Comments in response to L2-17/147

To: UTC
From: Peter Edberg & Mark Davis, for the Emoji Subcommittee
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The Unicode Emoji Subcommittee (ESC) submits the following comments in response to L2-17/147 "Request for greater transparency in the Emoji Subcommittee" from West, Buff, and Päper:

1. Regarding publishing the membership of the ESC:
    a. Organizations that are entitled to be represented on the ESC are determined by the current membership and the TC procedures. The committee may also invite other experts to participate as needed, at the discretion of the chairs.
    b. The membership is not static; organizations are represented by different people at different times, and other participants join as needed depending on the topics. There is no fixed membership list.
    c. Other committees and subcommittees have not generally had published membership. For example, the CLDR committee doesn't have a published membership list.
    d. The ESC will endeavor to always include the name of the primary author(s) for any ESC document submissions.
2. Please note that per the TC Procedures:
    a. A TC subcommittee such as the ESC is only advisory, all decisions must be approved by the Unicode TC. Such actions are minuted, and thus public.
    Note: The ESC *does* do a lot of management of proposals, in particular:
        i. Rejecting proposals that would not meet the submission criteria. For example, proposals for categorically-inappropriate characters such as commercial logos or depictions of specific people are rejected outright, in accordance with the selection criteria.
        ii. Working with authors to help make their proposals complete, and as strong as possible. This can take several iterations (many proposers do not follow through with this).
        iii. Informing authors when their proposed characters appear low priority (so that they don't have to put in time and effort when acceptance in the UTC appears unlikely).
        iv. Providing recommendations to the UTC for complete proposals. Note that the priorities are based on many factors. Two key issues are whether the characters are likely to be popular and whether they would be supported by major vendors. Vendors are faced with limits on how many emoji they can add support for in a given year, because of the resource costs of emoji (large color fonts, glyph design constraints, integration with character pickers, etc.) So the way to think of the issue is that for every emoji added some other potential emoji has to be removed from consideration. The committee needs to balance its recommendations among different competing sets of emoji. For example, we wouldn't serve end users well if we spent 3 years just adding sets of emoji for dog breeds, no matter how popular those might be among a subset of users.
    b. Discussions in the Unicode TC are confidential. The ESC may choose to operate by the same confidentiality rules, and does.
3. Regarding a public register of all emoji submissions:

a. Most emoji proposals initially sent to the ESC do not meet the specified [submission criteria](). Once a proposal does meet the submission criteria:
    i. It may be withheld for a time if the proposed character(s) are part of a larger set that is being worked on by the ESC (the proposers are informed of that), or
    ii. It is forwarded to the UTC and added to the UTC document register.
b. Maintaining a register of every proposal submitted is unworkable and would be a huge burden; a great many proposals are received, many in an informal way, and many are ill-formed (a significant number come from children). As noted above, the proposals that do meet the criteria end up in the UTC document register; UTC actions on those are minuted.
c. The ESC has been working on a list of at least the submitted names for proposed emoji, and is planning to make that public in the near future.
d. Proposers are free on their own to make their proposals public, and many have chosen to do so.