

Magic Wand Emoji Proposal

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Abstract

This proposal requests the addition of the MAGIC WAND to the Unicode emoji character library. Wands currently have no representation despite their strong association with magic, their use in multiple ancient societies and some philosophies/religions today, and their figurative use to represent accomplishing a task with ease.

Images



Image credit: Aphee Messer

Introduction

A wand is “a long, thin stick or rod.”¹ In English, the word wand is sometimes associated with curling wands and metal detector wands, but “wand” is most frequently associated with magic.

The wand is one of the most recognizable symbols in magic. All types of mages have wands: a magician might have one to perform illusions, a wizard for casting spells, or a fairy for performing magical feats. In many stories, a mage has little to no access to their magical powers without their wand.

¹ New Oxford American Dictionary, s.v. “wand”.

The first mention of a magic wand in Western literature is in the *Odyssey*, in which Circe (the goddess of magic) uses her wand to turn Odysseus' men into swine.² It's noteworthy that the author didn't include an explanation of what a wand was, so the concept of a magic wand was most likely known as of the end of the 8th century BCE.³

In ancient Egypt, wands called birth tusks were left in tombs for apotropaic magic.⁴ Together with magic texts and other weapons, these magical implements could be used by the *ba* (soul) to ward off evil. Even before death, wands may have been "used to defend infants against malign forces, perhaps by scratching a circle in the earth around the area where they slept."⁵

Today, wands play a part in ceremonial magic, Thelema, Wicca, and other philosophies/religions. Wands are traditionally made of wood (but can also be made of metal) and are sometimes adorned with crystals.⁶ Practitioners may use wands to channel energy or for other ceremonial purposes.

Metaphorically, a magic wand represents the idea of being able to accomplish a feat with relative ease. It's this feeling that has lent it to being used as an icon in graphics editors. In Photoshop (one of the most popular image editors in the world), the "magic wand tool" is used to select a part of an image without having to outline it manually.

Identification / Names

CLDR short name: magic wand

CLDR keywords: fantasy | mage | magic | magic wand | rod | sorcerer | stick | tada | tool | wand | wizard

Selection Factors — Inclusion

Compatibility

N/A; the major platforms do not currently have a magic wand emoji.

² "Homer, *Odyssey*." Demosthenes, Philippic 2, Section 2, <http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0012.tlg002.perseus-eng1:10.208-10.260>.

³ Homer, E. V. Rieu, and D. C. H. Rieu. *The Odyssey* (Penguin, 2003), p. *xi*.

⁴ The Metropolitan Museum of Art, I.e. The Met Museum. Accessed July 08, 2018. <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/545740>.

⁵ The Metropolitan Museum of Art, I.e. The Met Museum. Accessed July 08, 2018. <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/544243>.

⁶ Gallagher, Anne-Marie. *The Wicca Bible: The Definitive Guide to Magic and the Craft* (New York: Sterling Publishing Co., 2005), 201.

Expected Usage Level

Frequency

There is a high expected use of this emoji, especially around magical holidays such as Halloween and Christmas. This emoji will also be popular amongst fans of fantasy books (such as *Harry Potter*, which has sold more than 500 million copies worldwide⁷) and practitioners of Wicca (of which there are estimated to be 800,000 members worldwide⁸).

The data in the following sections compares “magic wand” with the existing emoji characters “goblin” (because it is one of the sample reference emoji) and “crystal ball” (because magic wand is more comparable to a crystal ball than goblin). Note that comparisons to both “wand” and “magic wand” are included because of the popularity of referring to a magic wand as simply a wand. While there are other types of wands (e.g. curling wands), the most common definition after simply “a long, thin stick or rod” (New Oxford American Dictionary) is a magic wand.

Google Search

“Magic wand” has a little over one million more results than “crystal ball” in Google’s web search (20.0 million vs. 18.9 million) and 44 million fewer results than “goblin” (64 million). “Wand” has more than twice the results of all three combined at about 231 million results.

The image shows two screenshots of Google search results. The top screenshot is for the search term "wand", showing approximately 231,000,000 results in 0.43 seconds. The bottom screenshot is for the search term "magic wand", showing approximately 20,000,000 results in 0.49 seconds. Both screenshots show the search bar, navigation tabs (All, Shopping, Images, News, Videos, More, Settings, Tools), and the result count.

wand

About 231,000,000 results (0.43 seconds)

"magic wand"

About 20,000,000 results (0.49 seconds)

⁷ Rusli, Serla. “The Charts That Shows How the UK Loves Harry Potter.” The Telegraph. June 26, 2017. Accessed July 08, 2018. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/books/news/data-show-uk-loves-harry-potter/>.

