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The Socks Emoji Submission

To: Unicode Consortium

From: Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (co-ordinator Petra Theman, Director of Public Diplomacy)

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Abstract

We are requesting the addition of the socks to complete especially the clothing emojis but also to complement emotion and activity emojis. The socks emoji would fill a notable gap in the current emoji set which includes several footwear emojis, such as ATHLETIC SHOE (U+1F45F) and WOMAN SANDAL (U+1F461), but not a single sock type emoji.

The formal name of the proposed emoji could be SOCKS as recommended by the subcommittee.

Introduction

A sock is an item of clothing worn on the feet covering the ankle and some part of the calf. There are multiple different types of socks depending on where and when they are used. To exemplify, the sock material depends whether they are intended to be worn on formal events, in everyday use or during sporting activities and whether it is winter or summer time. Some types of socks are also more popular than others and popularity may vary depending on the persons or even countries. For an example, woolly socks, which are thicker kind of sock type made from breathable wool material, could be considered to be the national costume to Finns, especially during the cold autumn and winter weather. Socks made from wool are comforting when ill and these socks offer warmth when skiing. These kind of socks are a great all-rounder – which is made even more soul-nurturing if your grandmother has knitted them herself. Woolly socks are often used typically with wellington boots (i.e. rubber boots) which are worn over the socks.

Until 1800 both hand knitting and machine knitting were used to produce socks, but after 1800s machine knitting has become the predominant method. Until the introduction of nylon in 1938, the socks were commonly made from silk, cotton and wool.

One of the functionalities of the socks is to absorb perspiration. In cold environments, such as in Finland, the socks, and typically socks made from wool, also insulate the foot and decrease the risk of frostbite.¹ Particular kind of socks may also be needed in different kinds of activities, such as using woolly socks with ski boots in skiing or sport socks in running. Typically socks made from natural materials are more comfortable and more breathable which makes them ideal for normal use from autumn until spring in home or summer cottages.

The socks are also used as a kind of holiday item during Christmas in some countries. Children tend to hang large ceremonial socks called a Christmas stocking by a nail or hook above the fireplace on Christmas Eve and then their parents fill them with small presents while the children are asleep.²

Socks also remain highly popular and commonly purchased clothing items nowadays. For example, different kind of socks are widely sold in the most popular Internet commercial platforms, such as eBay and Amazon,³ as well as in regular shops.

The proposed emoji would describe the socks as a clothing item. However, the socks emoji would not be restricted only to describe one type of socks but could also be used to describe either thinner or thicker kind of socks, such as woolly socks, or even the feeling of comfort and warmth in cold environment as well as Christmas tradition. The emoji could also describe the knitting or carefully and silently tiptoeing as an activity.

¹ Wikipedia-article "Sock". <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sock> (Accessed on August 15th, 2016).

² Wikipedia-article "Sock". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sock#Holiday_items (Accessed on August 15th, 2016).

³ Examples of commercial platforms selling different kind of socks.

http://www.ebay.com/sch/i.html?_odkw=woolly+socks&_osacat=0&_from=R40&_trksid=p2045573.m570.l1313.TR0.TRC0.H0.Xsocks.TRS0&_nkw=socks&_sacat=0;

https://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_noss?url=search-alias%3Daps&field-keywords=SOCKS&rh=i%3Aaps%2Ck%3ASOCKS;

http://www.ebay.com/sch/i.html?_from=R40&_trksid=p2047675.m570.l1313.TR0.TRC0.H0.Xwoolly+socks.TRS0&_nkw=woolly+socks&_sacat=0;

https://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_noss?url=search-alias%3Daps&field-keywords=WOOLLY+SOCKS (All accessed on August 15th, 2016).

However, to this day no presentation for any kind of socks exists as an emoji, nor has one been suggested according to our information. We hereby propose adding the socks emoji in the next Unicode update.

Support

A. Compatibility

Prior to the Finnish national emoji project, we do not know of socks, woolly socks or Christmas stocking or any other similar emojis currently used in the major platforms (Apple, Yahoo, Google, Facebook). The proposed socks emoji is not even expressible by any other existing emojis or sequence of other emojis.

Because of the lack of socks emoji, the hashtag #socks, #woollysocks and #woolsocks are commonly used to describe socks and fashion and especially the feelings of warmth and comfort.⁴

In addition, after an intensive media attention for the Finnish national emoji project the socks emoji has been included in the iTunes shop and application designed for both iPhone and iPad.⁵ In addition, GooglePlay has included the socks emoji into its app selection.⁶

As a result, the socks emoji has become available and commonly used in existing systems and, thus, the emoji should be included into the Unicode system.

