

Proposal for Emoji: FLIP-FLOP; STRAP SANDAL

Revision 1

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Changelog:

- Added non-English search information to B1 (Expected usage level > Frequency).
- Added additional context to describe what 'flip-flop' conveys that other emoji do not to B4 (Expected usage level > Breaking new ground).
- Reformatted to provide all required information on first page.

1. Identification (Names)

A. CLDR short name: Flip-flop

B. CLDR keywords: Flip-flop | sandal | male sandal | jandal | slipper | thong

2. Images



Credit: Aphelandra Messer/Emojination. Free for use in conjunction with this proposal.

3. Sort location

A. Category: Clothing

B. Emoji before it in that category: After hiking boot 🥾 (No. 976 / U+1F97E)

4. Reference Emoji

Clothing : Necktie

Abstract

This proposal requests the addition of a FLIP-FLOP or STRAP SANDAL emoji to the Unicode emoji set.

A flip-flop is a common Western name for an open toed and open backed sandal, worn by both men and women. These sandals are worn in a wide range of cultures across the world and are known by many names. They are particularly popular in the warm climates in Africa, South Asia (including India, Pakistan), Southeast Asian (Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia), and the Middle East.

Introduction

Flip-flops typically consist of a flat sole with a Y-shaped strap, known as a toe thong, that passes between the toes and around both sides of the foot. The name has been used in American and British English since the 1960s, but this style of sandal has a long history that's been traced back as far as ancient Egyptian civilisation.

Thong sandals have been depicted in ancient Egyptian murals dating back to 4,000 BC, and a pair made of papyrus leaves was found in Europe that was dated to be approximately 1,500 years old. They have a history that stretches across the globe, including usage in Africa, China, Japan, South America, Mexico, Ancient Greece and Ancient Rome.

In the modern era flip-flops became popular in the United States when soldiers returning from World War II brought traditional Japanese sandals, known as zōri, with them. As their popularity grew the sandals were mass-manufactured and sold in bright colours to match the aesthetics of the 1950'. By the 1960's they'd become commonly associated with beach culture, especially the Californian lifestyle.

The name flip-flop is an onomatopoeia of the sound made by the sandals when walking and is commonly used in Western countries. Along with flip-flop and zōri there are a lot of other names for this style of sandal used around the world including thongs (Australia), jandals (New Zealand), slops (South Africa), slippers (Hawaii, Bahamas, Trinidad and Tobago), and charlie wote (Ghana).

5. Selection Factors — Inclusion

A. Compatibility:

N/A

B. Expected Usage Level

B1. Frequency

We chose our median representative emoji to be NECKTIE.

Isolating statistics for FLIP FLOP/STRAP SANDAL are somewhat difficult, because this visual item is known by many terms around the world (“THONGS” in Australia MALE SANDAL in much of the world, JANDAL), yet some of those terms also overlap with other words in common use, so we can not simply aggregate all the terms.

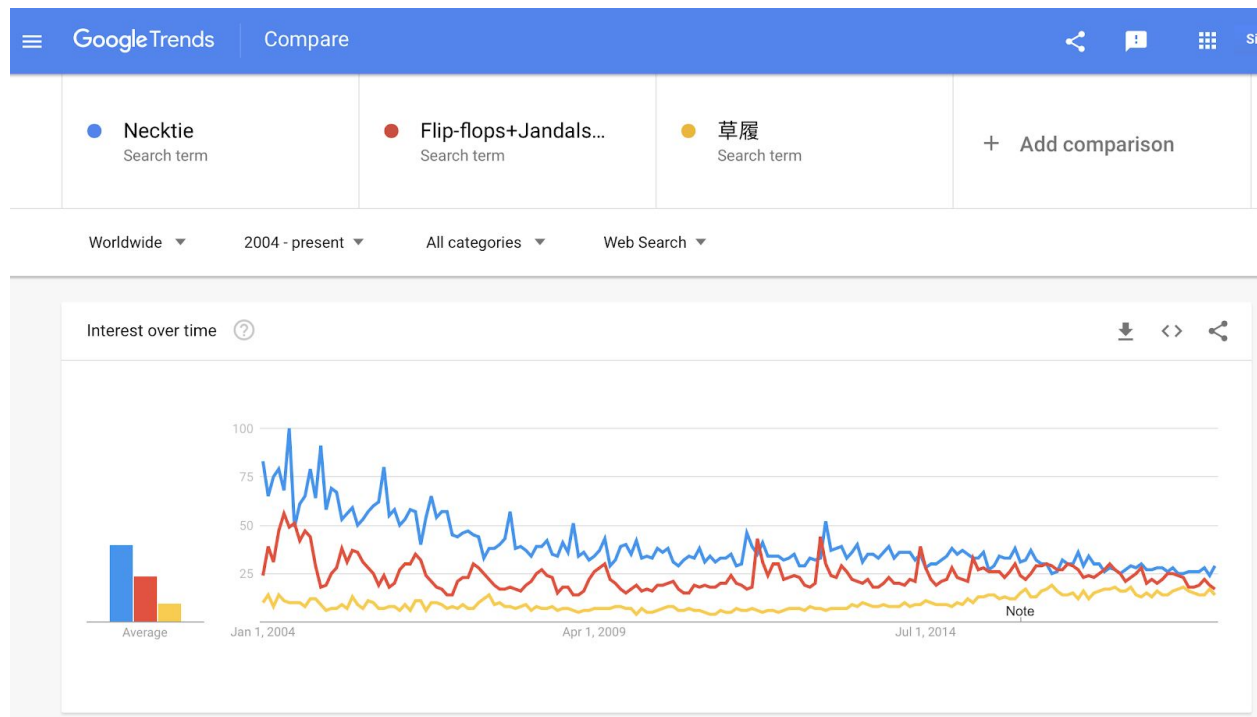
In addition, “flip flop” itself is a verb, as well as an electronic circuit item. So it’s a bit difficult to figure out.