⁸ “Statistical Summary Pages.” Adherents.com. Accessed July 08, 2018. http://www.adherents.com/Na/i_w.html.

"crystal ball"

All

Shopping

Images

News

Videos

More

Settings

Tools

About 18,900,000 results (0.55 seconds)

goblin

All

Images

Videos

News

Shopping

More

Settings

Tools

About 64,100,000 results (0.52 seconds)

Bing Search

“Wand” has 5 million more results than “goblin” in Bing’s web search (29.8 million vs. 24.8 million), while “magic wand” has about 2.5 million fewer results than “crystal ball” (5.5 million vs. 8.1 million)

wand

All

Images

Videos

Maps

News

Shop

|

My saves

29,800,000 Results

Any time ▾

"magic wand"

All

Images

Videos

Maps

News

Shop

|

My saves

5,540,000 Results

Any time ▾



"crystal ball"



All

Images

Videos

Maps

News

Shop

| My saves

8,070,000 Results

Any time ▾



goblin



All

Images

Videos

Maps

News

Shop

| My saves

24,800,000 Results

Any time ▾

YouTube

"Wand" and "goblin" have a comparable number of YouTube search results (1.2 million vs. 1.4 million), while "magic wand" and "crystal ball" have about a third of the results (425 thousand and 520 thousand).



wand



About 1,210,000 results



"magic wand"



About 425,000 results



"crystal ball"