B. Expected Usage

1. Frequency

The expected usage of the socks emoji is very high, in part because of its generality as a clothing item across the world and its ability to describe different kinds of socks, such as woolly socks or other thicker type of socks, and feelings, such as warmth and comfort as well as the Christmas tradition of hanging a Christmas stocking over the fireplace. The socks emoji can also refer to knitting as an activity. For example, these are evidenced by the common use of the hashtags #socks, #woollysocks or #woolsocks on Twitter and Instagram and pictures coupled with the said hashtags.⁷ It can also describe activity of tiptoeing carefully and silently.

⁴ Twitter-pages of #socks, #woollysocks and #woolsocks.
<https://twitter.com/search?q=%23woollysocks&src=typd>;
<https://twitter.com/search?q=%23woolsocks&src=typd>
<https://twitter.com/search?q=%23socks&src=typd> (All accessed on August 15th, 2016).

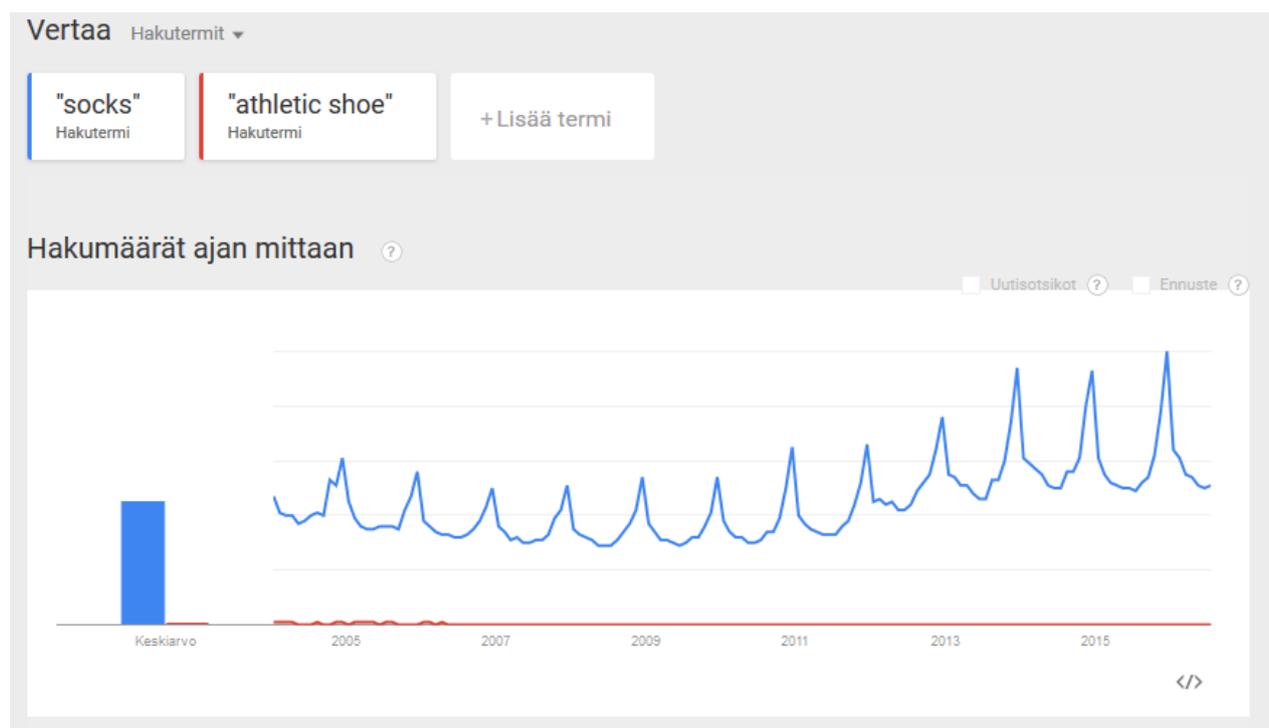
⁵ Official website of iTunes. <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/finland-emojis/id1061373303?mt=8>; See also <http://finland-emojis.appstor.io/> (All accessed August 15th, 2016).

⁶ Official website of GooglePlay.
<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.reaktor.finlandemojis&hl=en> (Accessed August 15th, 2016).

