

Proposal for New NINJA Emoji

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1. Abstract

This proposal is for the additional of a NINJA emoji to represent a ninja, a practitioner of the Japanese martial art ninjutsu.

A. Gender

The proposed NINJA emoji depicts a ninja donning a traditional black garment (shinobi shōzoku), consistent with exiting portrayals of ninjas in popular media. This garment covers the ninja's entire body and face, except a narrow slit for the eyes. Accordingly, the NINJA character cannot easily be specified as male or female. Nevertheless, vendors may implement male or female ZWJ sequences for the NINJA character if desired.

B. Skin tones

Vendors and/or the UTC may easily implement Fitzpatrick scale skin tone variations to the NINJA character if desired.

2. Background

Ninjas emerged as a class of mercenaries or spies specializing in covert warfare in Japan's Sengoku period, around the 15th century. In the succeeding centuries, ninjas played a crucial role in Japan's military history. Ninjutsu, the martial arts discipline associated with ninjas, continues to be practiced today in modern variants.

Beyond its historical associations, the image of the ninja, cloaked in a black uniform and wielding a sword, daggers, or throwing stars, has become prevalent in popular culture. For example, ninjas feature extensively in anime and manga, including such popular series as *Naruto* and *Basilisk*, and the landmark anime feature film *Ninja Scroll*. Even children's

television series and films, like the popular *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers*, the *3 Ninjas* series of films and *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, have embraced ninja culture.

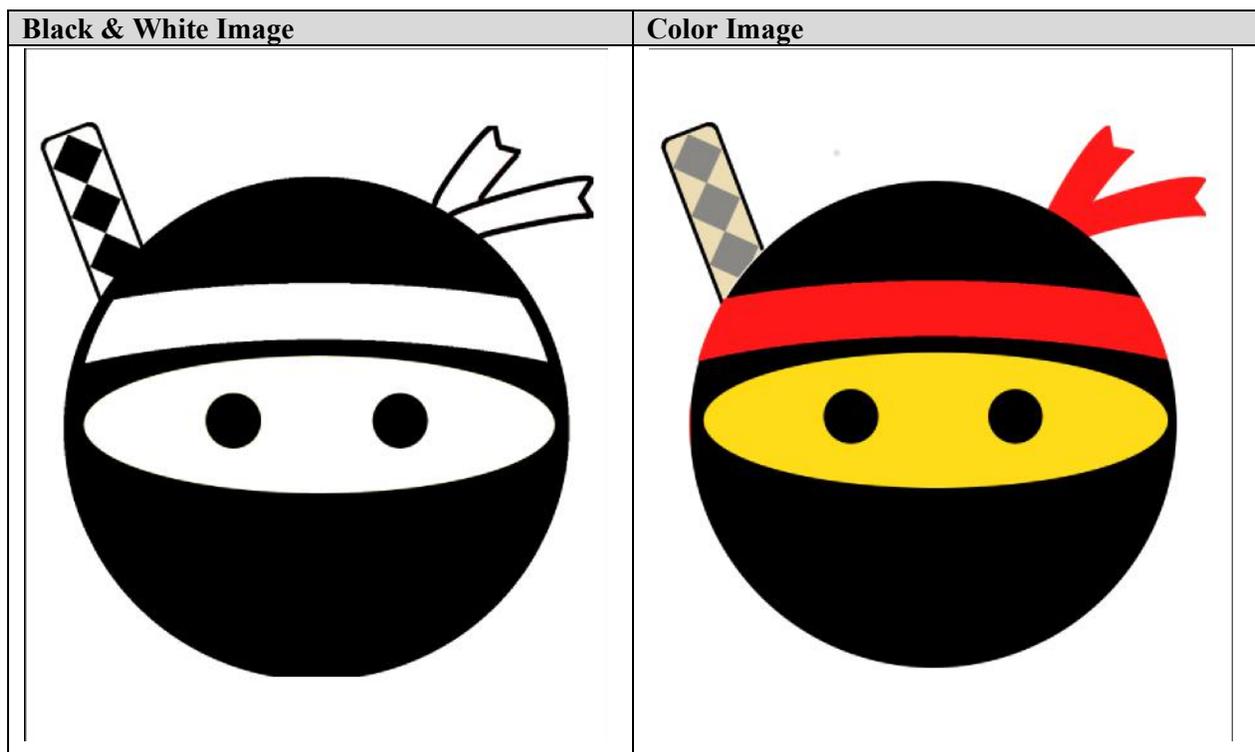
Ninjas also appear prominently in other media. Some of the best-selling video game series in history including *Mortal Kombat*, *Dead or Alive*, *Ninja Gaiden*, *Street Fighter*, *Tenchu*, *Final Fantasy*, and *Metal Gear* feature ninja characters and refer liberally to the iconography of ninjas. The popularity of ninjas in contemporary mass culture is so strong that a long-running sports competition television program, *Sakuru*, has aired in Japan for 20 years and has spawned at least 20 international versions under the title *Ninja Warrior*.

