

Update on Emoji Gender and Skintone Support

From: Jennifer Daniel on behalf of the Emoji Subcommittee (ESC)

To: UTC

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Version: 1.0

Introduction

Since the addition of gender and skintone related ZWJ Sequences, the encoding of gender and multi-person multi-skintone support has matured every year. However, the implementation can seem random to the average person: Some emoji additions list three gender options as Recommended for General Interchange (RGI), while others list two, or one. Some multi-person emoji have the full range of the Fitzpatrick scale others have none.

The Emoji Subcommittee is exploring paths to ensure the broadest range of designs land. The best path forward accomplishes two things: (1) Fix old issues (2) Don't create too many new issues. This follows priorities set out in [19-101](#).

RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

1. [L2/L9-392](#) Recommendations for Multi-skintoned Emoji Sequences for Unicode 14.0
2. [L2/19-078](#) Using Gender Inclusive Designs For existing code points which do not specify gender
3. [CODE](#) Unicode 13.0 ZWJ Background
2. [L2/17-232](#) Proposal for Fully Gender-Inclusive Emoji
2. [L2/17-195](#) Add Emoji Gender Properties
3. [L2/17-071](#) Gender-Neutral Human-form Emoji
6. [L2/180](#) Gender Emoji Strategy
7. [L2/17-287](#) ESC Recommendations

State of Emoji 13.1: Gender

We are left with seven explicitly gendered emojis as stated in [L2/19-231](#). Status of reconciling these emoji is documented below:

Submitted, Recommended Proposals

- [L2/20-190](#) Swollen Belly (aka Pregnancy)
- [L2/20-189](#) Person with crown (aka Prince & Princesses)

No Proposals Currently in Flight

- Dancing woman
- Dancing man
- Woman in headscarf
- Breastfeeding

KEY

Only male option

Only female option

Only GI option



State of Emoji 13.1: Skintone

There are 29 multi-person emoji that do not have skintone support.

Proposals in Flight

- None

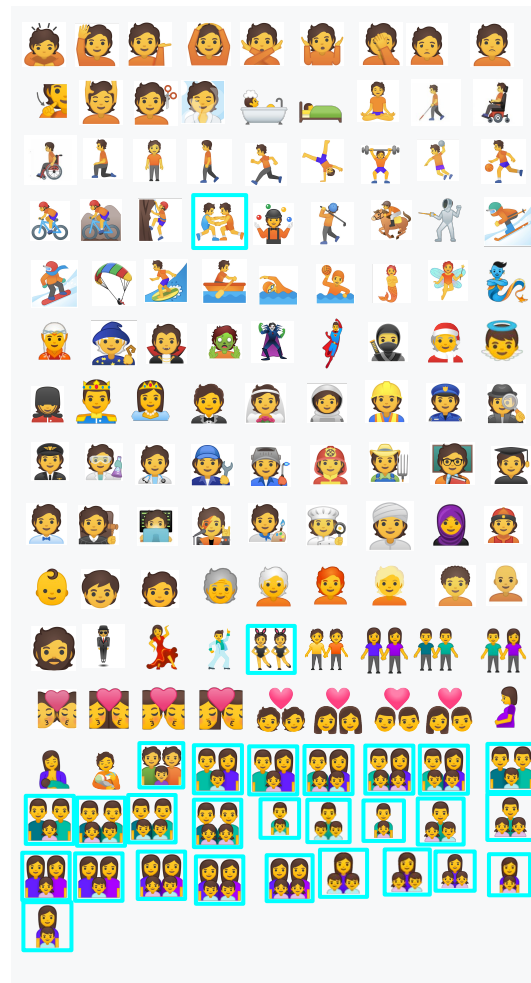
Background

After reviewing document [L2/19-392](#) which describes in detail to support over 7,000 skintone variants, the ESC has concluded to not make these emoji RGI in the foreseeable future. This is described in document [L2/20-114](#).

KEY

No RGI skin tone support*

*Note: Not highlighting emoji where skintone is obscured.

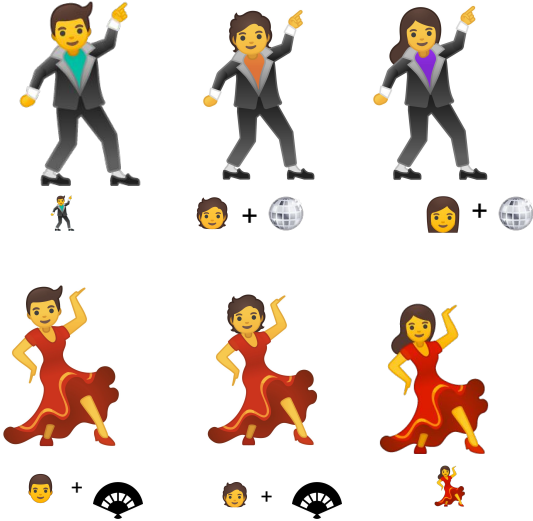


No Change: Keeping remaining gendered Emoji on Gendered List

Considering the high frequency use of these emoji, for backwards compatibility reasons we do not recommend changing the existing designs of gendered emoji at codepoints associated with Woman Dancer (U+1F483) and Man Dancer (U+1F57A).



Encoding Gender Inclusive Dancer



Not Recommending

Option 1: Add gendered and gender inclusive designs (Think: Teacher, farmer, etc. Identical designs) *Note: we cannot use “sex symbols” to denote GI so we must employ objects*



Currently exploring

Option 2: simply add a Gender inclusive design between disco man and flamenco lady. *Note: Type of dance TBD. Breakdancer to demonstrate concept only.*



Not Recommending

Option 3: Add gendered and person support for existing explicitly gendered dancers (disco man gets disco person and disco lady | Flamenco lady gets flamenco man and flamenco person)

Moving Forward: Future Gender related Emoji



Ongoing discussion and questions

What happens if we only encode GI designs moving forward?

- Could encode more people emoji moving forward since there would be less variants.

What do we lose by not including male/female designs?

- Do the m/f counterparts help contextualize GI designs?
- How does encoding gender into emoji impact their function?

Why not just encode smileys and stop encoding people emoji?

There's just so much you can do with a circle — adding elbows and shoulders and legs is a no go.

People based emoji provide great value for concepts that need a human form (body language) but no reason to be gendered.



Moving Forward: Future Skin tone related Emoji

Ongoing discussion and questions

The ESC is exploring recommendations for paths for the encoding and display of a range of identity signifiers.

When designing a spectrum of skintone, what level of detail is too much? Not enough?

- Skin tone is not a race, it is a color fill. How do we provide guidelines that don't set the wrong expectations?

Are skintones the most effective way to communicate race and identity? What are other types of emoji that would be effective to emojiify to represent yourself?

- Culture is music, dance, art, stories.

Have we already set an expectation we can never meet as it relates to representing culture?