About 520,000 results



goblin

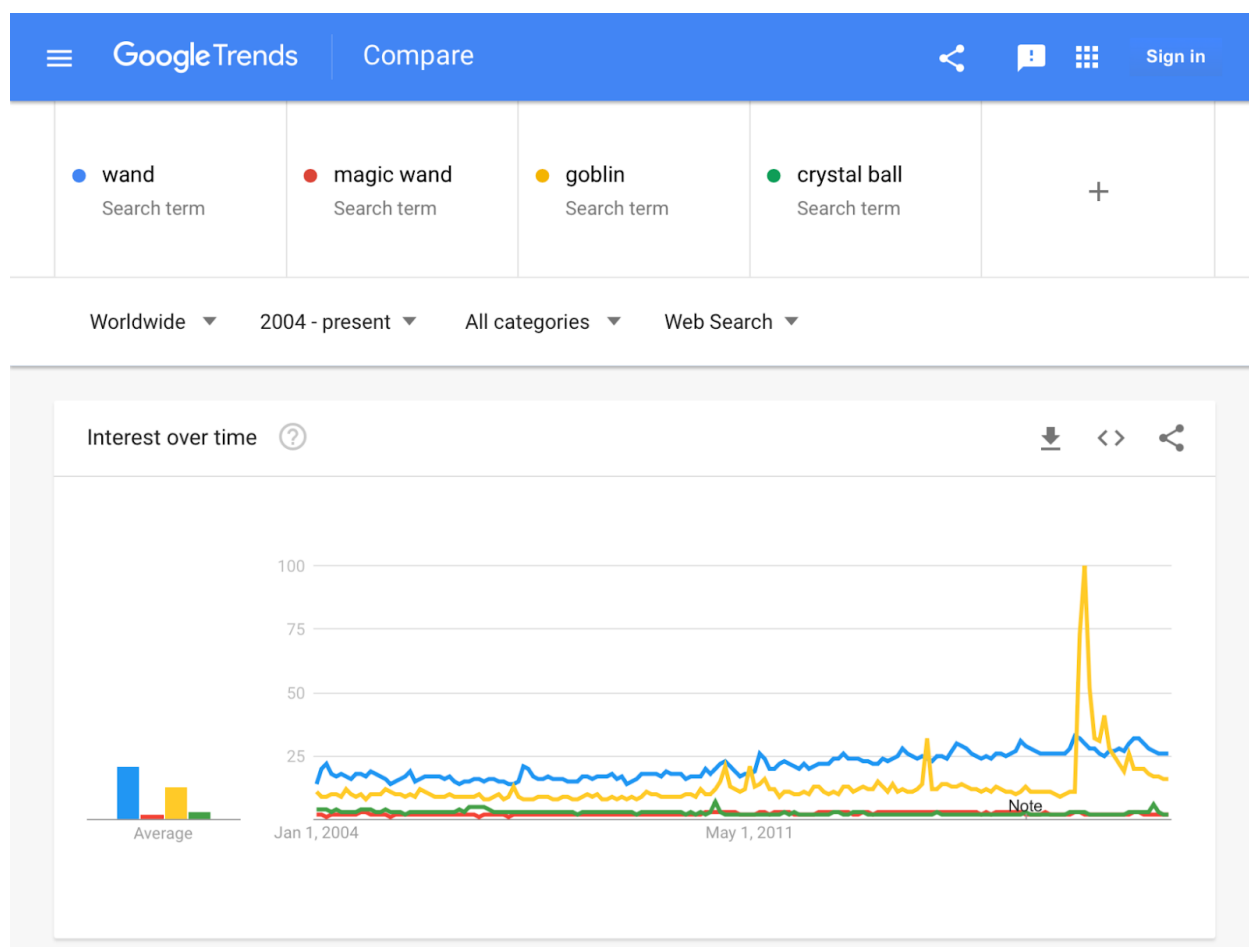


About 1,480,000 results

Google Trends: Web Search

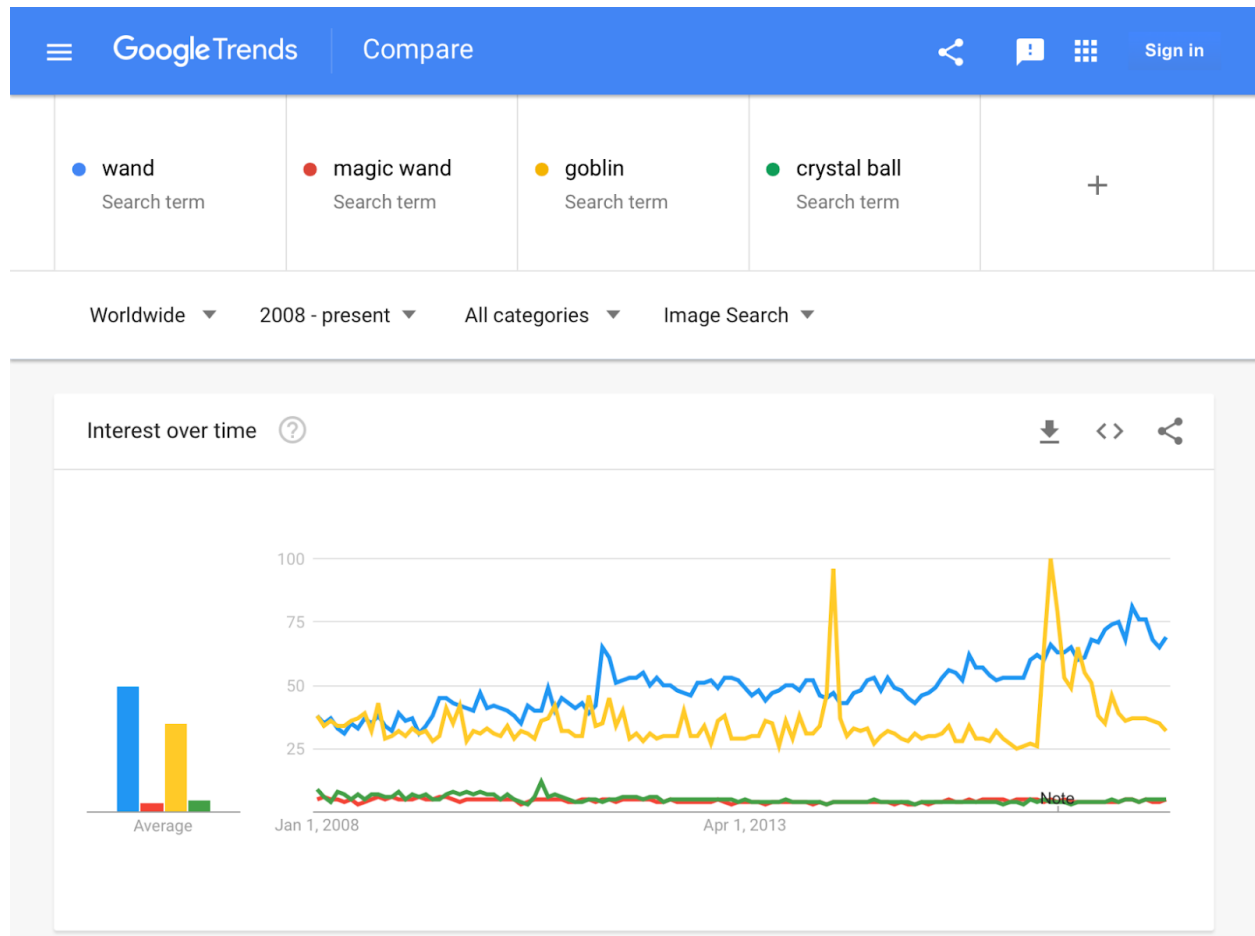
“Wand” is typically a more common search query than “goblin,” with the two notable exceptions being in May 2014 when it was reported that a rare goblin shark was caught, and when the series finale of a South Korean TV show aired in January 2017.