⁷ Twitter- and Instagram pages of #socks, #woollysocks and #woolsocks.
<https://twitter.com/search?q=%23woollysocks&src=typd>;
<https://twitter.com/search?q=%23woolsocks&src=typd>;
<https://twitter.com/search?q=%23socks&src=typd>;
<https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/socks/>;
<https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/woolsocks/>;
<https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/woollysocks/> (All accessed on August 15th, 2016).

In putting the estimated frequency of use of the proposed emoji into a context iemoji.com places the ATHLETIC SHOE emoji at rank #285 of 1679, MAN SHOE emoji at rank #481 of 1679, WOMANS SANDAL emoji at rank # 499 of 1679, HIGH-HEELED SHOE emoji at rank 243 of 1679 and WOMANS BOOTS emoji at rank # 479 of 1679.⁸ These rankings give a sense of projected popularity of the proposed SOCKS emoji. The said rankings of the existing emojis indicate that the socks emoji would definitely be in the top fourth in all emojis.

Furthermore, several comparisons of Google trends of "socks" and "woolly socks" and "wool socks", versus the benchmark of the very popular emojis "athletic shoe", "man shoe" and "high-heeled shoe" over time show clearly larger demand and with high season times especially during the winter time for the proposed emoji:



⁸ iEmoji.com – rankings of footwear emojis.

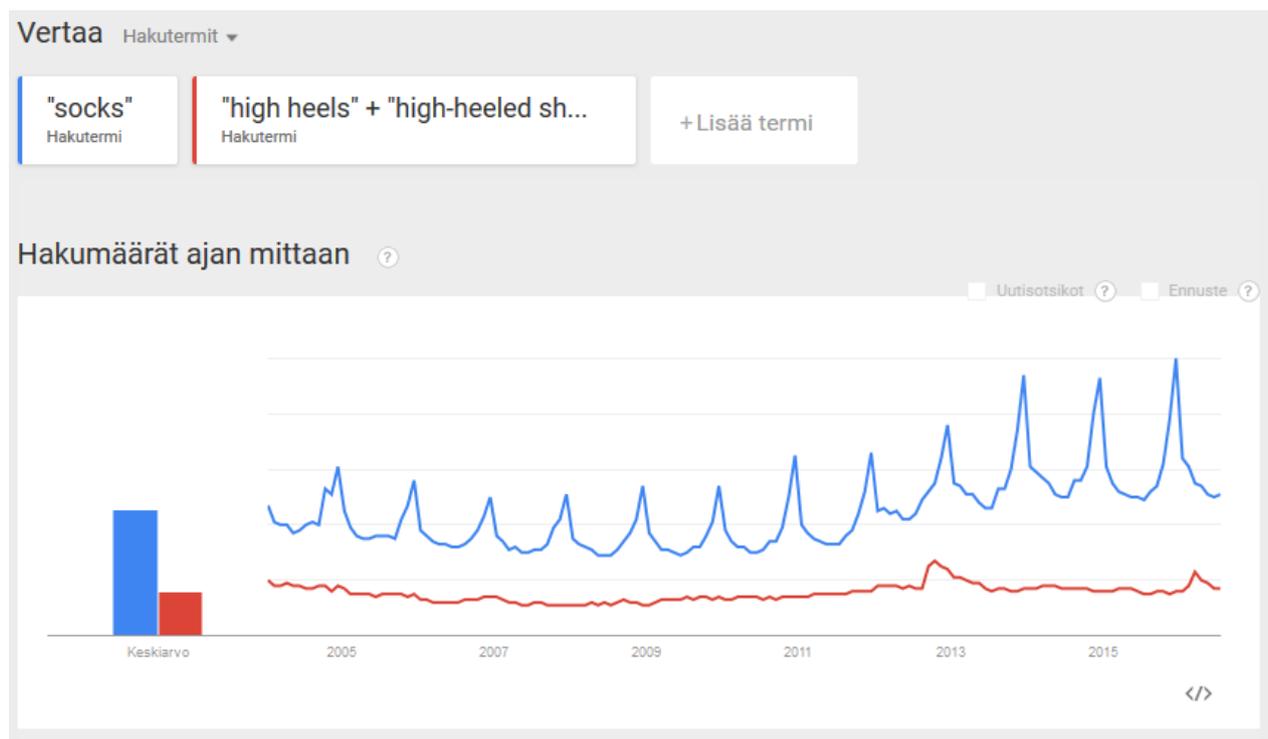
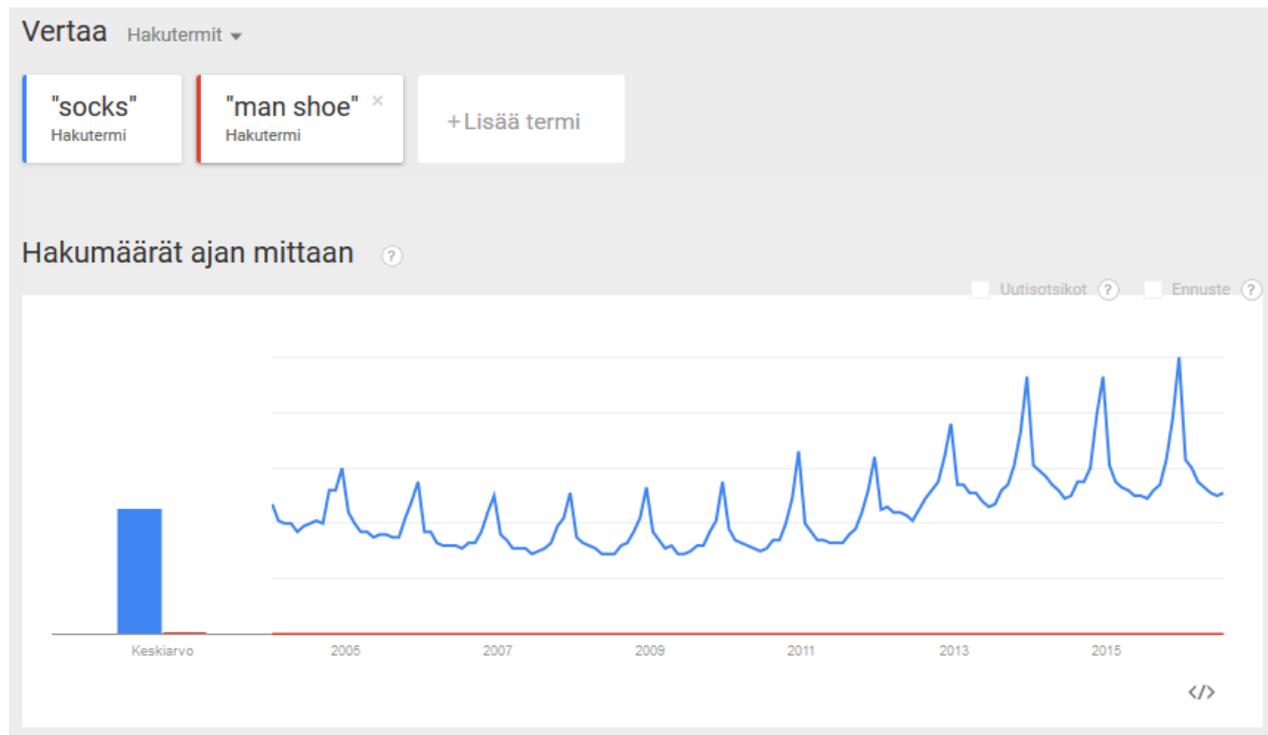
<http://www.iemoji.com/view/emoji/407/people/athletic-shoe>;