That being said, with enough different ways to slice the statistics, we see that flip-flop is a popular item, on the same order of magnitude as our reference emoji, NECKTIE. We posit that this is in part because while neckties are popular in industrialized countries, they are not as popular in other regions of the worlds, regions where FLIP-FLOP/STRAP SANDAL is popular.

Note that our searches below don’t include the additional weight of searches for regional names (e.g. “jandal”) and “male sandal.” Note also that ‘how to tie a tie’ is Google’s most searched how to since 2004 (<http://how-to-fix-a-toilet.com>), so it’s a hard comparison on YouTube.

For additional data searches have been conducted below using both the english name and Japanese characters (草履) for Zori.

Google Trends Worldwide - Red line is a combined search for Flip-flops + Jandals + Zori. Japanese characters have been kept separate for non-English usage analysis):



Google search:

The figure shows three Google search results. Each result includes the Google logo, a search bar with the query, and a list of search filters (All, Images, Shopping, Maps, News, More, Settings, Tools). The first search is for 'Flip-flops|Jandals|Zori' and shows 'About 264,000,000 results (0.54 seconds)'. The second search is for 'necktie' and shows 'About 39,100,000 results (0.47 seconds)'. The third search is for '草履' and shows 'About 87,700,000 results (0.28 seconds)'.

Instagram

Flip-flops significantly outperform “necktie” on Instagram by about a ratio of 3 to 1, including all the variations.

Instagram

Search: #flipflops

#flipflops
1,467,162 posts

Top Posts

- #flipflops: 1,467,162 posts
- #flipflopseason: 31,131 posts
- #gucciflipflops: 148,651 posts
- #flipflopshops: 7,912 posts
- #flipflopsandals: 34,705 posts

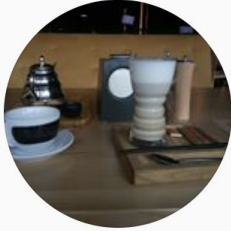
Instagram

Search: #necktie

#necktie
370,669 posts

Top Posts

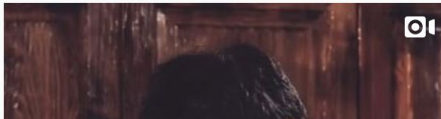
- #necktie: 370,670 posts
- #neckties: 103,609 posts
- #necktiestyle: 9,417 posts
- #necktieswag: 4,048 posts
- #necktiegirl: 719 posts
- #necktiemurah



#zori

20,329 posts

Top Posts



- #zori 20,329 posts
- #zorikdorzhev 907 posts
- #zorita 4,131 posts
- #zorişlerbunlar 482 posts
- #zorin 2,177 posts
- #zori_ashkanani



#草履

32,711 posts

Top Posts



- #草履 32,711 posts
- #草履屋ちぐさ 532 posts
- better_me_caolu 차오루+만두+꽃빵
- #草履バッグ 892 posts
- #草履蟲 235 posts
- zoriva69