“Magic wand” and “crystal ball” have a similar pattern of interest over time.



Google Trends: Image Search

Similar to web search, “wand” is typically a more common image search query than “goblin,” with the two outstanding exceptions noted above. Similarly, “magic wand” and “crystal ball” have a similar pattern of interest over time.



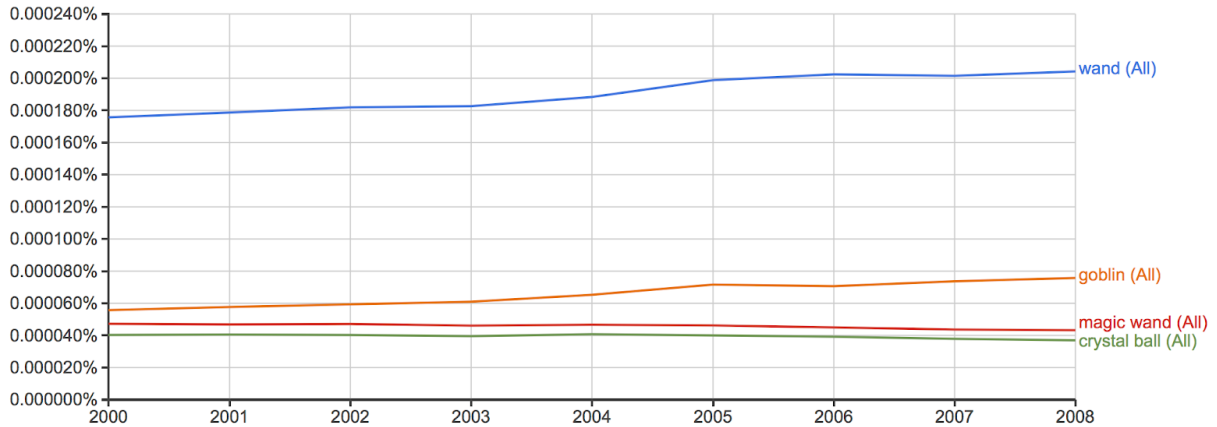
NGram Viewer

The usage of “wand” slightly grew from 2000 to 2008 and it occurs about three times as much as crystal ball, goblin, and magic wand in particular. “Magic wand” occurs slightly more frequently than “crystal ball” but less than “goblin.”

Google Books Ngram Viewer

Graph these comma-separated phrases: ☒ case-insensitive

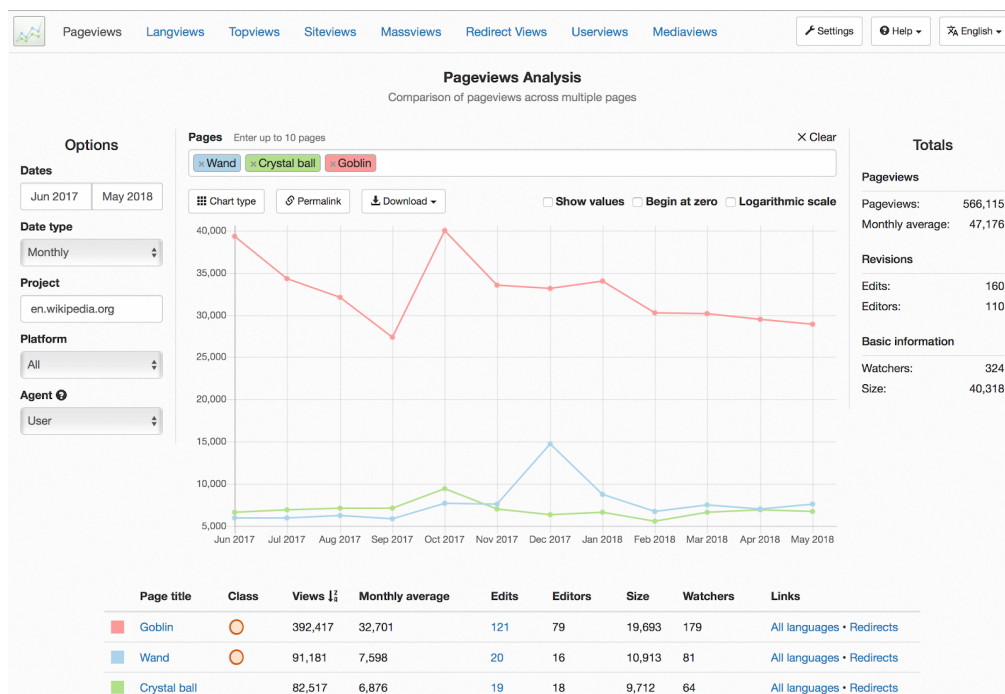
between and from the corpus with smoothing of [Search lots of books](#)