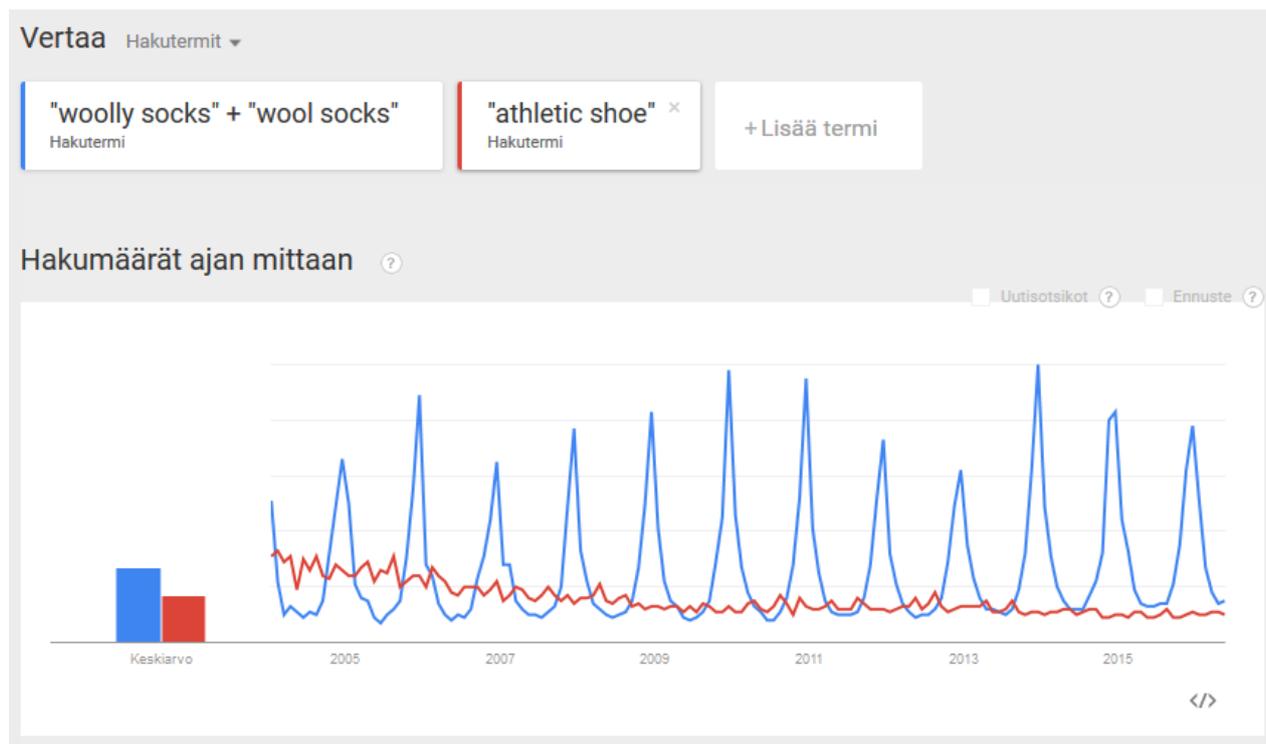
<http://www.iemoji.com/view/emoji/681/people/mans-shoe>;

