

Transgender Pride Flag Emoji Submission

To: Unicode Consortium

From:

- Bianca Rey
- Tea Uglow
- Ted Eytan, MD
- Chadwick Cipiti
- Monica Helms (creator of the transgender pride flag)

Initial Proposal: 06/29/2017

Updated: 11/19/2017

Changes: ZWJ Proposal, Updated Statistics, Societal Relevance

Contact: Ted Eytan, MD • Washington, DC USA

Introduction

We are requesting the addition of a transgender pride flag emoji (TRANS FLAG; TRANSGENDER, TRANS, LGBTQ) to complement the rainbow flag emoji.

We would like the Unicode Consortium to consider completing their set of gender markers by adding T to M & F.

This would be done by converting: 🏳️ U+26A7 (Male with stroke and male and female sign) to have its emoji property value set to Yes. This would support the use of a ZWJ sequence to represent the transgender pride flag.

Rainbow Flag, added to Emoji 4.0 in 2016¹², brought long-awaited inclusion to the LGBTQ community³, following historic strides in visibility for this population, as it is one of the most instantly recognizable symbols of the LGBTQ community.

As similar gains in visibility and respect for transgender people have occurred in every part of society, from health care, to employment, there is now a similar movement to promote inclusion for this population and the symbol most recognized worldwide, the transgender pride flag.

¹<https://emojipedia.org/rainbow-flag/>

²<http://unicode.org/pipermail/unicode/2015-June/002072.html>

³ <https://www.bustle.com/articles/93227-wheres-the-rainbow-pride-flag-emoji-why-the-iconic-gay-rights-symbol-should-be-on-our>

A blog post written by the Google Emoji team in October, 2016, said this about gender equality in Emoji⁴:

People like to see themselves represented in emoji. That's why people emoji look human, have skin tones, and are gendered. However, the current emoji set only includes options that represent men and women.

We recognize that gender identity is not fully defined by this binary and that we can do better to represent a more inclusive gender spectrum.

The transgender pride flag, a symbol of transgender pride and diversity, and transgender rights was created by Monica Helms⁵, a signatory on this application, in 2000⁶, and has since become recognizable world wide. During pride month in 2017, it was common in many cities to see rainbow flags and transgender pride flags side by side (see Appendix: Images)

Images



Image created by Chadwick Cipiti, as an original work. It is based on the current pride flag emoji, and is fully licensed for use in this context. ZIP file is included in this submission.

Selection Factors, Inclusion

Compatibility: N/A

Expected Usage Level:

Frequency of Usage Should Not Be Sole Determining Factor for This Proposal

It's a false assumption that emojis are only selected based on quantitative data - there are multifaceted considerations that go into determining what is selected... otherwise a female welder probably wouldn't have made the cut. (Communication with Tea Uglow, November, 2016)

⁴ <https://medium.com/google-design/taking-the-equality-conversation-to-emoji-e6dce28e006d>

⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monica_Helms

⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transgender_flags

The Trans Pride Flag to me represents my identity, that I belong to a community and that I'm visible - and I don't think any metrics can measure that feeling.

I think about a Trans person from a small town who feels like they are alone or they don't have a community - with the emoji being available, it will be something that the individual can say "This is me!" or "Yay! Trans Pride Flag emoji". It will bring happiness, a sense of community or support the identity to that individual.

Having the emoji available would reach so people in the world looking for something that allows them to say "there is an emoji for me. It reflects who I am." It can also create conversation and education for many. (Bianca Rey, November 2017)

These sentiments convey the importance of viewing this addition differently than others with less social/health significance. Given that the suicide attempt rate for transgender individuals is still greater than 40 %, the presence of gender markers and symbols that are as inclusive in emoji as they are in humanity is appropriate. Their lack of presence denies the science of gender in every interaction.

This is especially critical in the last 6 months, as people in this population have come under tremendous threat from proposed State and Federal policies in the United States. There is no symbol available to convey support.

Predictions of Usage

Usage should parallel the visibility of the transgender person population, which is different than saying it should parallel the number of people who identify as transgender.

It's estimated that 0.6% of the United States population identifies transgender, double previous estimates.⁷ This number is much higher in Washington, DC, where several of the authors of this proposal live, and it is 2.77% of the population. In comparison, Gallup reports that 4.1% of Americans identify as LGBT (2016)⁸

Additionally, the number of Americans who know someone who is transgender is currently 30%, much lower than the number of Americans who know someone who is gay or lesbian (87%).⁹ This number is expected to increase, with greater access to health care, often needed to successfully transition and live authentically, and general visibility in society.

