Re: ESR Report for UTC #188 (2026Q3)

From: Jennifer Daniel on the behalf of the ESR

Date: 2026-07-14 **Revised**: 2026-07-23

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1. Emoji 18.0 🔮

ESR recommends no changes to the emoji repertoire for the Unicode Standard, Version 18.0, with 9 new characters and additional sequences as recommended in L2/26-008R.

A few chart images have been updated since our last report with notes to help vendors reduce risk of future design variance.

Original	New	Notes
		L2/26-048 - Update to cracked face includes simplified shapes (the fragments are now thicker, chunky, block-like geometric pieces). The cracks are wider, the shadows are flattened, and the overall shape is cleaner, more defined, improving legibility and visual distinctiveness at emoji sizes.
		L2/25-257 - Higher contrast and more saturation. Design offers more aesthetic cohesion with the existing comet emoji ☄️
		L2/25-256 - The extra details in the lighthouse were stripped away. Removing these intricate textures mitigates cross platform variance so vendors don't have to replicate. Focusing on the core symbolic architecture creates a blueprint that makes it easy for designers to replicate.

2. Public Feedback

ReportID: ID20260417115325

Name: Kuen-Bang Hou

This feedback was reviewed by the Properties WG, where it was determined that the observed behavior was adopted by UTC consensus and therefore will not be addressed in UTS #51. Rather, UAX #29 will be amended to note that its proscriptions refer to RGI emoji sequences in particular. No action from ESR is needed.

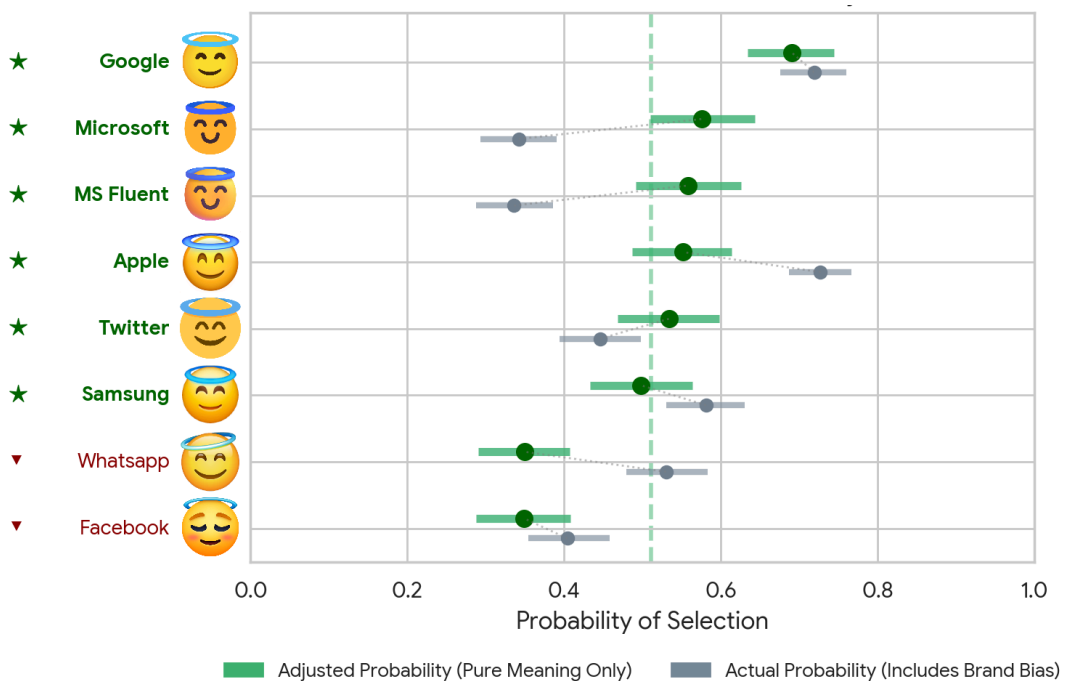
ReportID: ID20260419151046

Name: Kuen-Bang Hou

This suggestion will be considered for a future revision of UTS #51.

3. Update on Interoperability Audit

As part of our ongoing effort to improve interoperability, (L2/25-008, L2/25-089, L2/26-008) research moves forward to provide recommendations on how to improve the existing set of emoji in addition to adding new ones every year. This year's focus evaluated a new batch of emoji, testing user perception of cross-vendor variation with 1600 participants in the U.S. and U.K.