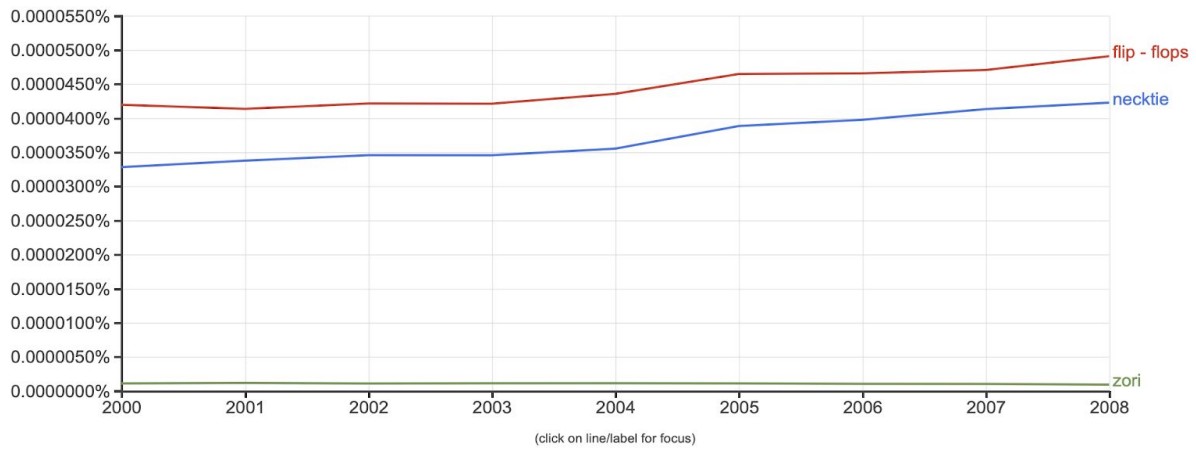
Google Books Ngram Viewer:

Google Books Ngram Viewer

Graph these comma-separated phrases: ☐ case-insensitive

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

Replaced **flip-flops** with **flip - flops** to match how we processed the books.



Bing search:



