

# Proposal for Emoji: CRUTCH

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To: Unicode Technical Committee

Date: July 2019 (Updated October 2019)

## I. Identification

Sample Image	Proposed Unicode and CLDR name	Possible CLDR English keywords	Closest Unicode Emoji
	Crutch	Crutch, mobility aid, disability, walking cane, walking stick	

## II. Images



## License

We certify that the images have appropriate licenses for use by the UTC.

## III. Sort location

### Transport-ground



## V. Selection factors — Inclusion

### A. Compatibility

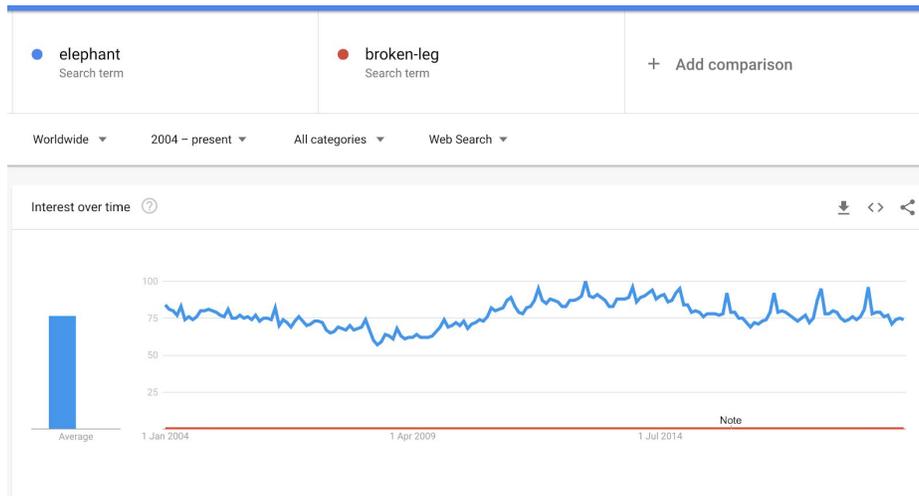
n/a - this emoji is not being submitted for compatibility reasons

### B. Expected use

## 1. Frequency

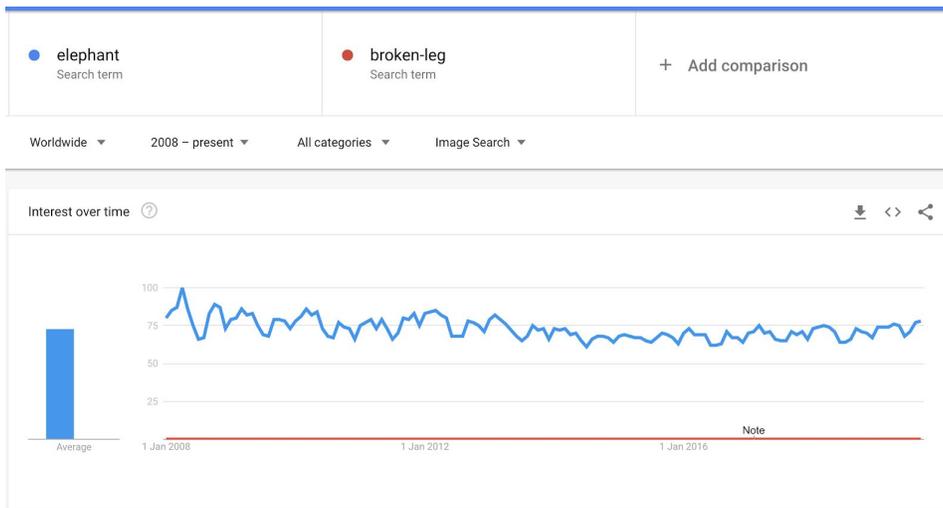
Crutches are used by almost everyone after an accident or an injury to their leg or foot, in the US about 17 million people a year visit the emergency department for an injury to a lower extremity<sup>1</sup>. Some injuries, such as ankle sprains require crutch usage but will not result in a visit to the emergency department. Crutches can also be used for more permanent conditions, there are around 6.1 million people in the US who permanently use crutches or canes<sup>2</sup>.