Therefore as the population trends toward knowledge of someone who is transgender that is comparable to that for gay or lesbian, usage will increase.

⁷ <http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/How-Many-Adults-Identify-as-Transgender-in-the-United-States.pdf>

⁸ <http://www.gallup.com/poll/201731/lgbt-identification-rises.aspx>

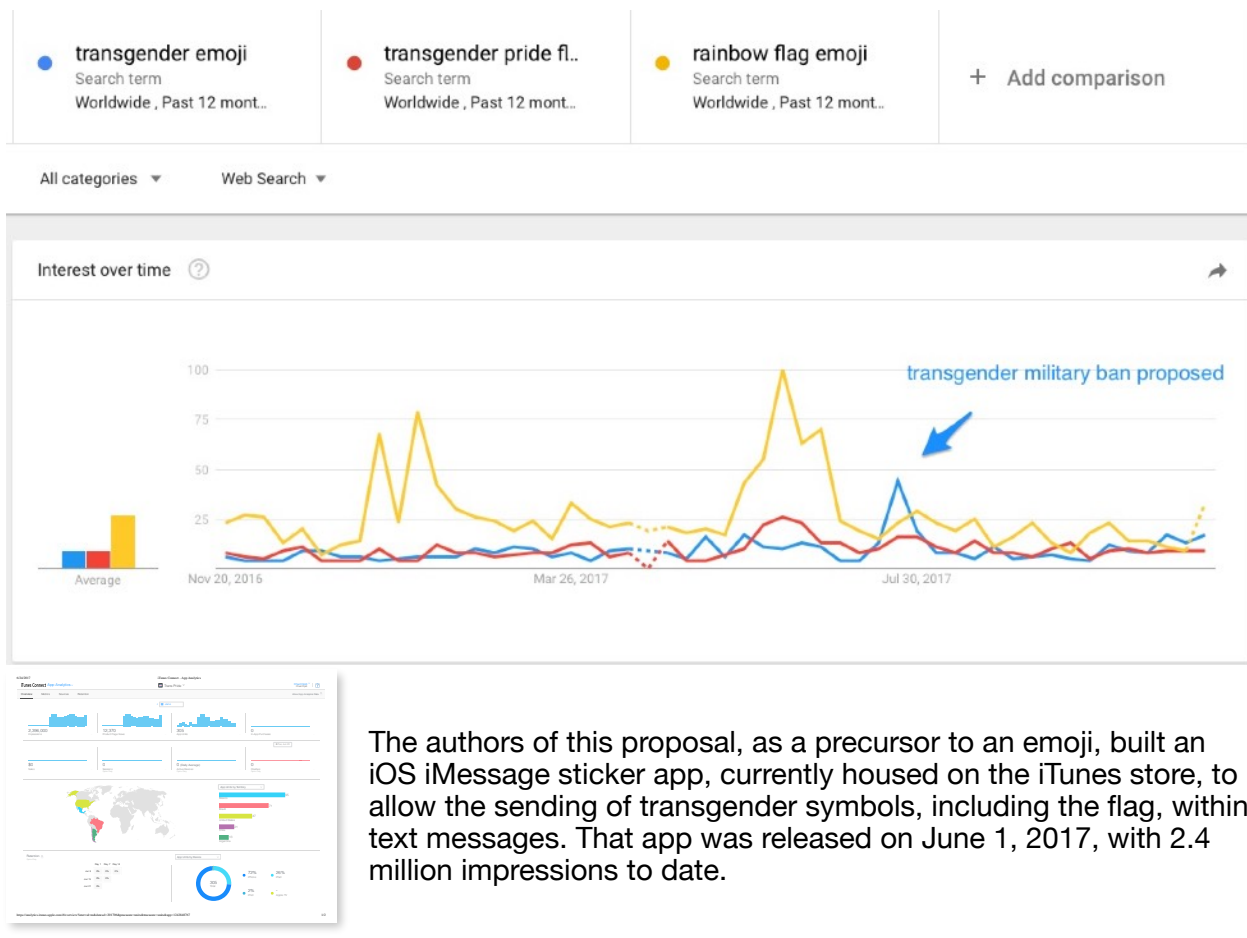
⁹ <http://www.pewforum.org/2016/09/28/5-vast-majority-of-americans-know-someone-who-is-gay-fewer-know-someone-who-is-transgender/>

(See Appendix: Images)

As an example of the increased visibility of this symbol, on June 10, 2017, when Washington, DC created 8 rainbow crosswalks in Dupont Circle, it added a transgender pride flag crosswalk, the first in the United States¹⁰. The first worldwide was painted just a day earlier, in Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada¹¹. (See Appendix: Images)

EmojiStats reports 129 uses of the rainbow flag per day from its keyboard app, above average relative to other emojis¹²

A search on Google trends¹³ shows **increasing interest as people in these communities face increasing threats** in society.



