Re: Proposed change to Emoji 12 data for skin tones and sequences
From: Peter Edberg, Mark Davis, ESC
Date: 2018-12-18, updated

This document constitutes beta feedback for PRI-387 from the Emoji Subcommittee.

One of the goals of Emoji 12 is to make improvements to skin tone support for emoji that represent multi-person groupings, per documents L2/18-228 and L2/18-223R. The current draft supports **combinations of different skin tones** for the people holding hands (the most popular of the 2-person groupings), while providing for the use of a **single shared skin tone** for **some** of the other groupings as a relatively easy way to expand the skin tone options for those other groupings. However, as vendors have begun to design and test actual implementations using this data, it has become increasingly apparent that providing different levels of skin tone support for different multi-person groupings would result in confusing or inconsistent experiences for users.

As a result, the ESC proposes to simplify the approach for Emoji 12 data by improving the consistency of options for people holding hands (providing combinations of different skin tones, per the gray section in the table under Details below), while eliminating the recommendation of partial skin tone support planned for the other multi-person groupings, reducing the number of new images required. The UTC needs to make sure that changes in each release make a consistent and understandable enhancement for users.

The ESC will continue to work to expand the diversity of emoji, and plans to make further recommendations for additions to skin tone and gender RGI sequences in the future. None of the retractions in this document for Emoji 12 preclude adding the sequences back in a future version.

In addition, vendors may still implement the retracted sequences even with Emoji 12, since they will remain valid. (Vendors are not restricted to only RGI sequences, and may go beyond that set with any valid sequence.)

Proposal

1. Retract the RGI sequences that added skintones for multi-person emoji other than those holding hands.
2. Add 16 new (gender-neutral) emoji for people holding hands, to complete the set (1 without skin tones, and 15 skin tone combinations).
3. Make corresponding changes to the emoji specification and test files.

The detailed changes proposed here are listed in Data and Spec Changes, and apply to the Emoji 12.0 draft as of November 2018.

Details

The following chart summarizes the behavior for the current Emoji 12 beta data, and for the proposed changes (using W = woman, M = man, A = adult, C = child). The chart shows how the current (November) draft presents a number of inconsistencies to users. These inconsistencies are due to the internal structure, but users don't know about those, nor should they need to.

Emoji category	Variants	Emoji 12 beta data	This proposal
handshake (no gender)	U+1F91D	Single shared skin tone	No RGI skin tone sequences
people with bunny ears; people wrestling	gender-neutral (AA): U+1F46F, U+1F93C	Single shared skin tone	No RGI skin tone sequences
	explicit gender (WW, MM): sequences	Single shared skin tone	No RGI skin tone sequences
people holding hands	gender neutral (AA): sequence	No RGI emoji sequences	Add RGI sequences with no tones, plus all skin tone combinations: 15 AA
	explicit gender (WM, MM, WW): U+1F46B, U+1F46C, U+1F46D	All skin tone combinations: 25 WM, 15 MM, 15 WW	All skin tone combinations: 25 WM, 15 MM, 15 WW
kiss; couple with heart	gender-neutral (AA): U+1F48F, U+1F491	Single shared skin tone	No RGI skin tone sequences
	explicit gender (WM, MM, WW): sequences	No RGI skin tone sequences	No RGI skin tone sequences
family	gender neutral (typically AAC): U+1F46A	Single shared skin tone	No RGI skin tone sequences
family	explicit gender (various combinations): sequences	No RGI skin tone sequences	No RGI skin tone sequences

Data and Spec Changes

Detailed changes to UTS #51 and emoji data:

Proposed Update to UTS #51

Make the following changes to Section 2.6.2 Multi-Person Skintones:

1. Second paragraph: "...and men holding hands, and people holding hands. These sequences are structured like 55 70 different emoji sequences that appear as 55 70 different images"
2. Change the following so that the ***emoji modifier sequence set*** is also subject to RGI. That has fewer changes, gives us more flexibility in the future, and means that implementations that add skintones to characters with skin are just going beyond RGI, rather than being non-conformant.
3. Move the definition of RGI above ED-22, and modify ED-22 to be a subset, as follows:

   Note: The following definitions use the acronym "RGI" to mean "recommended for general interchange", referring to that subset of some larger set that is most likely to be widely supported across multiple platforms.

ED-22. *emoji modifier sequence set* — The specific set of emoji sequences listed in the **emoji-sequences.txt** file [emoji-data] under the category **Emoji_Modifier_Sequence**.

- This is the *subset* of all valid **emoji modifier sequences** recommended for general interchange.

Note: The following definitions use the acronym "RGI" to mean "recommended for general interchange", referring to that subset of some larger set that is most likely to be widely supported across multiple platforms.

Draft Emoji 12 emoji-sequences.txt

Under Emoji_Modifier_Sequence, remove all sequences for the characters:
- U+1F46A family
- U+1F46F people with bunny ears
- U+1F48F kiss
- U+1F491 couple with heart
- U+1F91D handshake
- U+1F93C people wrestling

Draft Emoji 12 emoji-zwj-sequences.txt:

1. In the section "Emoji_ZWJ_Sequence: Family":
   - Add 1 Emoji_ZWJ_Sequence for "people holding hands" without skin tones:
     1F9D1 200D 1F91D 200D 1F9D1 ; uses adult + handshake + adult
   - Add 15 Emoji_ZWJ_Sequences for "people holding hands" with skin tones, e.g.
     1F9D1 1F3FB 200D 1F91D 200D 1F9D1 1F3FB ; light, light skin tone
     1F9D1 1F3FC 200D 1F91D 200D 1F9D1 1F3FB ; medium-light, light skin tone
     …
     1F9D1 1F3FF 200D 1F91D 200D 1F9D1 1F3FE ; dark, medium-dark skin tone
     1F9D1 1F3FF 200D 1F91D 200D 1F9D1 1F3FF ; dark, dark skin tone

2. In the section "Emoji_ZWJ_Sequence: Gendered":
   - Delete the 10 sequences beginning with 1F46F followed by an Emoji_Modifier (the sequences for women and men with bunny ears, plus skin tones)
   - Delete the 10 sequences beginning with 1F93C followed by an Emoji_Modifier (the sequences for women and men wrestling, plus skin tones)

Draft Emoji 12 emoji-test.txt

Regenerate to be consistent with the above changes.

Draft Emoji 12 Charts

Regenerate to be consistent with the above changes, especially Draft Emoji Candidates.