Search term	Google Search	Bing Search	Google Video Search	Google Trends: Web	Google Trends: Image
crutch	42,600,000	7,570,000	3,200,000	See below	See below
broken-leg	314,000,000	7,690,000	20,500,000	See below	See below
walking-stick	619,000,000	7,860,000	24,900,000	See below	See below

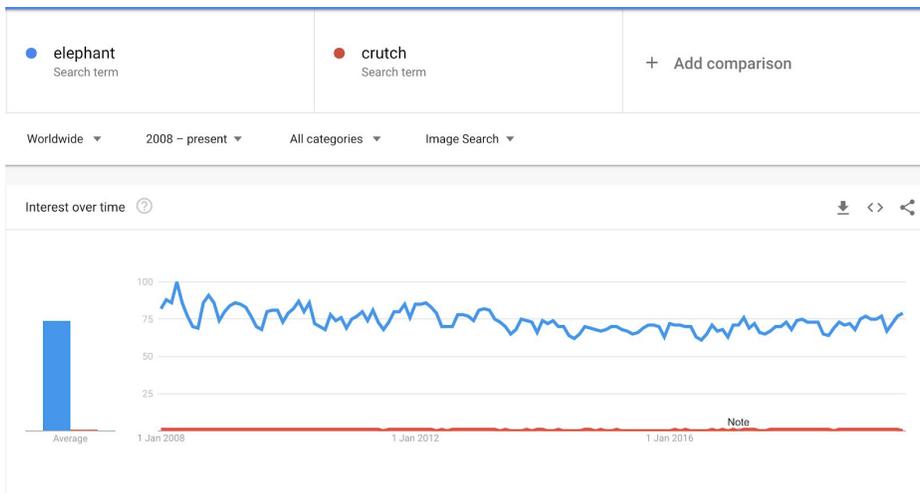
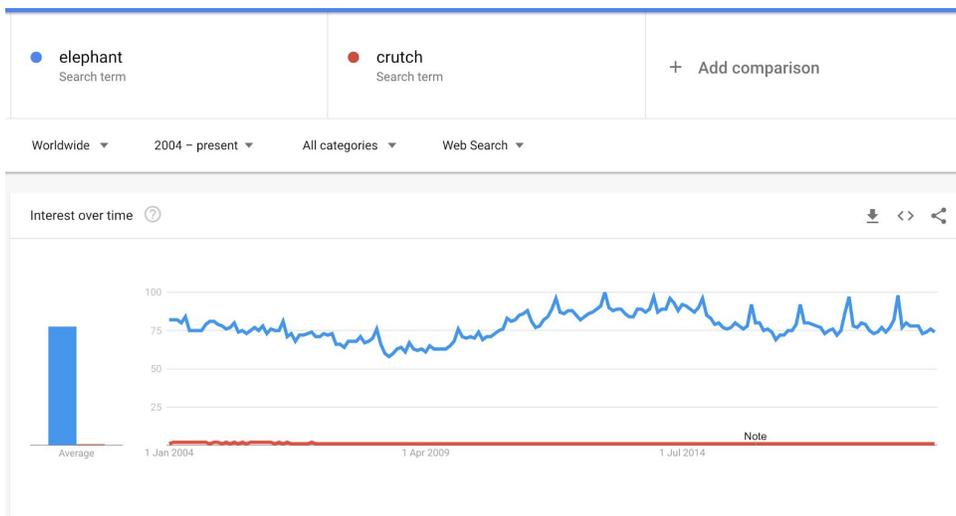