Wikipedia Search

The “Wand” page on Wikipedia mentions different definitions of wands (ceremonial, the unit of length, etc.), but the page mostly focuses on the wand as magical tool or religious item.

The “Wand” page has about a quarter of the average monthly page views as “Goblin” (7,598 vs. 32,701), and a slightly higher average than “Crystal ball” (6,876). The “Wand” page’s views roughly double in December.



Multiple usages

In addition to the magic wand representing a literal wand used in fictional stories (e.g. *Harry Potter*) or modern practices (e.g. Wiccan rituals), a wand can represent the idea of being able to accomplish a difficult task with ease. In image editors such as Photoshop, the “magic wand tool” is used to select a part of an image automatically based on the pixel color values, a task that would otherwise be tedious with the application’s “magic.”

Due to the wand’s phallic shape, it is sometimes colloquially used to refer to a penis or sex toy. The wand as a sex toy was popularized by Hitachi’s “Magic Wand” massager, which became popular in the 1960s after gaining a reputation amongst women for having alternate uses.⁹



Use in sequences

The magic wand could be combined with the mage or fairy emojis to give them a wand as the tool they’re holding.

Breaking new ground

Yes, the magic wand emoji breaks new ground in expressing both literal and figurative concepts. Literally, there are no existing emojis that can represent a wand. Figuratively, no existing emoji captures the same feeling as being able to make something happen as if by magic.

⁹ Trout, Christopher. "The 46-year-old Sex Toy Hitachi Won't Talk about." Engadget. August 27, 2014. Accessed July 08, 2018. <https://www.engadget.com/2014/08/27/history-of-the-hitachi-magic-wand/>.

¹⁰ @eggpaints. "i wish there was a little wand emoji with little sparkles coming out of the tip and now that i wrote it out i realize that every fucking one of us would use it as the new dick emoji" May 25, 2018, 6:44 AM. <https://twitter.com/eggpaints/status/1000009765970497538>.

Image Distinctiveness

The magic wand has a clearly recognizable physical object after which the emoji can be modeled. It lends itself to being represented by either a black stick with white tips or a more natural-looking wooden stick, both with sparkles on one end. These are the two styles portrayed in the “Images” section above. These two variations are unlikely to be confused with any existing emoji.

Completeness

The magic wand emoji would contribute to the set of things associated with fantasy and magic, which include crystal ball, elf, fairy, goblin, mage, man in suit levitating, rabbit, sparkles, and top hat.

The magic wand can also cover scepters and staffs typically held by mages. While these are distinct from wands (they are typically longer or thicker, held differently, and are adorned with something on top), it is unlikely that a scepter or staff could have a distinctive enough image to separate it from the magic wand. While the magic wand would not completely cover the potential meanings of a scepter or staff, it could mostly cover the same concepts.

Frequently Requested

The magic wand has been included in a few previous proposals:

- [Emoji Additions L2/14-174R](#)
- [Emoji Additions: Animals, Compatibility, and More Popular Requests](#)
- [Fantasy Characters Proposal for Unicode v10 L2/16-304](#).

The wand has also been mentioned in the Unicode mailing list:

- [“gender-aware Mage emoji coming to Unicode 10... is probably less useful than a Magic Wand \(which is a common icon in image editors and thus became part of graphic artist jargon\)”](#)
- [“I sincerely believe that a Magic Wand emoji would be used much more than a Mage emoji.”](#)

Many Twitter users have requested a magic wand emoji:

- /* (We need the wand emoji) <https://twitter.com/malfoysrey/status/646033911055810560>
- Dear Apple, Wand emoji. Now. <https://twitter.com/GingerWesson/status/756307372650397697>

