

Proposal for Screwdriver Emoji

Submitted by: David F. Gluckman, Dwight Knell and Jennifer 8. Lee of Emojination

Date: December 11, 2017, Revised April 25, 2018



Credit: Aphelandra Messer/Emojination. Free to use in conjunction with discussing the emoji proposal

Abstract

This proposal requests the addition of a SCREWDRIVER to the Unicode emoji character library. The SCREWDRIVER is one of the oldest and most basic hand tools. It is thought to date to the Middle Ages and is at its core a simple machine – a wheel and axle used to drive or remove screws. Screws are themselves simple machines – inclined planes wrapped around cylinders or cones – and they continue to be used to hold together innumerable items in our modern world. The trusty SCREWDRIVER would join a small number of hand tools in the Unicode emoji character library – including hammer, pick, wrench, and clamp – as well as other hand-tool-related characters, such as mechanic and construction worker.

Images



Credit: Aphelandra Messer

Introduction

The SCREWDRIVER is a basic hand tool, evidenced by the fact that it is often called upon in the assembly of simple flat-pack furniture. As the name implies, the SCREWDRIVER is designed to drive screws into at least one medium, such as wood, plastic, or metal. The reverse of this process, called removal or unscrewing, takes the screw out of the medium/media into which it is situated. This is a standard and widely used method of assembly and disassembly used by tradespeople, homeowners, factory workers, and pretty much anyone who has ever had to change a lightbulb. Screw heads, and thus screwdrivers, come in a variety of designs, including the flathead (slotted) and Phillips head (cross-recess) shapes, as well as hex, Torx, star, and other

intricate shapes used mainly to prevent tampering. If you're sitting down right now (and you should be), the chair you're on is most likely held together with screws.

While other uses aren't necessarily recommended, the SCREWDRIVER is also frequently pressed into service as an ice pick, a chisel, a pry bar, and even a hammer. Its versatility and ubiquity make the screwdriver an indispensable item in any tool box. Its image can be used to convey ideas of work or assembly, or that something is being assembled or is under construction.

As for homonyms, there is of course the (again very basic) screwdriver cocktail: one part vodka to two parts orange juice in a glass with ice. The orange handle in the suggested depiction included with this proposal even serves to reinforce the drink's orange juice component.

We would be remiss if we did not mention the sonic screwdriver used by the BBC programme *Doctor Who*'s title character. Different iterations of the device have served a variety of complex purposes in addition to being used as a "normal" screwdriver. As noted below, the Doctor's sonic screwdriver is often mentioned online along with requests for a screwdriver emoji.

Names

CLDR Short Name: screwdriver
CLDR Keywords: screwdriver | tool

Selection Factors: Inclusion

A. Compatibility

The SCREWDRIVER is not currently available as an image, sticker, or emoji on any other major platforms. There also is not a screw depiction available on those platforms.

B. Expected Usage Level

Screwdriver is a very popular hashtag on Instagram.