Given the popularity of ninjas in popular culture and the public's fascination with them, it is surprising that they are not represented in Unicode's current emoji set.

3. Identification

- A. CLDR short name: ninja
- B. CLDR keywords: stealth, martial arts, ninjutsu, shinobi

4. Images.



A. Zip File: proposed_e000.png

B. License. The images were created by the submitter in December 2017 and are hereby released into the public domain.

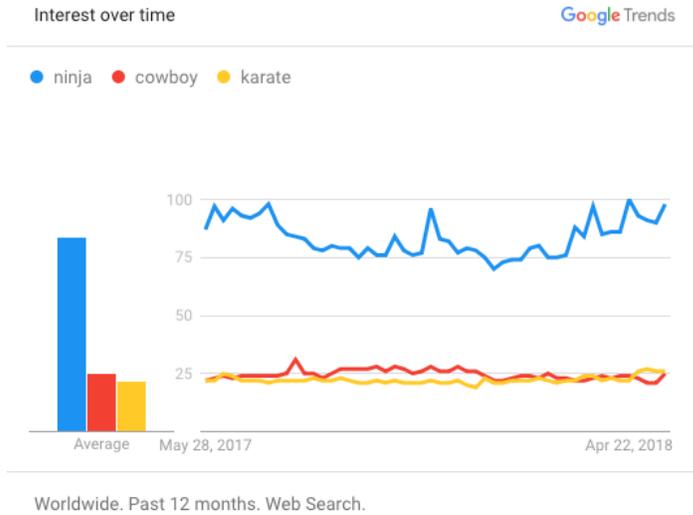
5. Selection factors — Inclusion.

A. Compatibility

The submitter is not aware of ninja images appearing in any of the existing major platforms. However, a NINJA CAT emoji has been adopted on some platforms as a sequence generated from the CAT FACE emoji joined by the BUST IN SILHOUETTE emoji. Although the NINJA CAT emoji has not been recommended for general interchange by Unicode, it is similar in appearance to the proposed NINJA emoji. Moreover, the proposed pictogram is visually consistent with depictions of ninjas in various clip art libraries (See https://www.google.com/search?q=ninja&tbm=isch&source=ln&tbs=itp:clipart&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjwurCY6qrXAhVB2mMKHUw4C_MQpwUIHw&biw=13%2066&bih=659&dpr=1).

B. Expected usage level

Frequency: The expected usage of the NINJA emoji is extremely high. For example search term analytics suggest the term “ninja” was searched very frequently in the past year. The graph below, generated on May 23, 2018 by Google Trends, shows the popularity of “ninja” as a search compared with that of “karate”, the only martial art to be given specific representation in the current Unicode emoji lexicon (1F94B), and “cowboy” (1F920), an existing median emoji. Searches for the term “ninja” regularly exceeded those for “karate” and “cowboy” by at least a threefold margin, and sometimes significantly more.