<sup>1</sup><https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3237997/>

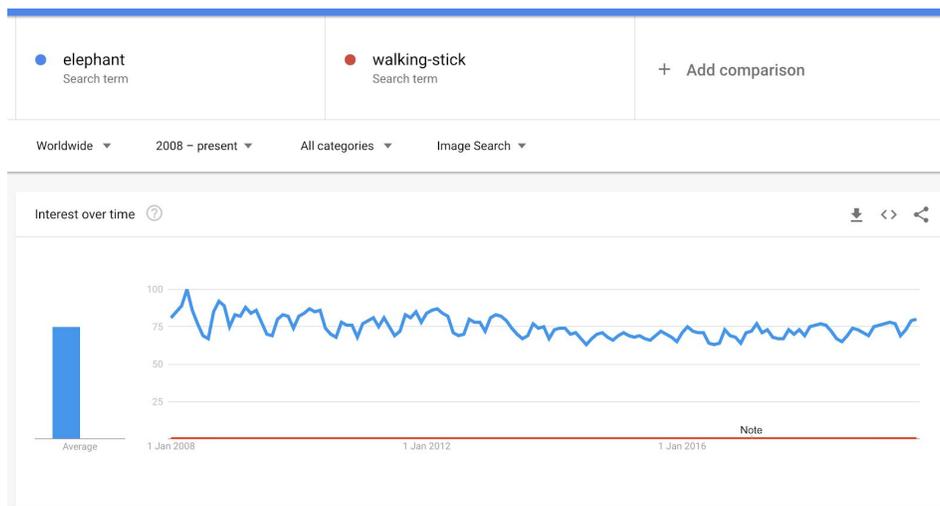
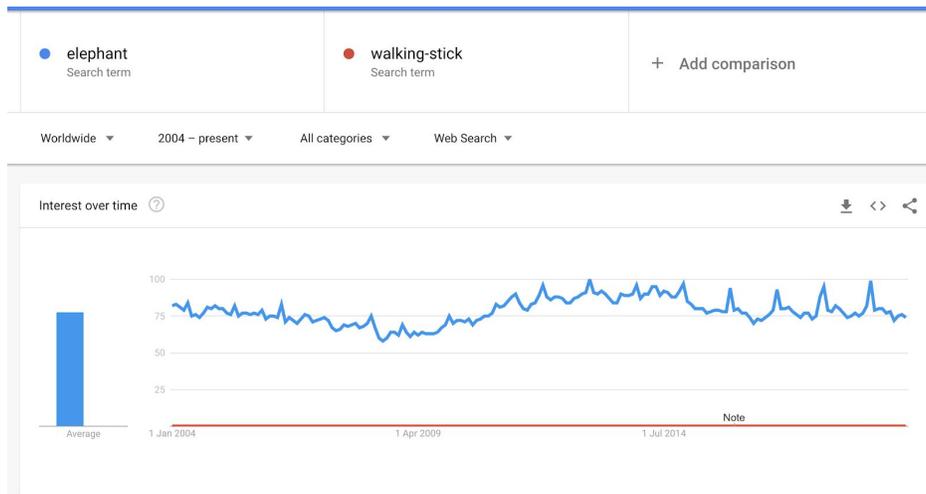
<sup>2</sup> <https://www.disabled-world.com/disability/statistics/mobility-stats.php>



Above: trend results for broken leg



Above: trend results for crutch



Above: trend results for walking stick

## 2. Multiple usages .

- Permanent disability
  - Can be used to convey a permanent disability of a lower extremity.
- Temporary disability
  - Can be used to convey a temporary disability in a lower extremity (e.g. caused by trauma)
- Symbol of good luck
  - “Good luck, break a leg!”
- Symbol of help<sup>3</sup>
  - Used as hyperbole to portray something that is used as a surrogate or substitute.

## 3. Use in sequences

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/crutch?s=t>

Could be used to represent a person in crutches (PERSON+CRUTCH):

- Just had a ski accident 🏂 🌲 🚶 🩹
- Wait for me , I'm not that fast right now 🚶 🩹 ⚠️

An idiom to wish good luck:

- Have fun and break a leg 🎬 🎭 🩹 .

A source or means of support or assistance that is relied on heavily or excessively

- Dude, you don't need pills in your life. 🧑 🩹

#### 4. Breaking new ground

While we already have the manual and motorised wheelchair emojis, there are no emojis that are geared at representing walking aids or temporary disabilities.

#### C. Image distinctiveness

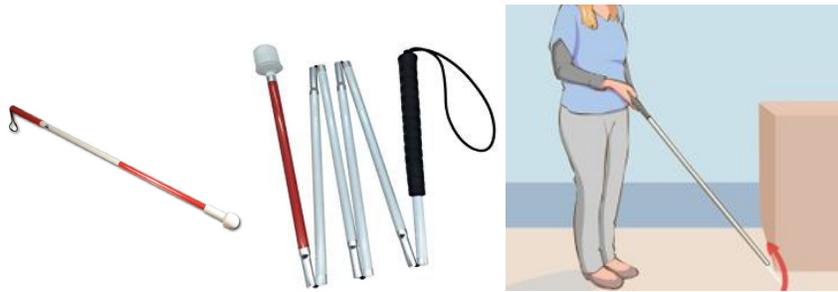
Crutches are visually distinct from probing canes and wheelchairs as a crutch is designed to support a subject's body weight.



Above: Forearm and underarm crutches



Above: Canes



Above: Probing canes



Above: Manual and motorized wheelchairs

This proposal could have also focused on proposing a walking cane emoji but it was felt that walking canes are not distinctive enough to probing canes. Additionally amputees would generally need to use a crutch instead of cane, thus a crutch is more appropriate for a wider population.

#### D. Completeness

The current set of disability themed emojis only includes a subset of mobility aids (wheelchairs) and excludes crutches, the most popular type of aid. In the US **2.6 million people use a wheelchair<sup>4</sup> and 11.6 million people use a cane, crutches or a walker<sup>5</sup>**. These numbers don't include the amount of people needing to temporarily use crutches.