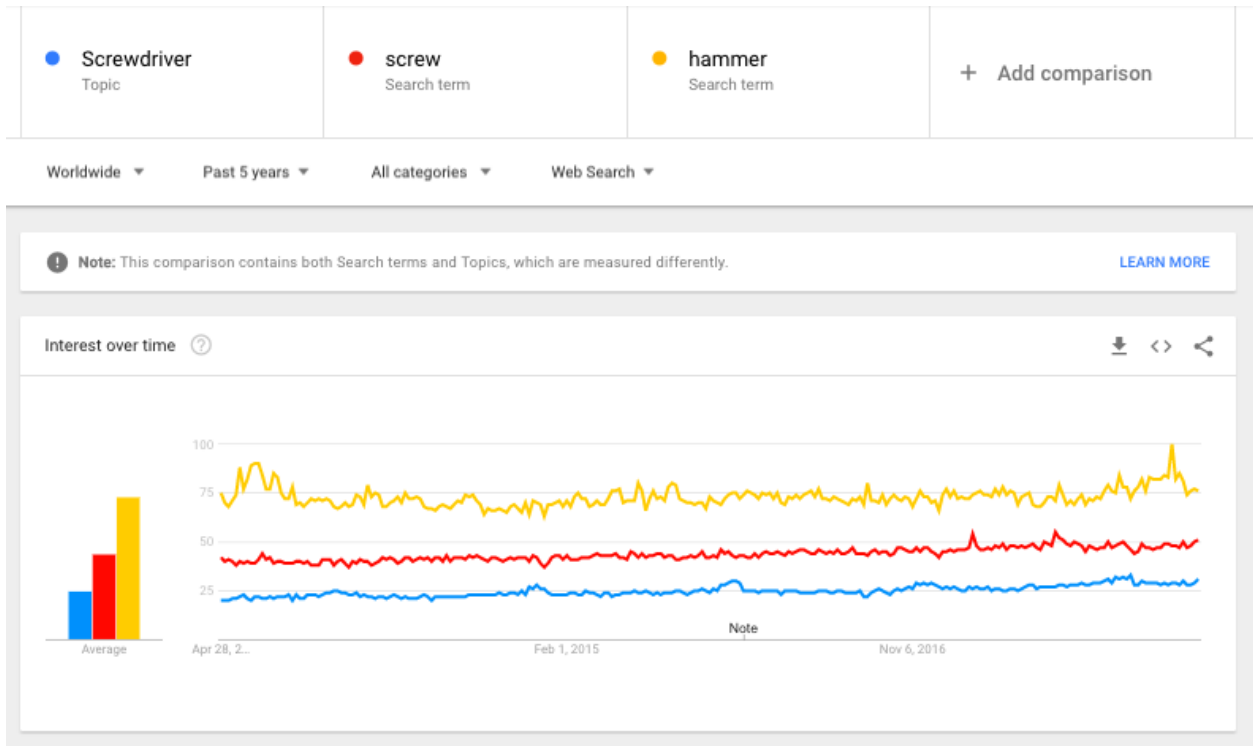
#screwdriver

139,769 posts

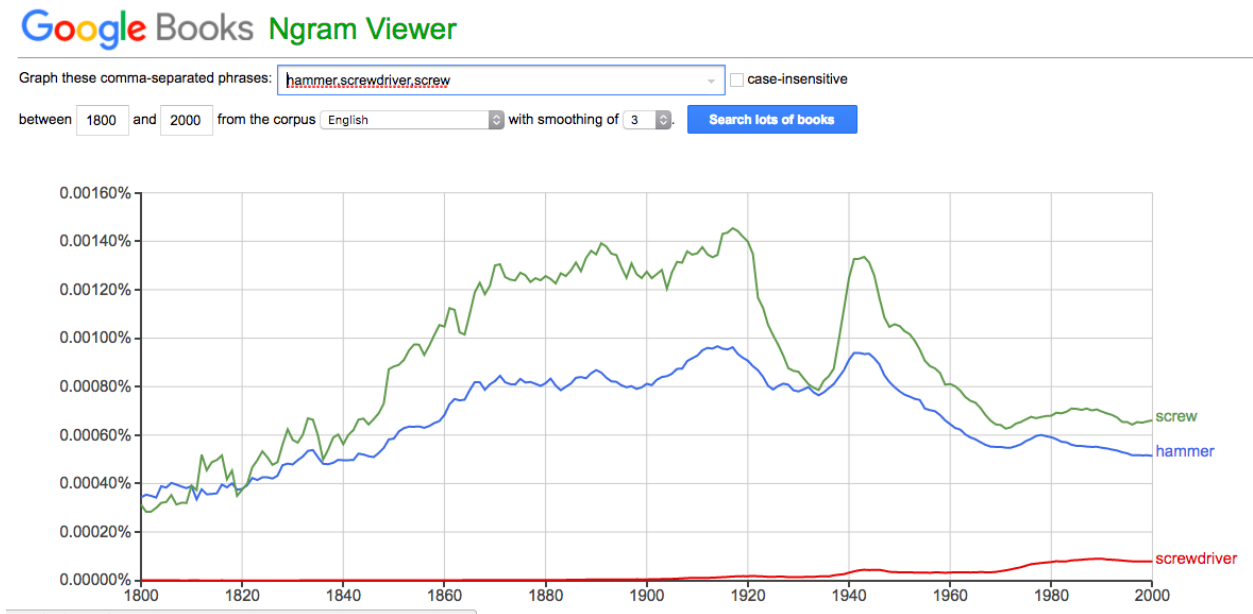


[Instagram #screwdriver](#)

Google Trends (Web Search) and ngram data compares SCREWDRIVER to HAMMER which is already an emoji. However, since hammer is both the verb and the object, we also added SCREW, which is also a verb and an object for comparison's sake.