The authors of this proposal, as a precursor to an emoji, built an iOS iMessage sticker app, currently housed on the iTunes store, to allow the sending of transgender symbols, including the flag, within text messages. That app was released on June 1, 2017, with 2.4 million impressions to date.

¹⁰ <https://www.tedeytan.com/2017/06/15/22220>

¹¹ <http://www.newnownext.com/lethbridge-alberta-trans-pride-flag-crosswalk/05/2017/>

¹² <http://www.emojistats.org>

¹³ <https://trends.google.com/trends/explore?date=today%2012-m,today%2012-m,today%2012-m&geo=,.,&q=transgender%20emoji,transgender%20pride%20flag,rainbow%20flag%20emoji>

There is a current petition on [change.org](https://www.change.org/p/unicode-add-transgender-pride-flag-emoji) entitled “Unicode: Add a Transgender Pride Flag Emoji” with 1,353 signatures:¹⁴

No matter what language you speak or where you are in the world, emoji’s are a universal way of communicating how you are feeling in a text message or on social media. There are over 800 emojis, but there is one that is missing: the transgender pride flag.

Though less known than the rainbow pride flag, this important symbol shows support for and brings awareness to a marginalized population in our country. In the wake of the Orlando tragedy, which occurred during Pride month, and with the various bathroom bills being circulated, I think it is important to show solidarity with the entire LGBT community. One way to do so is by adding this icon to our emoji vocabulary.

The authors of this proposal have corresponded with the author of the petition and confirmed that they have not submitted a proposal to Unicode.

It would be expected that usage would increase during important days of the year, such as International Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR), International Transgender Day of Visibility (TDOV), and in LGBTQ Pride celebrations around the world.