The number of the of Google, YouTube, and Bing search results (also generated on May 23, 2018) for the term “ninja” as compared to those for the term “karate” similarly underscores the observation that the term “ninja” is consistently more prevalent than the terms “karate” and “cowboy”.

	Karate	Cowboy	Ninja
Google	153.00	407.00	463.00
YouTube	7.75	11.90	37.00
Bing	35.00	31.00	33.40

Search hits (in millions)

 <input type="text" value="karate"/> <p>All Maps Videos Images News</p> <p>About 153,000,000 results (0.62 seconds)</p>	 <input type="text" value="cowboy"/> <p>All Images Videos News Maps</p> <p>About 407,000,000 results (0.88 seconds)</p>
 <input type="text" value="ninja"/> <p>All Videos Images News Shopping More Settings Tools</p> <p>About 463,000,000 results (0.60 seconds)</p>	
<p><i>Google results</i></p>	

 <input type="text" value="karate"/> <p>Home Trending</p> <p>About 7,750,000 results</p>	 <input type="text" value="cowboy"/> <p>Home Trending</p> <p>About 11,900,000 results</p>
 <input type="text" value="ninja"/> <p>Home Trending</p> <p>About 37,000,000 results</p>	
<p><i>YouTube results</i></p>	

 <input type="text" value="karate"/> <p>All Images</p> <p>35,000,000 Results</p>	 <input type="text" value="cowboy"/> <p>All Images</p> <p>31,000,000 Results</p>
 <input type="text" value="ninja"/> <p>All Images</p> <p>33,400,000 Results</p>	
<p><i>Bing results</i></p>	

Google’s analytics also demonstrate that the interest in ninjas is widespread and is not confined to any particular country or region.



Darker shades of blue indicate a greater volume of searches

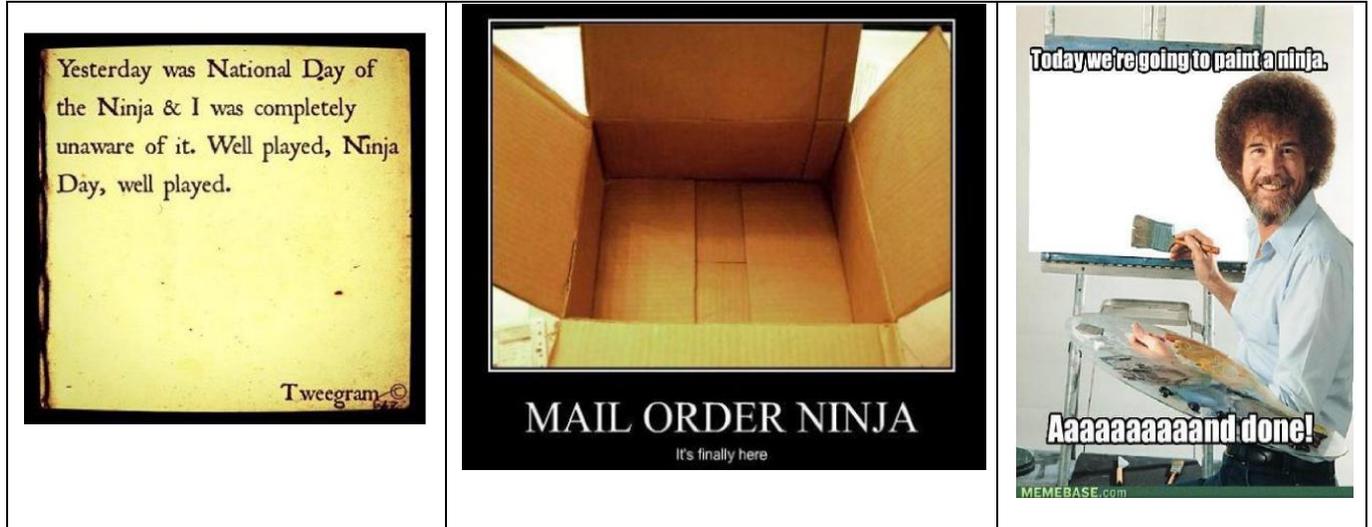
Likewise, the term “ninja” has been used frequently as a hashtag on the image sharing site Instagram. According to results accessed on the site <https://top-hashtags.com/> on November 6, 2017, the hashtag #ninja has been used 4.196 million times (the hashtag #ninjaturtles has been used an additional 1.052 million times). This is considerably more frequent use than for the comparator #karate, which has only been used 2.594 million times.