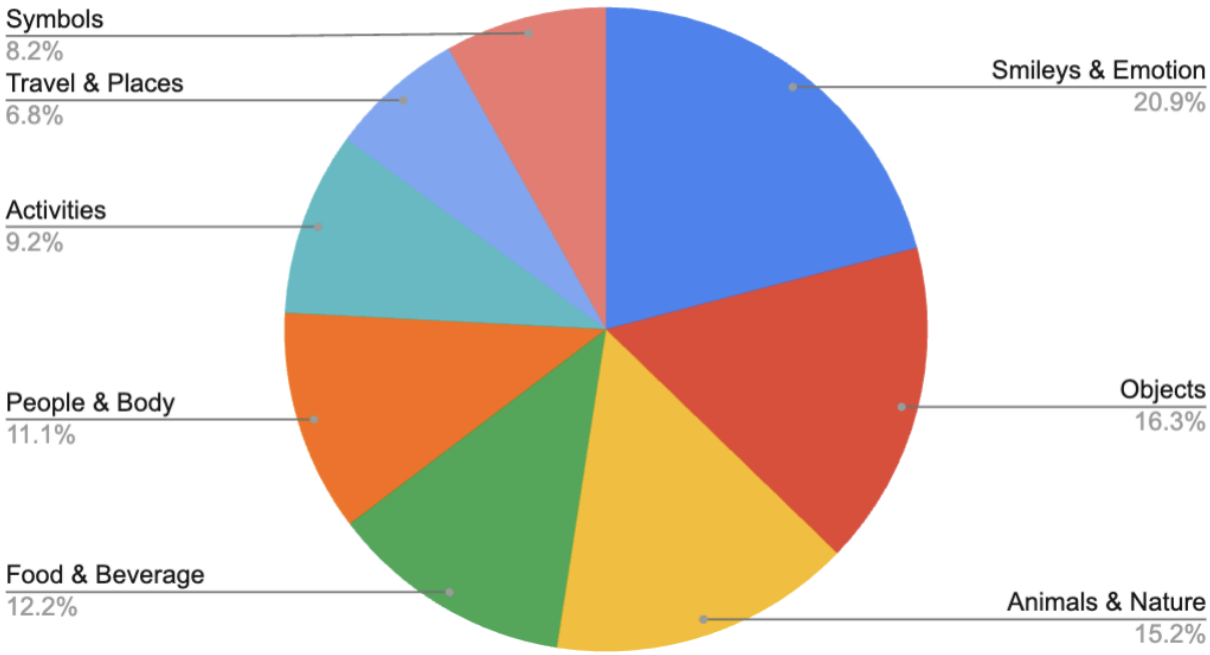
Key Insights & Findings

Many insights from our 2025 report were further validated including how microexpressions details are critical, extra details are distracting and lower selection probability, reversing direction for “differentiation” hurts selection rates, and yes, animals still need bodies. 😉

As a result, our recommendations from last year remain the same. While emoji designs meet user expectations more often than not, our findings highlight several broad themes where adjustments can be made to better align with shared user understanding.

- **Standardise key microexpressions**: Vendors should ensure that subtle facial markers (such as the positioning of sweat and tear drops, the presence of eye whites or pupils, and the specific angle of mouths or eyebrows) align with consensus conventions. Minor deviations in these areas are the primary cause of semantic confusion.
- **Remove extraneous props from faces**: We advise stripping away non-essential elements (such as prominent hands, gloves, or visible features that should be obscured by other elements like bandages) that distract from the core emotion or concept the emoji is meant to convey.
- **Align directionality and anatomical scope**: Vendors should match the consensus orientation for dynamic objects and expressions to prevent cross-platform misinterpretation. Additionally, when designing animal emoji, vendors should default to full-body representations, as these universally outperform face-only designs in user comprehension.
- **Enhance object recognition with defining structural details**: Contextual clues help ensure immediate recognition. For example, adding bones or fat to Cut of Meat 🥩 makes it easier to recognize, and distinct patterns (like stripes on Candy 🍬.

Continued

4. Update on Intake 🧭

   Reviewing emoji proposals continues to move forward. A visualization of what has been submitted thus far is shown below. Note, this data consistent with last year “Animals & Nature” + “Object” emoji represent over a third of all submissions. “Smileys & Emotion” show a slight increase now tipping over 20%. The ESR WG will continue to review proposals submitted through July 31, 2025.