Multiple usages:.N/A

¹⁴ <https://www.change.org/p/unicode-add-transgender-pride-flag-emoji>

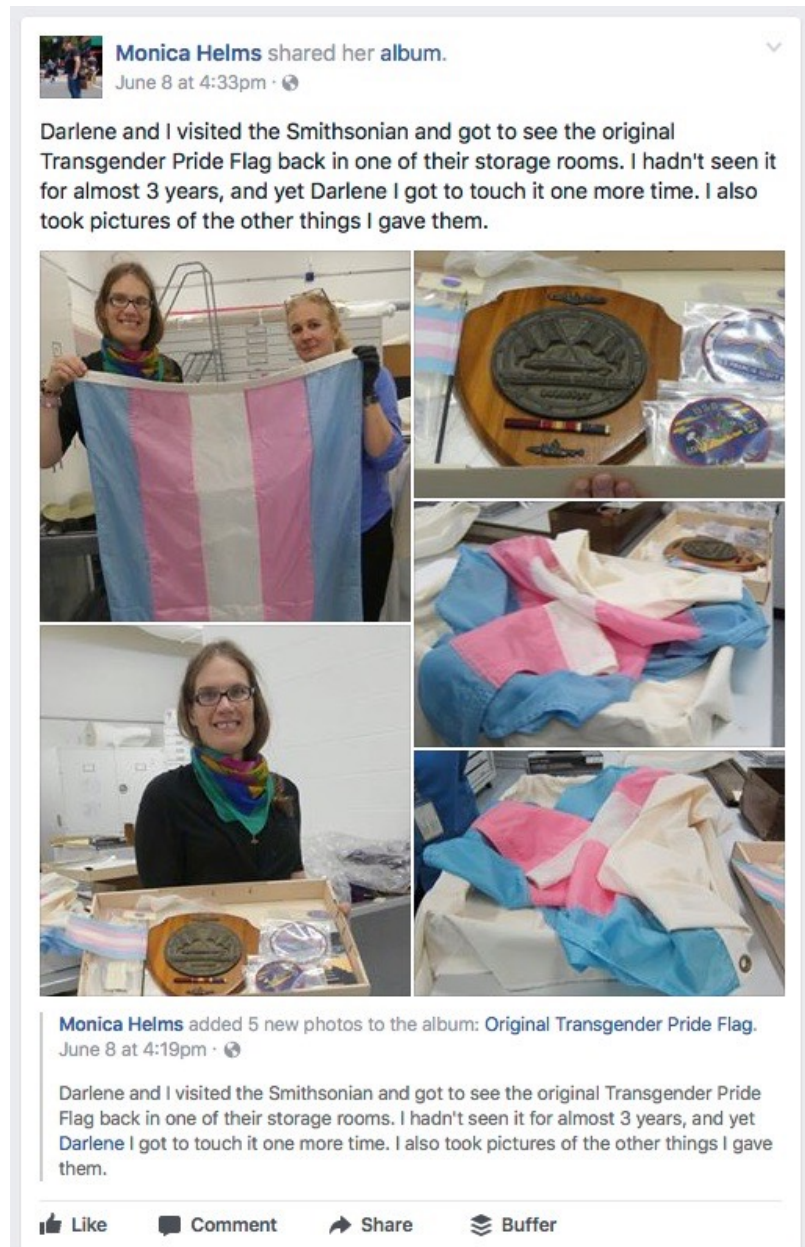


Image distinctiveness: The transgender pride flag is well recognized by the transgender person population and gaining rapid visibility in the LGBTQ population and beyond. The original flag is now housed at the Smithsonian Institution:¹⁵

Completeness:

The emoji charset currently carries 2 of the 3 gender markers. M & F but not T.

While the current rainbow flag might be considered inclusive of this population, the authors of this work, three of whom identify as transgender (Uglow, Rey, Helms), or cisgender and working to be allies (Cipiti, Eytan), are of the opinion that the lack of of this symbol is not fully inclusive of the LGBTQ population and reduces the visibility of the transgender population. In addition, the current emoji set is considered non-inclusive when it comes to non-binary representations of gender.¹⁶

Frequently requested: It is the belief of the authors, several of whom work in large organizations, that there would be a demand for this emoji, especially as they work to increase the diversity of their workforce.

Selection Factors for Exclusion

Overly specific: The transgender pride flag is the correct level of specificity for the population it represents.

Open ended: N/A

Already Representable: As is the case in society today, this symbol is not representable by a combination of others.

Logos, brands, UI icons, signage, specific people, deities: N/A

Transient: The opposite. This symbol is gaining use steadily every year.

Faulty Comparison: This symbol is distinct from the rainbow pride flag and as is the case in society in general, it is seen as exclusion for it not to be present in an LGBTQ supportive space.

"My reason for wanting a trans flag emoji is so that a trans individual can feel a sense of belonging and visibility when using technology to communicate."

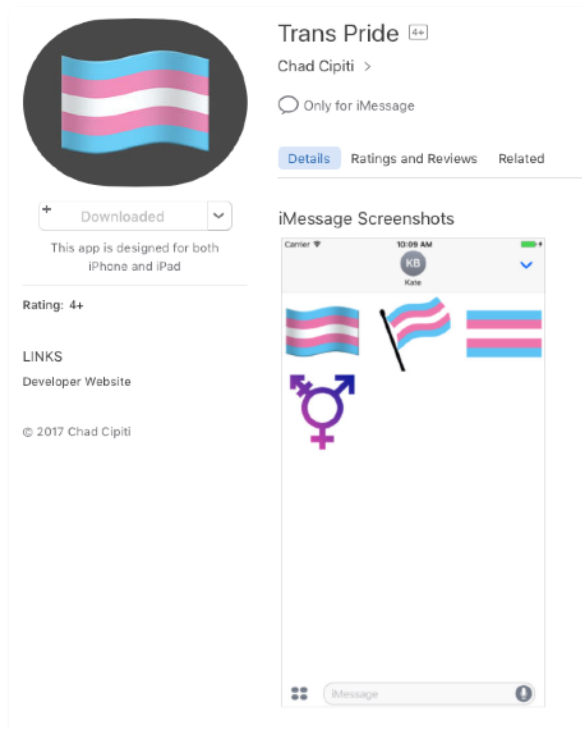
— Bianca Rey, Co-Chair, Capital Trans Pride, Washington, DC¹⁷

¹⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/monica.helms.75/posts/10209171154572802>

¹⁶ <http://blog.emojipedia.org/what-is-gender-and-why-does-it-matter-to-emoji/>

¹⁷ <http://chad-wick.com/transpride/>

Appendix: Images



iMessage Trans Pride Sticker App (Released 6/1/2017) - <https://itunes.apple.com/app/id1242848767> ; Support page with background - <http://chad-wick.com/transpride/>



Signs of inclusion - Rainbow flags displayed next to transgender pride flags, Washington, DC, June 26, 2017

(Photographs by Ted Eytan, MD)



First transgender pride flag crosswalk painted in the United States. L: Monica Helms, R: DCRainbowCrosswalks Team, Washington, DC June 10, 2017



Protesting Proposed
Transgender Military Ban,
White House, July, 2017

(Photographs by Ted Eytan,
MD)