flip-flop



All Images Videos Maps News | My saves

6,590,000 Results Date ▼ Language ▼ Region ▼



necktie



All News Images Videos Maps | My saves

2,150,000 Results Date ▼ Language ▼ Region ▼

zori

All

News

Images

Videos

Maps

|

My saves

648,000 Results

Date ▾

Language ▾

Region ▾

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All

Images

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News

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My saves

2,060,000 Results

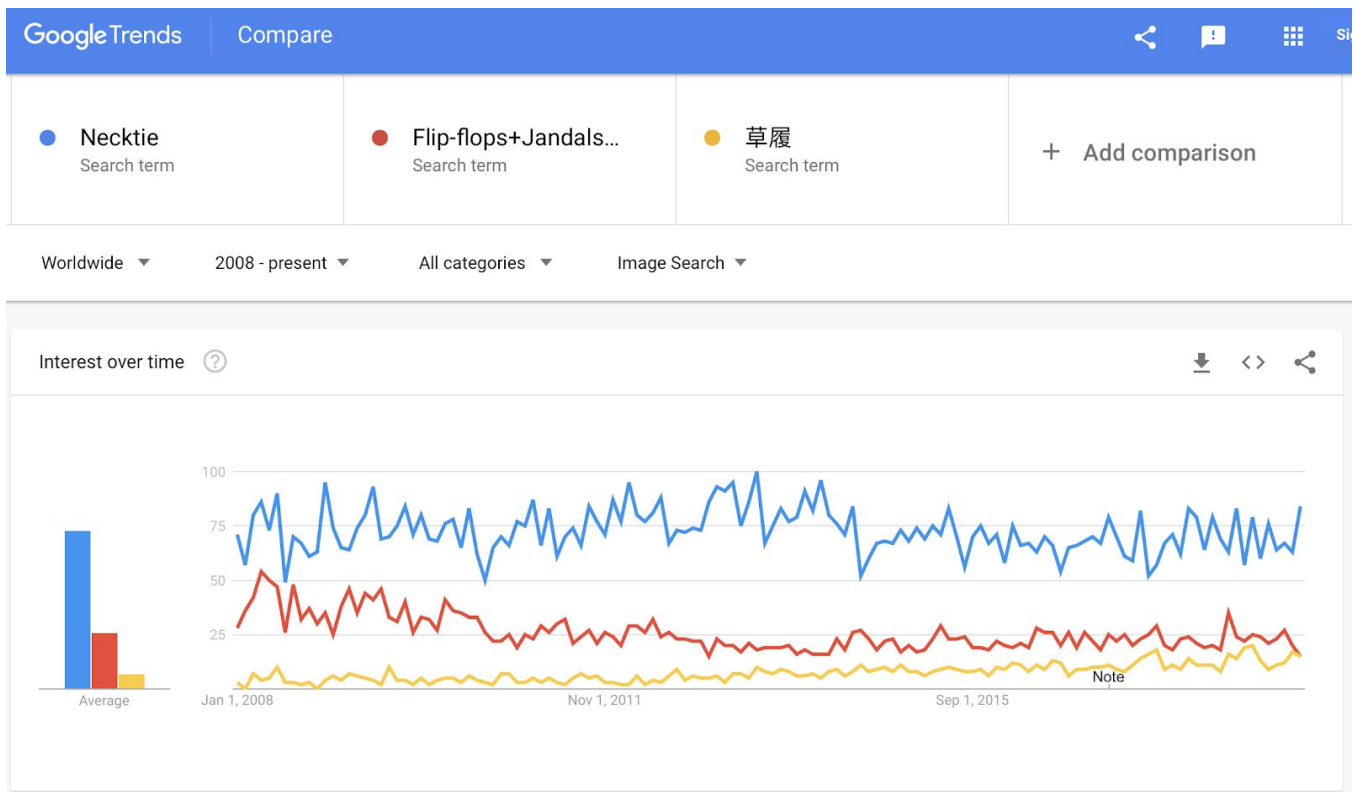
Date ▾

Language ▾

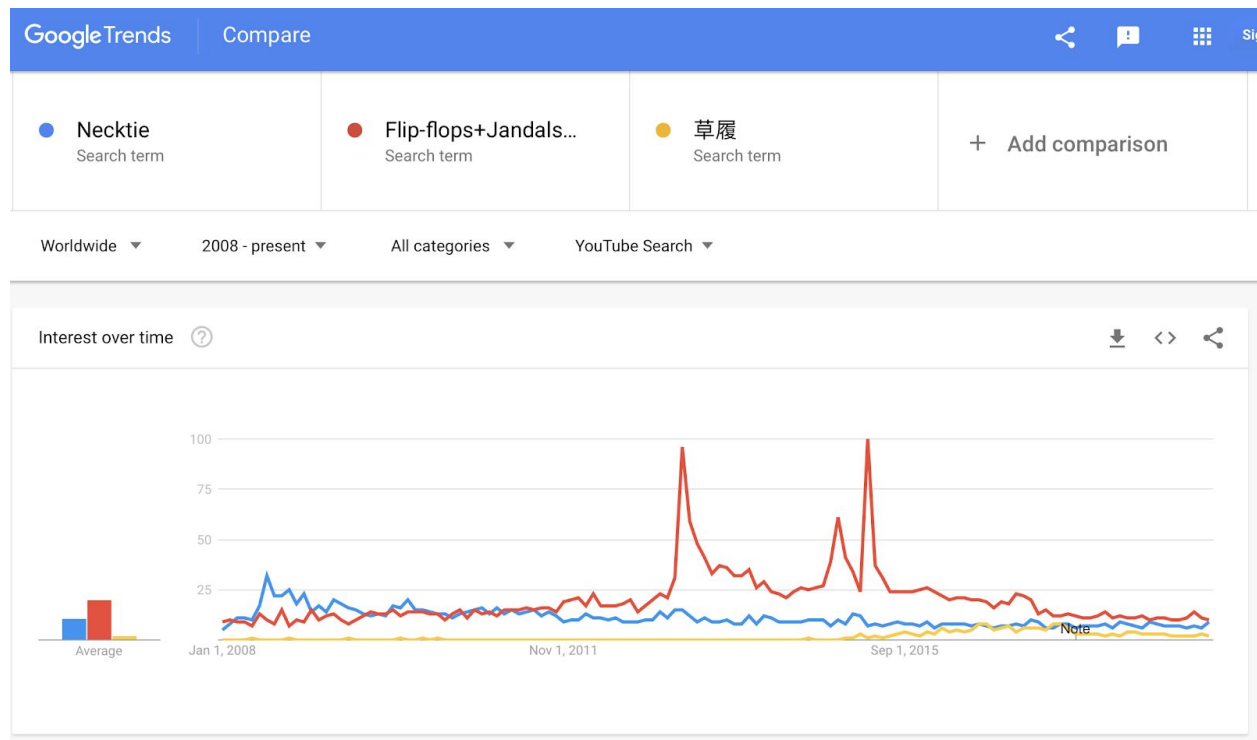
Region ▾

Other Google Trends - Red line is a combined search for Flip-flops + Jandals + Zori. Japanese characters have been kept separate for non-English usage analysis):

Google Trends Image Search



YouTube search:



B2. Multiple Usages

Users are likely to use a flip-flop emoji to represent the sandal, or in broader contexts like beach culture or vacations. It could also be used sarcastically to represent changing ones position on something (i.e. 'to flip-flop').

