tennis racket OR tennis ball”.



Results for a youtube search (since youtube does not show the number of hits anymore, we use google and restrict it to youtube results)



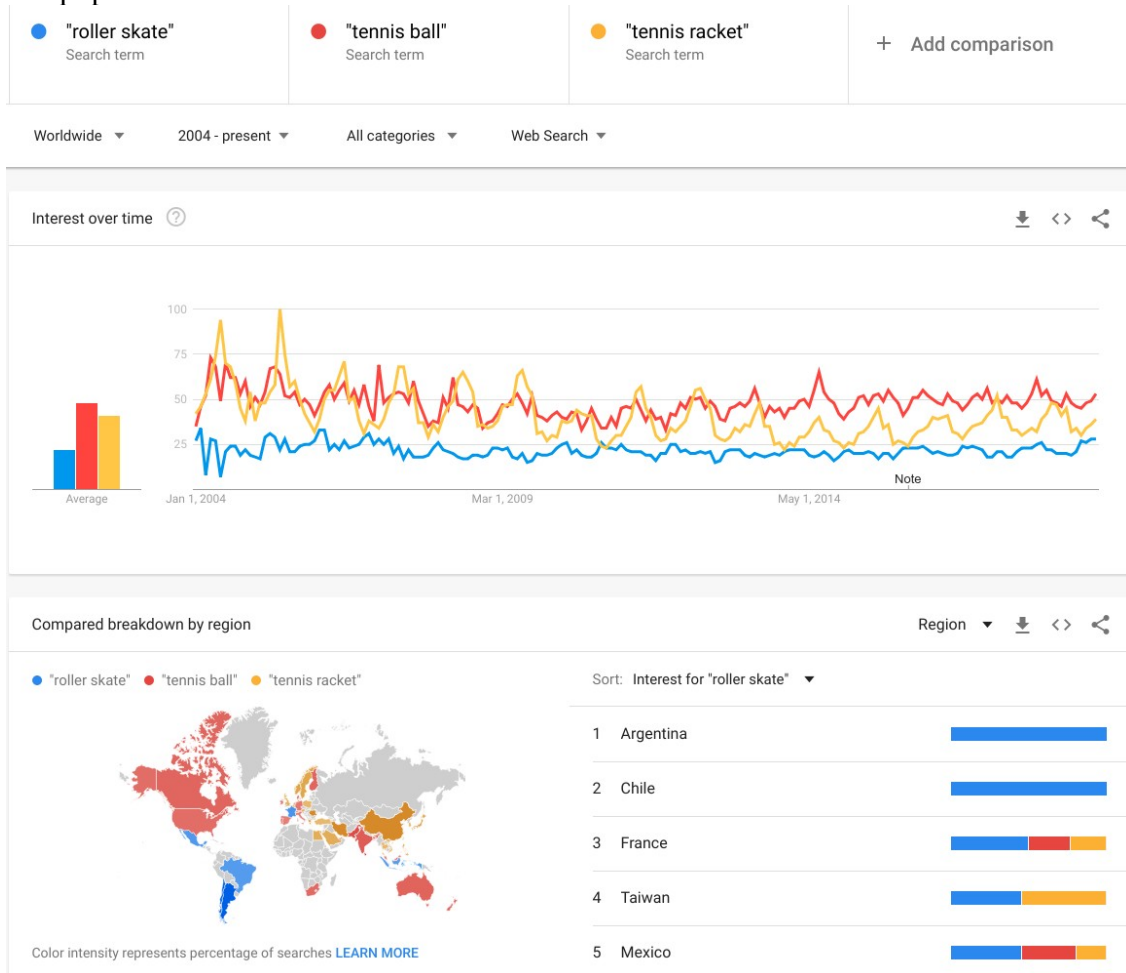
The results on Bing do not really match what we saw on google, and show a 1/2 ratio for roller skate vs tennis