<http://www.iemoji.com/view/emoji/408/people/womans-sandal>;

<http://www.iemoji.com/view/emoji/409/people/high-heeled-shoe>;

<http://www.iemoji.com/view/emoji/410/people/womans-boots> (All accessed on August 15th, 2016).





2. Multiples uses

As delineated in this proposal, the socks emoji could be used to describe different types of socks, such as the wool socks, as clothing items, the feelings of warmth and comfort, the Christmas tradition of hanging Christmas stockings over the fireplace and the knitting or tiptoeing as an activity.

3. Emotional Content

As its emotional connotation, the reference to socks is understood to evoke mainly neutral and also in proper context positive emotions and feelings, such as warmth, comfort and Christmas tradition.

The socks as a clothing item is often linked and used as a gift. Thicker kinds of socks are often given as a gift especially for feast days or birthdays during the autumn and winter months. On the other hand, knitting as an activity is considered to give a feeling of relaxation as well as to ease and prevent stress, pain and depression.⁹ Accordingly, even as a clothing item and activity concept the proposed socks emoji would at least have a slightly positive connotation.

4. Persistence

We believe that the socks emoji will be persistent because the emoji represents both the socks as a general clothing item and also the feelings of warmth and comfort as well as the Christmas tradition and knitting or carefully and silently tiptoeing as an activity.

⁹ Wikipedia-article "Knitting". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knitting#Health_benefits (Accessed on August 15th, 2016).

Considering that the socks have been used from the dawn of time and they continue to be used in different kinds of activities and events, such as in sporting activities like skiing with ski boots, running and hiking with rubber boots. Accordingly, the origins, the history and the current status and use of socks make it inevitable that the socks emoji would stand the test of time and persist in the future.

The Finnish national emoji project, which has received global media attention across multiple newspapers and media channels, is likely to even increase the high popularity of the socks emoji. This is even more probable due to the absence of any socks and similar emojis. Furthermore, the uses of #socks, #woollysocks and #woolsocks hashtags on Twitter and Instagram clearly indicate that use of it would not be diminished.¹⁰

Moreover, the socks emoji in itself has been highly visible or expressly mentioned on the news reporting of the new Finnish national emoji project.¹¹ In other words it has received wide recognition and media attention.

C. Image distinctiveness

The socks emoji would be visually clearly distinct from all the current emojis. There is not a single emoji that could be considered even slightly similar. This is due to the fact that the current emoji set includes merely the footwear, or more accurately, shoe emojis and not even a single sock or other similar emojis.

In far-fetched consideration, the closest in spirit could be any of the shoe emojis. However, shoes are completely different clothing item than socks. Also, the shoe emojis do not possess at all similar connotations than what the socks emoji has and describes.