The number of the of Google and YouTube search results for the term “ninja” as compared to those for the term “karate” similarly underscore the observation that the term “ninja” is consistently more prevalent than the term “karate”. Although search hits for the respective terms are nearly even on the search engine Bing, the evidence taken as a whole strongly suggests the popularity of ninjas within digital culture.

Multiple usages: The term “ninja” is capable of accommodating many uses and evokes a rich multitude of meanings.

In addition to its literal meaning, the term ninja is often applied to connote stealth. A number of popular memes have played off the popular perception that ninjas are sly to the point of being undetectable (see below and see generally:

<http://knowyourmeme.com/memes/cultures/ninjas>). It is anticipated that the proposed NINJA emoji will be used in a similar manner to suggest stealth.



In addition to their associations with stealth particularly, ninjas are often used to describe feats that require a high degree of skill generally (see for example the tweet below). It would be expected that the NINJA emoji will also be used to connote skillfulness, as in the example below.



In addition to the more general meanings outlined above, the term “ninja’d” has come to refer to a situation where a post on an internet message board is inadvertently submitted just moments after another user submits an identical or very similar post (see below and generally: <https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=ninja%27d>). It is anticipated that the NINJA emoji would also be used in these situations, for example on message boards and in group chats.



Image distinctiveness: The proposed NINJA emoji does not closely resemble any of the existing emoji. Additionally, the proposed NINJA emoji is visually consistent with common depictions of ninjas in popular culture. Indeed, as noted above the NINJA emoji is similar visually to the depiction of ninjas in existing clip art libraries

Completeness: The addition of a NINJA emoji would contribute to the completion of the existing subset of emojis depicting various fantastical archetypes (such as the clown, witch, cowboy). Additionally, the NINJA emoji would help to fill the significant in emojis representing martial arts. Martial art are practiced, both recreationally and competitively, by millions of individuals worldwide. Millions more enjoy martial arts competitions as spectators and fans. The addition of the proposed NINJA emoji will help fill a significant gap in representing this community and may serve as the bridge for further emojis.

6. Selection factors — Exclusion.

A. Overly specific

The proposed NINJA emoji is not overly specific. The NINJA emoji does not represent a particular ninja, but ninjas in general as a class. As outlined above, the concept of ninjas is prevalent in contemporary popular culture and ninjas are capable of conveying a range of different meanings.

B. Open-ended

Ninjas have a distinct historical and cultural significance. Moreover, as outlined above, other forms of martial arts are not well-represented in the current emoji set.

C. Already representable

Ninjas cannot be represented at all using the current emoji set. Moreover the secondary meanings attributable to ninjas discussed above (eg, stealth, skill) are not easily representable in the current emoji set.

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

The NINJA emoji does not run afoul of any of the excluded categories.

E. Transient

Ninjas and ninjutsu have existed for centuries. These concepts entered the Western popular cultural consciousness several decades ago (from around the 1970s in most Western countries) and resonate in popular culture. It appears very improbable that they are simply a fad or transient phenomenon.

7. Sort location.

It is proposed that the NINJA emoji be situated in the *face-role* section of the emoji order. Alternatively, the NINJA emoji may be situated in the *person-sport* section.