

Proposal for Emoji: TROLL

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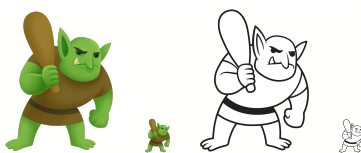
Date: December 13th, 2019

Emoji Name: TROLL

Sort Order: in the PERSON-FANTASY category, after ELF

Reference Emoji: ELEPHANT

Keywords: FIGHT | MONSTER | INTERNET



Proposal for a TROLL emoji

Credit: Aphelandra Messer/Emojination. Free for use in context of this proposal.

Introduction

"Troll" or "trolling" have become one of the touchpoints of the Internet. The word's use as both a noun and a verb make it very popular for communication on social media, in real life, and even as a personal identify.

The current emoji library contains a few "creature" images like GOBLIN 🧟 and OGRE 🧟, but these are not close enough to the modern depiction of trolls to be used as such.

Trolls frequently appear in fantasy stories like Harry Potter or The Lord of the Rings, and are shown with a bulky, usually greenish body, big ears and/or noses, and carry some sort of club. Our proposed image includes all of these features.



The troll in "Harry Potter and The Sorcerer's Stone" bears a very similar resemblance to the one in our emoji. Screenshot from [Harry Potter Clips](#).

We believe our TROLL emoji will be heavily used to represent these fantasy creatures, but more importantly, the concept of a "troll" or "trolling" on the Internet.

The Merriam-Webster dictionary added this new meaning of the word "troll" in 2017, noting its significance in public discourse. "I feel like once it took off, it really took off in such a way that it seemed like it was absolutely everywhere," an associate editor for the dictionary told the Washington Post¹.

Merriam-Webster now defines a "troll" as "a person who intentionally antagonizes others online by posting inflammatory, irrelevant, or offensive comments or other disruptive content", as well as the creature of folklore. There is also the verb "trolling", which means "to antagonize (others) online by deliberately posting inflammatory, irrelevant, or offensive comments or other disruptive content."²

Also noteworthy is the dictionary editor's notice that "troll" had expanded beyond folklore and into the Internet, and even further into real life discussion. People often use the word "trolling" to describe provocative or dissenting statements and actions in real life.

1

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-intersect/wp/2017/09/18/alt-right-troll-and-dog-whistle-among-new-entries-added-to-merriam-webster-dictionary/>

² <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/trolling>



The modern usage of "troll" adapts the ancient depiction of the creature to a modern setting, making our emoji appropriate for both contexts. Image from [Tech of Tomorrow](#).

Originally a creature from Scandinavian folklore, trolls started being used to mean Internet provocateurs as early as the 1980s.³ It is also used for other slang, like a "patent troll" - a person or company who uses patent law to profit off other people's work.⁴

In addition, trolls are popular in other media, like the "Trolls" movie produced by Dreamworks in 2016, festivals, museums, dolls and toys. An estimated 9,152 domain names which include the word "troll", according to original research.

While it is tough to estimate how often the word is used throughout the online world, TweetReach estimates it is used on Twitter around 30 times per minute⁵. Other monsters, like "goblin" and "ogre", were only used around once per minute. This suggests that "troll" has superseded its history as a fantasy creature to enjoy much wider usage.

In fact, we believe that TROLL has the potential to become one of the most popular emoji in the entire library.

Selection Factors Inclusion

A. Compatibility

We are not aware of an existing TROLL emoji or icon. There are a CREATURE emoji, but they are dissimilar in shape, style and usage, like GOBLIN (👹), VAMPIRE (🧛♂️) and OGRE (👹). We believe the TROLL carries a very different connotation, as well as powerful symbolism, and is visually distinct.

³ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Troll>

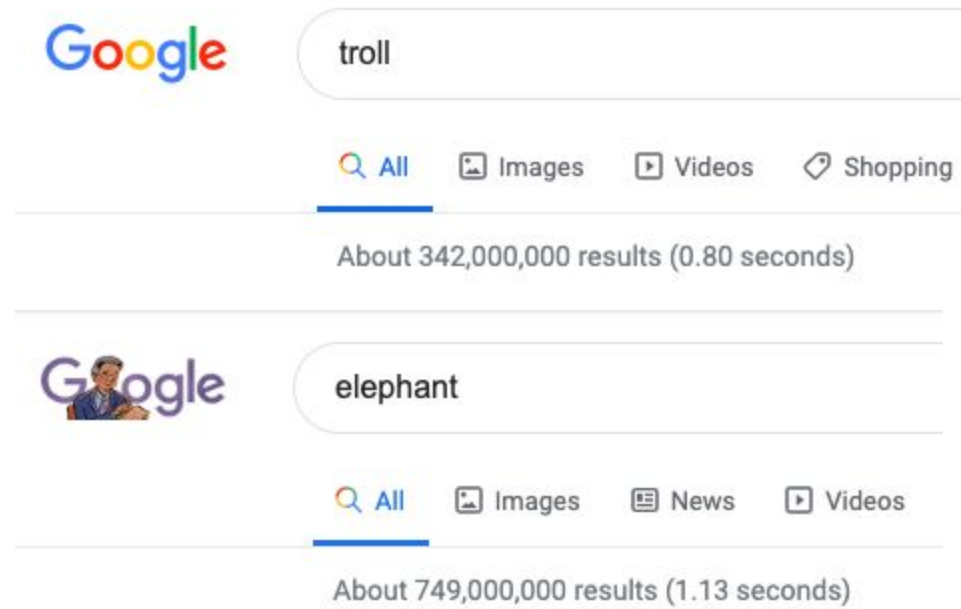
⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patent_troll

⁵ <https://tweetreach.com/reports/23946027>

B. Expected Usage Level

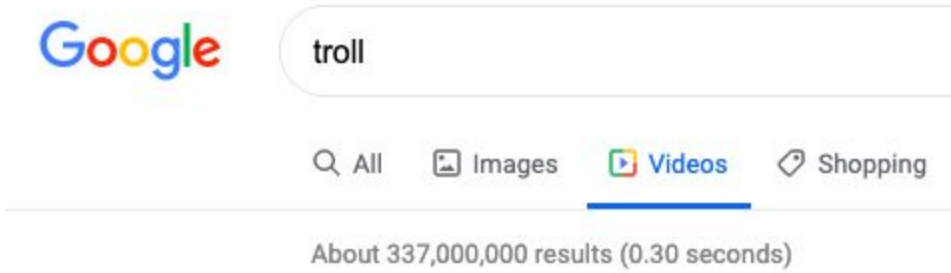
Evidence of Frequency

Google Search:



The image shows two screenshots of Google search results. The first screenshot is for the search term "troll". It features the Google logo on the left, a search bar containing "troll", and navigation links for "All", "Images", "Videos", and "Shopping". Below the search bar, it indicates "About 342,000,000 results (0.80 seconds)". The second screenshot is for the search term "elephant". It features the Google logo with a small cartoon character on the left, a search bar containing "elephant", and navigation links for "All", "Images", "News", and "Videos". Below the search bar, it indicates "About 749,000,000 results (1.13 seconds)".

Google Video Search:



Google troll

Q All Images Videos Shopping

About 337,000,000 results (0.30 seconds)

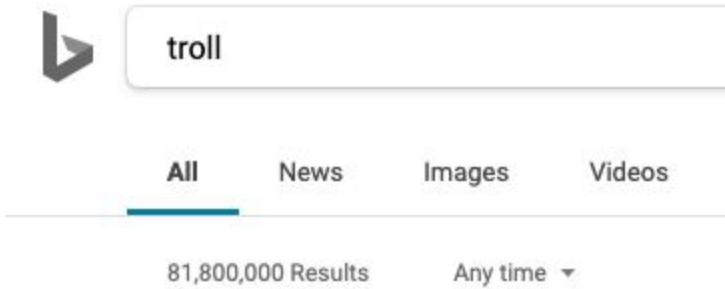


Google elephant

Q All Images News Videos

About 131,000,000 results (0.29 seconds)

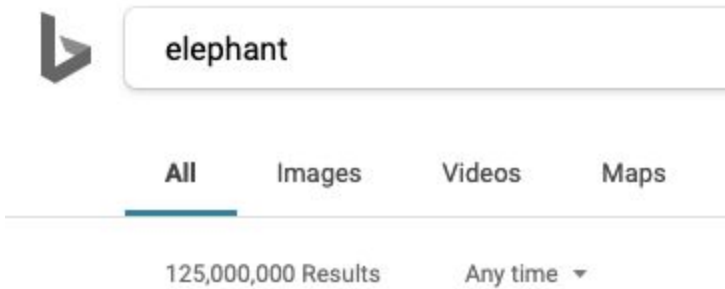
Bing:



b troll

All News Images Videos

81,800,000 Results Any time ▾

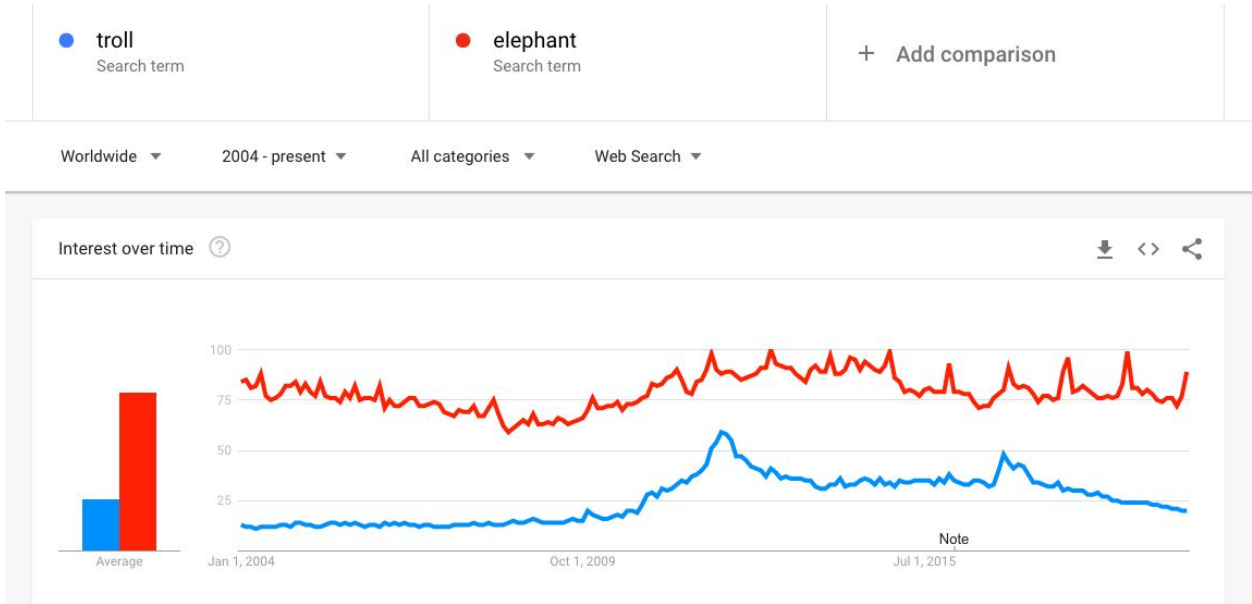


b elephant

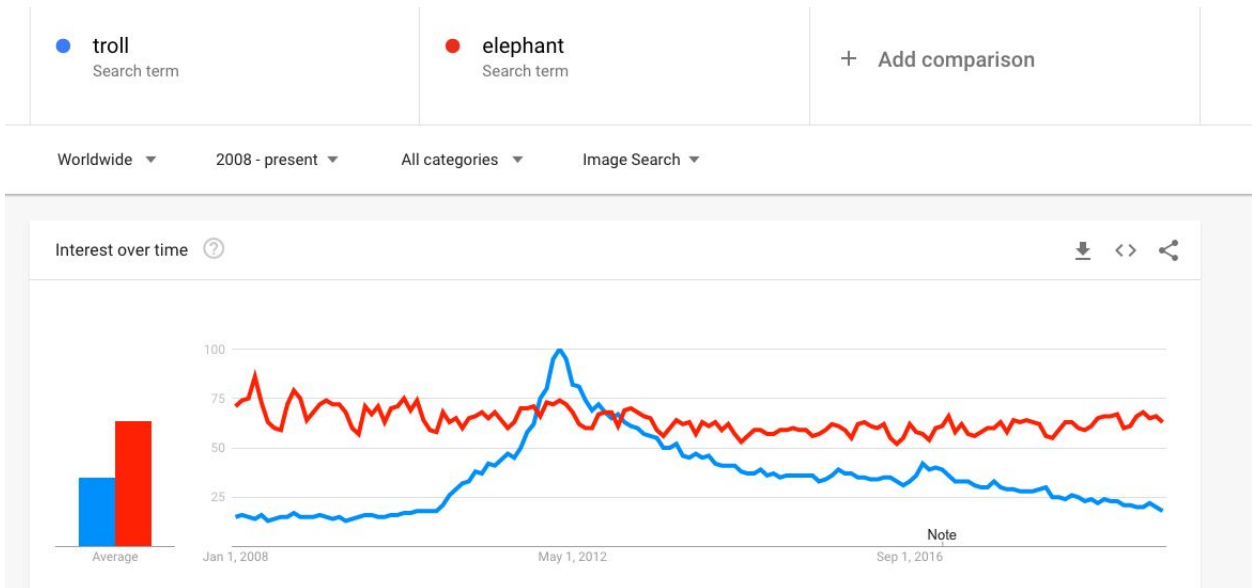
All Images Videos Maps

125,000,000 Results Any time ▾

Google Trends: Web Search



Google Trends: Image Search

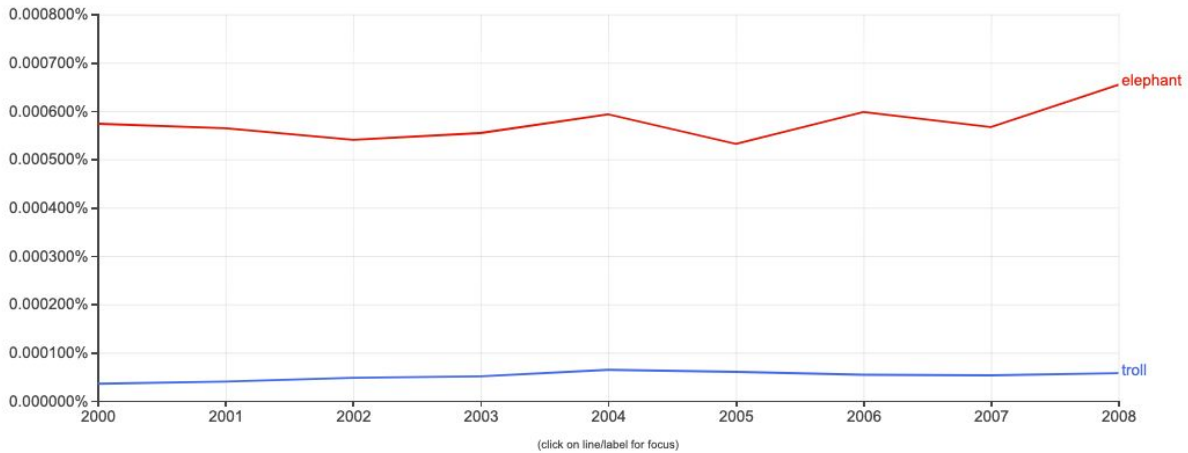


Ngram Viewer:

Google Books Ngram Viewer

Graph these comma-separated phrases: case-insensitive

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



Multiple Usages

As stated in the Introduction, TROLL will represent the fantasy creatures as well as trolls and trolling on the Internet.

Use in Sequences

N/A

Breaking New Ground

N/A

C. Image Distinctiveness

The TROLL emoji is distinct from all other emoji images. The closest in appearance is probably ZOMBIE (🧟♂️), which is only a head and hands, as opposed to a full body. The TROLL is also carrying a club which makes it unique.

D. Completeness

N/A

E. Frequently Requested

TROLL is not listed as a most frequently requested emoji, but social media users often ask for one.

Selection Factors Exclusion

F. Overly Specific

The TROLL is not overly specific because it refers to different concepts and is widely recognized as a troll.

G. Open Ended

We do not believe that the addition of TROLL will open up a new category of emoji.

H. Already Representable

As stated earlier, there are no emoji to represent trolling.

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

Troll is none of the above. It is a generic mythic/fantasy creature common in folklore. None of the emoji images suggested in this proposal fall into the excluded categories.

J. Transient

Though their descriptions vary, trolls date back more than a thousand years in Scandinavian mythology. They have remained popular through the centuries and we do not believe it will disappear any time soon.

K. Faulty Comparison

N/A

Other Information

Character Properties

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

General Category:

Canonical Combining Class:

Bidirectional Class:

Decomposition Type:

Decomposition Mapping:

Numeric Type:

Numeric Value:

Bidirectional Mirrored:

Name:

ISO Comment:

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

Authors

Samantha Sunne (samanthasunne@gmail.com) is an emoji enthusiast, Harry Potter fan, and hopefully not a troll.

Frederick Mostert is an emoji devotee and keen student of Norse Mythology.