D. Completeness

The socks emoji would be crucial addition complementing the extensive selection of footwear emojis. It would also serve as a useful addition for emotion emojis describing feelings of warmth, comfort and Christmas tradition. It could also describe the knitting as an activity.

Since there are no socks or other similar emojis in the current emoji set, the need for the proposed socks emoji is very dire.

¹⁰ Twitter- and Instagram pages of #socks, #woollysocks and #woolsocks.

<https://twitter.com/search?q=%23socks&src=typd;>

<https://twitter.com/search?q=%23woollysocks&src=typd;>

<https://twitter.com/search?q=%23woolsocks&src=typd;>

[https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/socks/;](https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/socks/)

[https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/woolsocks/;](https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/woolsocks/)

<https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/woollysocks/> (All accessed on August 15th, 2016).

¹¹ Examples of news reporting picturing or expressly referring to the proposed socks emoji.

<http://www.npr.org/sections/alltechconsidered/2015/12/06/458453835/with-new-nordic-emojis-give-your-texts-that-finnishing-touch;>

<http://peconicpublicbroadcasting.org/post/new-nordic-emojis-give-your-texts-finnishing-touch#stream/0;>

[http://www.multilingualblog.com/the-advent-of-finnish-emojis-happy-holidays-headbangers/;](http://www.multilingualblog.com/the-advent-of-finnish-emojis-happy-holidays-headbangers/)

<http://www.wbur.org/npr/458453835/with-new-nordic-emojis-give-your-texts-that-finnishing-touch;>

[https://multilingual.com/language-in-the-news/the-advent-of-finnish-emojis-happy-holidays-headbangers/;](https://multilingual.com/language-in-the-news/the-advent-of-finnish-emojis-happy-holidays-headbangers/)

<http://ahmarova.blogspot.fi/2015/12/when-distressed-in-finland-start.html> (Accessed August 15th, 2016).

E. Frequency Requested

There is a clear demand for the socks emoji. Even a cursory search on the Internet reveals a large number of uses on popular social media platforms where the proposed socks emoji could have been used instead of verbal reference to #socks hashtag. Moreover, there have been express remarks concerning why there is no socks emoji yet.¹²

Factors for Exclusion

F. Overly Specific

The proposed socks emoji would not be overly specific. In fact, the socks can only be considered as highly general as it describes all kinds of socks as clothing items. In addition, the feelings of warmth and comfort and Christmas tradition as well as the activity of knitting are universally attached and linked to thicker kind of socks.

In overall, the multiple uses of the socks emoji make it perfect candidate for next addition to Unicode.

G. Open-Ended

The socks would be unique in the emoji setting as its meaning and contexts are commonly understood around the world.

Moreover, the socks emoji is able to convey the idea of both regular socks and also warmer type of socks which are commonly used across the world and especially in the cold environments.

Accordingly, the socks emoji deserves to be acknowledged as an emoji at least among clothing emojis, while supplementing emotion and activity emojis too.

H. Already Representable

It is impossible to create socks emoji using existing emoji or any sequence of them. The closest emojis in spirit, and even then being quite far-fetched, are the footwear emojis which are totally different and used for completely different reasons.

Accordingly, no other emoji connotes the same meaning of socks as a clothing item, in addition to its emotion and activity connotations, than the proposed socks emoji would be able to.

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

Not applicable because the socks emoji does not picture any specific person, either historic or living, nor any logo, brand, icon, signage or deity.

¹² Twitter- and Instagram pages of #socks and other websites:
<https://twitter.com/search?q=%23socks&src=typd>;
<https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/socks/>;
<https://discussions.apple.com/thread/7328713?start=0&tstart=0>;
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/emmalola/8975609028> (All accessed on August 15th, 2016).

J. Transient

The socks emoji will definitely continue to be in use in the future as the need for such emoji remains. The socks emoji will definitely prevail in use even if other special socks type representing emoji would be proposed and included into the Unicode later on. This is due to the fact that socks are commonly used worldwide in different forms and in wide variety of events and activities.

Disclaimer

The images we are submitting do not have any significant that would make it unsuitable for encoding as a character. There are no copyright, religious, or issues that reference anyone historic or living.

This document is a proposal whose contents are subject to UTC and Unicode Emoji Subcommittee review, and any and all details are therefore subject to change.

Other Character Properties

The socks emoji *in situ* on Apple's emoji keyboard