- Sorry about your wand Garrett. Tomorrow's a new day!! ❤️🧙♂️🪄 Well, I tried to find a wand emoji for you but chopsticks will have to do
<https://twitter.com/PSeymour418/status/1003498068254380032>
- And @Apple where's the wand emoji at cough cough get some Harry Potter emojis 🤔🤔 <https://twitter.com/OfficallyEmz/status/1002157325858295808>
- Can someone ask @SamsungMobileUS and @Android why there is no magic wand emoji (unless I'm missing something)?
<https://twitter.com/jadedmuses/status/1004613497710235648>
- Hurrah! Nice work 😊 I can't find a magic wand emoji so this will have to do... 🎩🐰
<https://twitter.com/emvjones/status/1007599979840581632>
- Magic Wand Emoji wya <https://twitter.com/SPECIALBIC/status/1002283768202366976>
- Thanks so much, Kathy. Your workshops are magical [insert magic wand emoji here!] 😊
<https://twitter.com/Summerwriter/status/993481011643211776>
- I GOTTA HAVE YA LIKE ABRACADABRA 🪄 (there isnt a magic wand emoji so I'm sad)
<https://www.instagram.com/p/BiSXaUhg2IP/>


Ginger Wesson ✓
 @GingerWesson

Follow

Dear Apple,

Wand emoji. Now.

K thanks.

6:58 PM - 21 Jul 2016

30 Retweets 152 Likes




eli(se)
 @maifoysrey

Follow

/*

(We need the wand emoji)
vine.co/v/ewKdQL2iPDi

11:51 AM - 21 Sep 2015

57 Retweets 57 Likes




Anne Summerfield
 @Summerwriter

Follow

Replying to @kathyfish

Thanks so much, Kathy. Your workshops are magical [insert magic wand emoji here!] 😊

6:21 AM - 7 May 2018

1 Like




Emily Jones
 @emvjones

Follow

Replying to @ClaireMN_Music

Hurrah! Nice work 😊 I can't find a magic wand emoji so this will have to do... 🎩🐰

5:25 AM - 15 Jun 2018

Selection Factors — Exclusion

Overly Specific

It can be argued that magic wand is too specific, and instead wand should be added and a combined with the sparkles emoji to form the magic wand. However, almost all requests for a “wand” emoji have specifically requested a magic wand.

Different types of wands or scepters would be overly specific; for example, a fairy godmother's wand (with a star at the end) or wands made of different materials (wood, plastic, metal, etc.) would be overly specific.

Open Ended

The magic wand would not be just one of many. While there are different types of wands (curling wands), magic wand is the most requested.

Already Representable

The magic wand emoji cannot be represented in the current emoji set. Crystal ball is the closest, but it has a different connotation in Western culture (closer to divining magic than making supernatural events happen).

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

The magic wand is not tied to a specific logo, brand, signage, person, building, or deity.

Transient

Given the continual appearance of magic and wands in culture since ancient Egypt and Greece, it is unlikely that references to wands will stop in the future. The magic wand is not a transient or faddish symbol. It has existed in multiple cultures over thousands of years.

Faulty comparison

The crux of this proposal is not based on the magic wand being similar to or more important than existing emoji. The magic wand emoji should not be added solely based on compatibility or adding a new variety of an existing emoji.

Exact images

This proposal does not require an exact image or type of magic wand.

Sort location

There are a few different categories that the magic wand could fit under:

clothing: after gem; while a wand is not a piece of clothing, it is an accessory, and thus could fit after gem.

game: after crystal ball; the wand would thematically fit well after crystal ball, even though it isn't really a game or something used in games.

other-object: after cigarette; the wand is an object that may not completely fit into other categories.

Other Information

This proposal suggests the magic wand emoji designs include sparkles at the end of the wand, as shown in the images at the top of this proposal. This will help make it distinctive amongst the other emoji designs and more clearly communicate that it is not just a rod or stick.

Other Character Properties

The other character properties are suggested to be defined as follows.

General Category: So

Canonical Combining Class: 0

Bidirectional Class: ON

Decomposition Type: Decomposition Mapping:

Numeric Type:

Numeric Value:

Bidirectional Mirrored: N

Unicode 1 Name:

ISO Comment:

Simple Uppercase Mapping: Simple Lowercase Mapping: Simple Titlecase Mapping:

Author bio

Chasen Le Hara (me@chasenlehara.com) is a software developer from Long Beach, CA. He remembers borrowing the *Harry Potter* series from a friend and using his Game Boy's light to read the series late into the night. He hopes to bring a little magic into the hands of emoji users everywhere.