B3. Use in Sequences

Beach with Umbrella + Flip-flops: Beach

T-shirt + Shorts + Flip-flop: Casual dress

Bikini + Flip-flop: Beach wear

Repeat Button + Flip-flop: Keep changing your mind

B4. Breaking New Ground

The proposed flip-flop emoji provides a distinctly different option when compared to other emoji in the footwear sub-category. Although there is currently a women's sandal option it is typically presented with a high-heel or wedge, which doesn't allow for the gender-neutral option a flip-flop would provide.

Sandals are popularly worn to the beach in places like the tropics or Australia and are closely connected to beach culture but they have also come to broadly represent

relaxation and casualness. There are no other emoji that can communicate the same sense of 'taking it easy' or 'kicking your feet up' that the sandals could represent.

The strap sandal is also a cultural icon with associations beyond just its literal use, it can represent 'casual' dress or beach culture in a way that other footwear items don't allow.

In addition, this type of footwear is popular in regions of the world which are underrepresented in the emoji character set, including Africa, the Middle East and South and Southeast Asia. Thus, we feel like it's a diversification of the clothing options.

C. Image Distinctiveness

The only shapes in the emoji library that bear a resemblance to the proposed flip-flop emoji are the other footwear options, the closest resemblance would be the flat shoe and women's sandal. Both of these are distinct.

The women's sandal is displayed with a high heel across all platforms, which visually distinguishes it from a flip-flop. The flat shoe is typically presented with a flat top and no straps, distinguishing it from a flip-flop. A flip-flop emoji would be visually distinct without even considering colour, which ensures that it's unlikely to be confused, even at smaller sizes.

In addition, both of those have a distinctly "feminine" flavor, whereas this FLIP-FLOP is more gender neutral, in style and color.

D. Completeness

While this is not currently represented on any of the major platforms, we think FLIP-FLOP helps complete the major categories of footwear that are available.

E. Frequently Requested

FLIP-FLOP has appeared on top requested emoji lists, such as Business Insider's South Africa's, "[12 African emoji we would like to see - including proper sandals and pap.](#)"

4. Selection Factors — Exclusion

F. Overly Specific

The FLIP-FLOP is a very popular style of footwear across a broad range of countries and cultures. It would appeal to a wide range of people across the world and carries with it other cultural connotations. It is not too specific, given its global appeal. This is also designed to be brown, which allows it to serve as a flip-flop and a sandal.

G. Open Ended

There is a limited number of footwear which have historic, iconic and global appeal, and the FLIP-FLOP falls among them. While there are a large number of footwear that could conceivably be added to the emoji set, FLIP-FLOP rises above, because of the historic longevity, unique shape, and its broad footprint.

H. Already Representable

Current footwear/clothing emoji do not allow for the casual unisex footwear option a FLIP-FLOP would provide.

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

The proposed flip-flop emoji does not represent a specific logo, brand, UI icon, sign, person or deity. Although a number of large companies produce flip-flops no single company owns the overall design.

J. Transient

Flip-flop style sandals have been in use for thousands of years, having emerged simultaneously in multiple ancient civilisations. They remain very popular and sell in large quantities worldwide. Brazilian brand Havaianas sell their products in over 100 countries, including 200 million pairs sold in Brazil each year, a number equal to its population.

K. Faulty Comparison

The FLIP-FLOP is a unique addition to the Unicode Standard. We are not comparing to any legacy decisions Unicode did.

L. Exact Images

The proposed emoji does not require an exact image to be distinguishable. It allows for many variations in colour and style that will still be identifiable given the basic form.

M. Region Flags Without Code

N/A

Author Biographies

Callum Ponton (callumponton@icloud.com) is a an Australian designer and marketer. Being Australian he repeatedly had to stop himself from calling flip-flops ‘thongs’ while writing this proposal. He got his first pair of thongs at the age of 4 and has probably broken hundreds of pairs since. Despite this he continues to wear them every summer because he’s self-conscious about wearing socks with shorts.