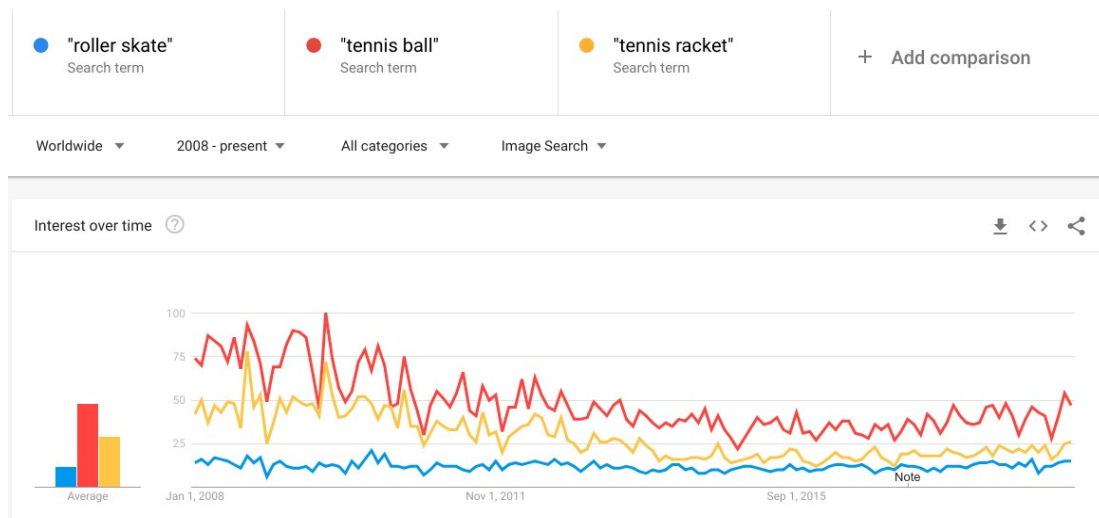
8 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p05wg5xz>

9 <https://wftda.com/wftda-signs-esp3-deal-for-two-broadcast-dates-in-2016/>

The google trends comparison shows that searches for roller skates are about as common as searches for tennis equipment.



On the image search, roller skate popularity is slightly lower.



2. Multiple usages

As mentioned above, roller skates can be used to represent a wide variety of sports played on skates, but also by people using skates simply as a hobby.

3. Use in sequences

Could be used in a sequence with a person to represent a person skating

4. Breaking new ground

Yes. There is currently no emoji to represent sports played on roller skates, though rink hockey and roller hockey can fallback to the hockey emojis.

C. Image distinctiveness

Yes. Although the design is close to the ice skate emoji, it is easily distinguished from it even in small size by the wheels replacing the blade.

D. Completeness

Adding a roller skate emoji would complete the set of “things people don’t want you to do in private open spaces”, with biking, skateboarding and riding a kick scooter already having theirs. You can also consider this is part of the “soft urban mobility” set.

E. Frequently requested

The roller skate emoji is in the top requested emojis reported by emojiopedia for the year 2017¹⁰ and 2018¹¹

Selection factors — Exclusion.

F. Overly specific

No currently available emoji overlaps with a roller skate emoji.

G. Open-ended

There are already emojis for skateboard, ice skate and kick scooter, which would be the closest objects of the same type, so this proposal is not opening way for new requests.

H. Already representable

No real alternative available, the ice skate conveys a very different meaning and cannot really be used in replacement.

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

N/A

J. Transient

Roller skates have existed for at least two centuries, and have had ups and downs in terms of popularity but show no sign of disappearing soon.

¹⁰ <https://blog.emojiopedia.org/top-emoji-requests-2017/>

¹¹ <https://blog.emojiopedia.org/top-emoji-requests-2018/>

K. Faulty comparison

N/A

L. Exact Images

There are various designs for roller skates (number of wheels, heel on the boot or not, laces or strap...) that do not affect how the object is perceived, and leave a lot of room for designers to express their creativity.

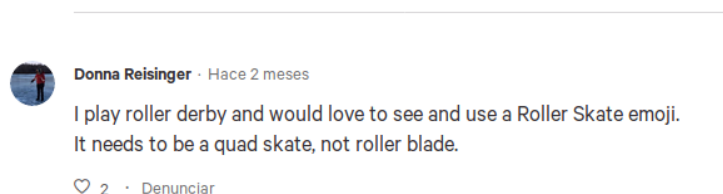
Other information

Roller skates come in two main designs : quad skates and inline skates. They are interchangeable in hobby usage, but roller sports are usually played with one specific design. We used a quad skate as suggested the appearance for the emoji as it's what comes up first in a Google search. Moreover, the roller derby community is pretty active online and has been requesting this specific appearance for the emoji – should it exist. An inline skate would be a valid design for the emoji as well, but we believe it could be confusing to people if the design is not consistent across vendors.

Here is an example from someone on twitter expressing concern over the design choice for an emoji:



And here is an other example from someone who signed a change.org petition¹² for a skate emoji:



¹² <https://www.change.org/p/unicode-roller-skate-emoji>