Other required evidence relative to reference emoji





screwdriver

All

Images

Shopping

News

About 14,300,000 results (1.18 seconds)



hammer

All

Images

Shopping

Videos

News

About 299,000,000 results (0.74 seconds)



screwdriver

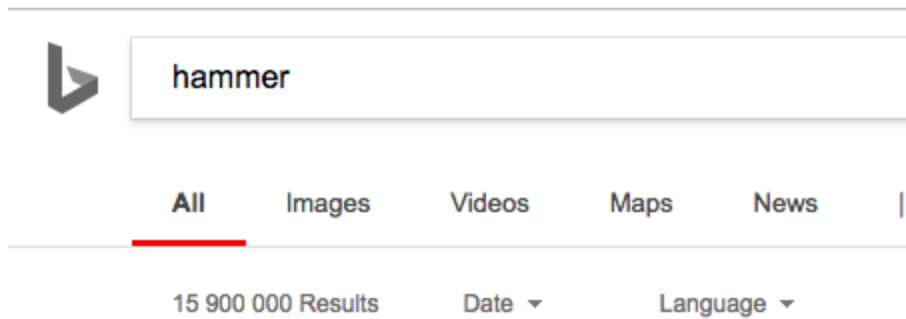
All

Images

Videos

20,200,000 Results

Any time ▼

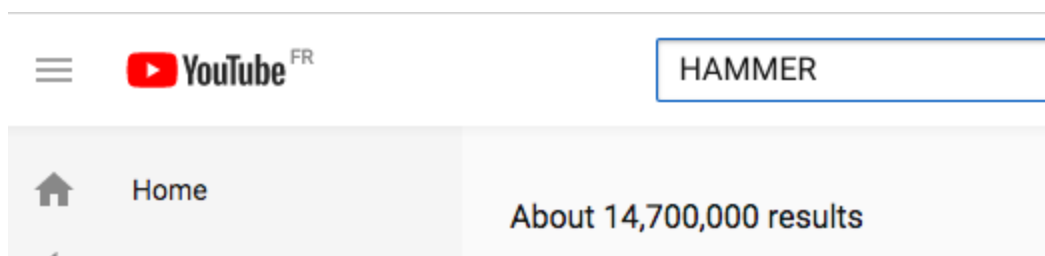


screwdriver

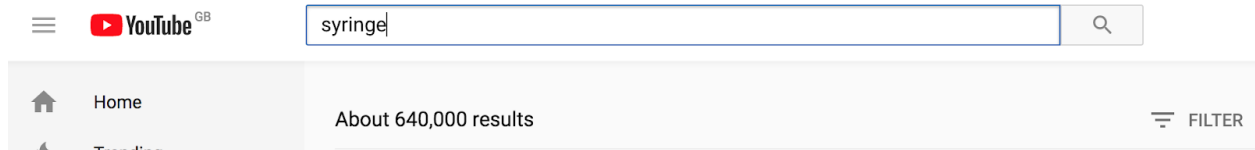
Home

About 528,000 results

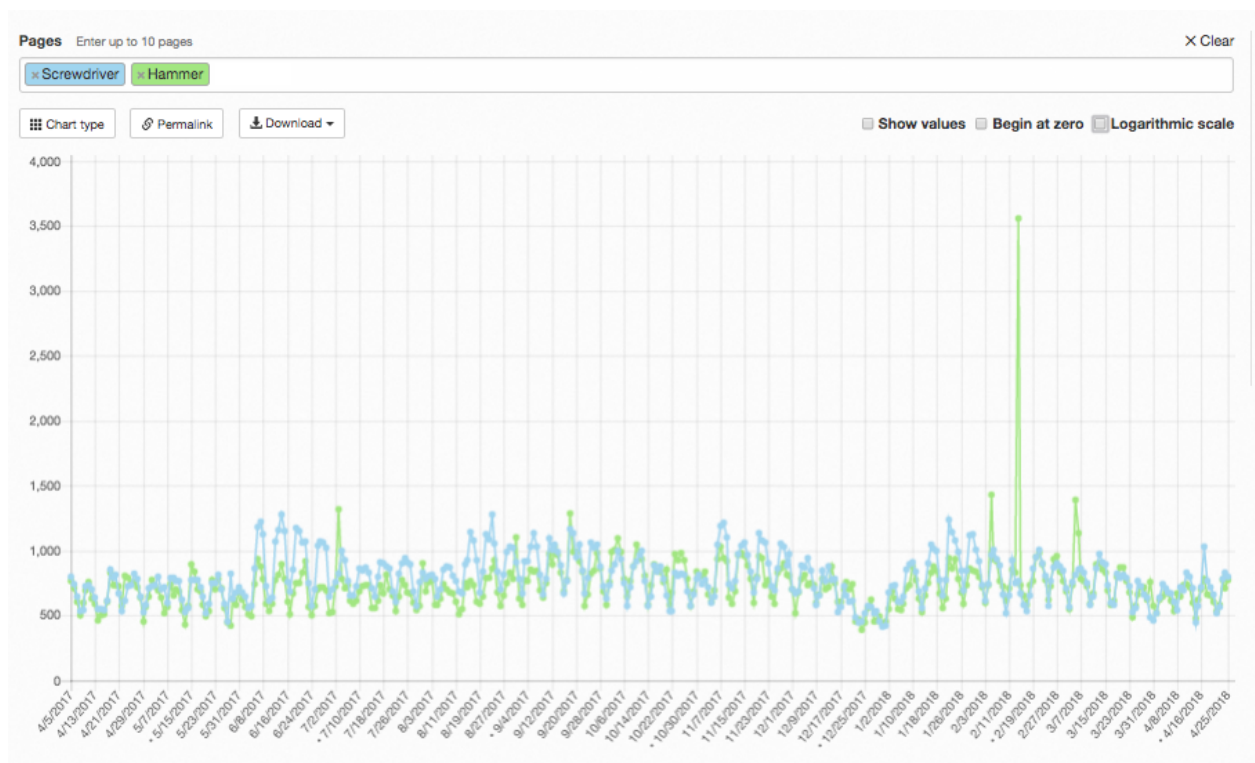
Here is the reference for hammer on YouTube, but that number may be distorted because of MC Hammer.