#### VI. Selection factors — Exclusion

##### E. Frequently requested

n/a

##### F. Overly specific

CRUTCH encompasses a whole set of mobility aids that include the forearm and underarm crutch.

##### G. Open-ended

No, CRUTCH is one of the most common type of temporary disability aids and was not encoded in Unicode's previous effort in encoding disability emojis.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4397418/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.pantsupeasy.com/u-s-wheelchair-user-statistics/>

## **H. Already representable**

No, users could use the person with a walking cane emoji  to approximate the use of crutches but this would be incorrect.

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

Not applicable. There are no logos, brands, signage or otherwise among the proposed character..

## **J. Transient**

Characters with disabilities are anything but short-lived. People with disabilities already make up 15% of our population and the number of people with disabilities is rising. Furthermore, after year long efforts from activists and different charities, disability is starting to be a more visible part of our society. Therefore, the demand for equality when it comes to emoji will only be rising.

Specifically, crutches have been used since ancient Egypt<sup>6</sup> and their current commercial design has existed since at least 1917<sup>7</sup>. This emoji is thus expected to stay relevant for a long time.

## **K. Faulty comparison**

n/a

## **L. Exact Images**

An exact image is not required.

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<sup>6</sup> [https://opedge.com/Articles/ViewArticle/2008-04\\_06](https://opedge.com/Articles/ViewArticle/2008-04_06)

<sup>7</sup> <https://patents.google.com/patent/US1265993>

## VII. Background

We would like to indicate that an important part of emoji initially proposed by Aktion Mensch have been accepted in slightly varied forms by the Unicode Consortium lately. These include:

- Person with hearing disability
- Person with hearing aid
- Person with arm prosthesis
- Person with leg prosthesis
- Wheelchair
- Guide dog

We deeply appreciate the integration of inclusive emoji in Unicode and welcome it as an important step towards the recognition of handicapped persons' rights in societies all over the world. **We hope that our contribution to this development will be acknowledged and communicated by Unicode.**

We would like to re-propose the crutch emoji based on the following considerations:

### **People**

Emoji representing persons with impairment of physical and motor skills have been accepted by Unicode lately. They can be identified as persons with disabilities only because they are depicted in wheelchairs. Unfortunately, this still excludes persons with visible impairment like missing limbs. More than 2 million people in the US suffer from limb loss or amputation. This does not count in people who have been born without a certain limb<sup>8</sup>. According to the National Center for Health Statistics, there are more than 50.000 new amputations in the US every year<sup>9</sup>. This means, that this group is likely to grow. For them, using the existing people characters might be inappropriate and possibly offensive. In order to better represent people with visible physical disabilities we recommend to add representations of persons with missing limbs and include alternative ways of moving forward besides the wheelchair to better represent their life experience [excluded in this proposal as recommended by Unicode commission, see corresponding Proposal 2.7b to find people's representations enclosed].

### **Props**

Props are indispensable for handicapped persons in order to live independent and self-determined lives. Thus, we deeply appreciate the integration of new emoji, such as wheelchairs, guide dogs and mechanical limbs. But in order to make surroundings accessible to people with disabilities a lot of additional devices are needed which have to be provided by society and organizations, e.g. elevators and ramps. This kind of props is still completely missing from the current emoji set. This is why we would like to re-propose some fundamental accessibility props in order to help people with disabilities, their friends and families and persons without disabilities to better communicate what concerns them in their everyday lives. In this proposal we will now concentrate on one important prop, the clutch and exclude other essential aids like ramps, elevators, tv with subtitles and the mechanical hand, in order to suit the Unicode commission's wishes. Please find the additional props' representations enclosed in the corresponding submission 2.7b.

### **About Aktion Mensch**

Aktion Mensch is the largest private funding organization in the social sector in Germany. Since it was founded in 1964 it has given more than 3.9 billion Euro to social projects. Aktion Mensch has three main goals: Improving the living conditions of people with disabilities, improving the living conditions of children and teenagers and promoting a diverse society as something natural. With the proceeds of its lottery Aktion Mensch supports up to 1.000 projects every month, made possible by about four million lottery players. More information can be found on [www.aktion-mensch.de](http://www.aktion-mensch.de).

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.amputee-coalition.org/limb-loss-resource-center/resources-filtered/resources-by-topic/limb-loss-statistics/limb-loss-statistics/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.ishn.com/articles/97844-statistics-on-hand-and-arm-loss>