As a result, we offer a comparison to SYRINGE.



Optional Wikipedia pageview screenshot:



Multiple Usages

In addition to the obvious visual reference to the basic hand tool, SCREWDRIVER can refer to the cocktail of the same name, suggest the concept of assembly, suggest the concept of DIY or home improvement, and suggest the concept of fixing or repairing.

Use in Sequences

Likewise, the SCREWDRIVER emoji would be useful in sequences to convey the assembly of something – say, furniture when paired with the bed or couch and lamp emojis. Fixing a car, phone, or appliance would be similarly conveyed by pairing the SCREWDRIVER emoji with that of the appropriate object. The idea of making a mistake could be denoted by following the screwdriver emoji with an up arrow.

C. Image Distinctiveness

As depicted from the side, the emoji shows a standard tool handle, a shaft, and a tip that is not likely to be confused with any other standard hand tool. Anyone familiar with a hand-powered screwdriver should be able to easily recognize its form, even in low-resolution situations.

D. Completeness

The SCREWDRIVER adds to a group of basic hand tools that includes HAMMER and WRENCH in the current character set. This is perhaps the strongest argument for the SCREWDRIVER, as there is a closed universe of commonly used hand tools, and we are only halfway there.

E. Frequently Requested

Twitter reactions to the lack of a SCREWDRIVER are numerous and exist on a continuum from surprised (“wow”) to upset (“Where's a screwdriver emoji when you need one 😞😞😞”). There are also numerous Twitter mentions of Doctor Who’s sonic screwdriver, with many users looking for a way to depict it on the social media platform. Judging by the number of mentions of the non-existent screwdriver emoji, the proposed character would find quick and wide adoption.

Selection Factors: Exclusion

F. Overly Specific

As has been done here, the screwdriver emoji can be drawn in such a way that it resembles both a flathead and Phillips head, the two most common tip shapes. We believe we only need one.

G. Open Ended

The screwdriver is a very common tool and can be used convey many tool-related ideas. As shown here, it is intended as a general-use emoji. As we noted before, there is a limited set of commonly used handtools, and this would help complete this. It does not cause emoji to run amok.

H. Already Representable

There is currently no way to represent a SCREWDRIVER using other characters. Similarly, there is no screw emoji available in the current set.

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

A generic screwdriver image is not used by any popular products or companies.

J. Transient

Screwdrivers have been used as basic tools since the Middle Ages and they continue to be used in modern assembly and technology.

K. Faulty Comparison

Aside from other hand tools, there are no emojis similar to the proposed screwdriver, and it is not a direct variation on something existing in the set.

Sort location

Category:	tool
Emoji before it in that category:	shield

Author Bio

David F. Gluckman (gluckman@gmail.com) is a mechanical engineer that should have majored in computer science, so he did exactly that after a career in writing. He also thinks of himself as somewhat handy, having watched *This Old House* since he was a kid, back when they still used hand tools regularly on the show.

Jennifer 8. Lee (jenny@emojicon.co) is the founder of Emojination and terrible with tools. As a result, she supports those who are handy around the house.

Dwight Knell (dwight@emojicon.co) loves screwdrivers