

# Proposal for New Valid Emoji Sequence

## Transgender Flag

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## 0. Introduction

The following is a proposal to the Unicode Consortium for a SWJ sequence, to be recommended for general interchange (RGI). The Transgender Flag would complement the Rainbow Flag as a representation of non-cis gender identities and intersex people.

A blog post written by the Google Emoji team in October, 2016<sup>1</sup>, said this about gender equality in Emoji:

*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 Flag, a symbol of transgender pride and diversity, and transgender rights was created by Monica Helms (a co-author of this proposal) in 1999, with its first public appearance in 2000.

The flag has been adopted by the transgender community as an umbrella emblem and can be seen flown separately, as well as along with or hoisted along with other flags, such as national flags and the Rainbow Flag for the past decade.

Variants and alternatives have been developed since and before the introduction of the Transgender Flag, but are often less than a decade old and they see limited use. While this proposal does not request inclusion of those, some ideas are explored in section 6.B, but one of those variants is suggested as the black-and-white representation.

The flag is based on five pastel bands. Pastel Blue (RGB #5BCEFA), Pastel Pink (RGB #F5A9B8) and white, repeating horizontally. The flag proportions used in this proposal are 3:2, but vendors may adjust those in accordance with their design style.

The sequence is based on the current SWJ implementation of the Rainbow Flag (🏳️🌈), with *Male With Stroke and Male and Female Sign* (♂️, U+26A7), a symbol commonly used to represent non-cis gender identities and intersex people in place of the rainbow (🏳️, U+1F308). Hence, the sequence would be U+1F3F3 FE0F 200D 26A7.

All the components of the proposed sequence do exist as Unicode codepoints, so no new character codepoint is proposed. Furthermore, artwork can be easily reproduced consistently across fonts and vendors due to the flag's simple design. The only issue lies with a black-and-white representation, but a solution is provided in section 2.2.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://medium.com/google-design/taking-the-equality-conversation-to-emoji-e6dce28e006d>

## 1. Identification



### 1.A. CLDR short name

Transgender Flag

### 1.B. CLDR keywords

transgender | flag

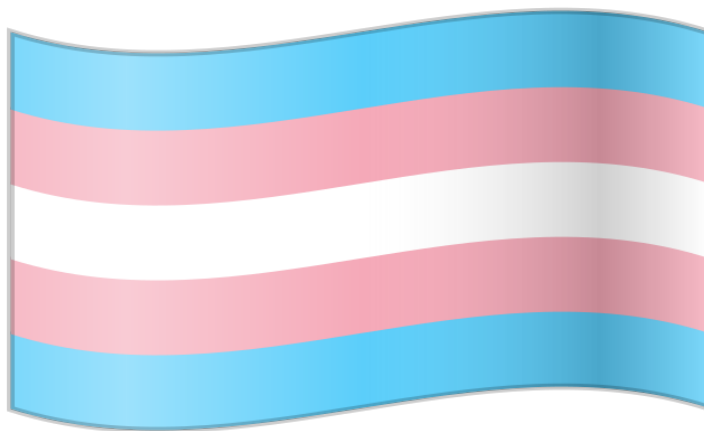
### 1.C. Code Points

1	U+1F3F3	White Flag	
2	U+FE0F	Variation Selector-16	
3	U+200D	Zero Width Joiner (ZWJ)	
4	U+26A7	Male With Stroke and Male and Female Sign	

## 2. Images

### 2.1. Colour Image

A scalable vector graphics file (SVG) is available at <https://goo.gl/TPw317> for further examination.



### 2.2. Black and White Image

As the flag is composed of coloured bands, without a symbol, a black and white reproduction as per the submission guidelines is impossible without an alternative design. We suggest a black-and-white image where the *Male With Stroke* and *Male and Female Sign* symbol is placed upon an outlined square in the proportions of 3:2.



## 2.A. Zip File

A zip file containing the artwork is located at <https://goo.gl/CpPMz3> for further examination.

## 2.B. License

The flag is in the public domain and the original author of the flag has signed the proposal as an author.

## 3. Selection factors — Inclusion

### 3.A. Compatibility

The transgender flag has not been implemented by any vendors as a sequence or as a Unicode codepoint before, so this proposal does not clash with any current implementation.

### 3.B. Expected usage level

#### 3.B.1: Frequency

Given the success for the Rainbow Flag emoji, we expect the use of the sequence to become common, even if transgender people are a smaller minority than the rest of the LGBTQ+ spectrum.

Currently 0.6% of the United States population identify as transgender, double previous estimates. This number is much higher in Washington, DC, where several of the authors of this proposal live, where it is 2.77% of the population.<sup>2</sup> Gallup reports that 4.1% of Americans identify as LGBT (2016) or about 10% of the total LGBT community.<sup>3</sup> Appropriating those numbers worldwide, we can approximate that about 20 million people worldwide identify as transgender.

Additionally, the number of the United States population who know someone who is transgender is currently 30%, much lower than the number of US Residents who know someone who is gay or lesbian (87%). 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.

The European Commission's Special Eurobarometer on Discrimination in the EU from 2015<sup>4</sup> shows that while transgender awareness is increasing in EU countries, it varies vastly across borders. As an example, 22% of respondents in Malta reported having transgender people in their social circle while the average was below 5%, but increasing.

Therefore as the population trends toward knowledge of someone who is transgender that is comparable to that for gay or lesbian, usage is expected to increase.<sup>5</sup>

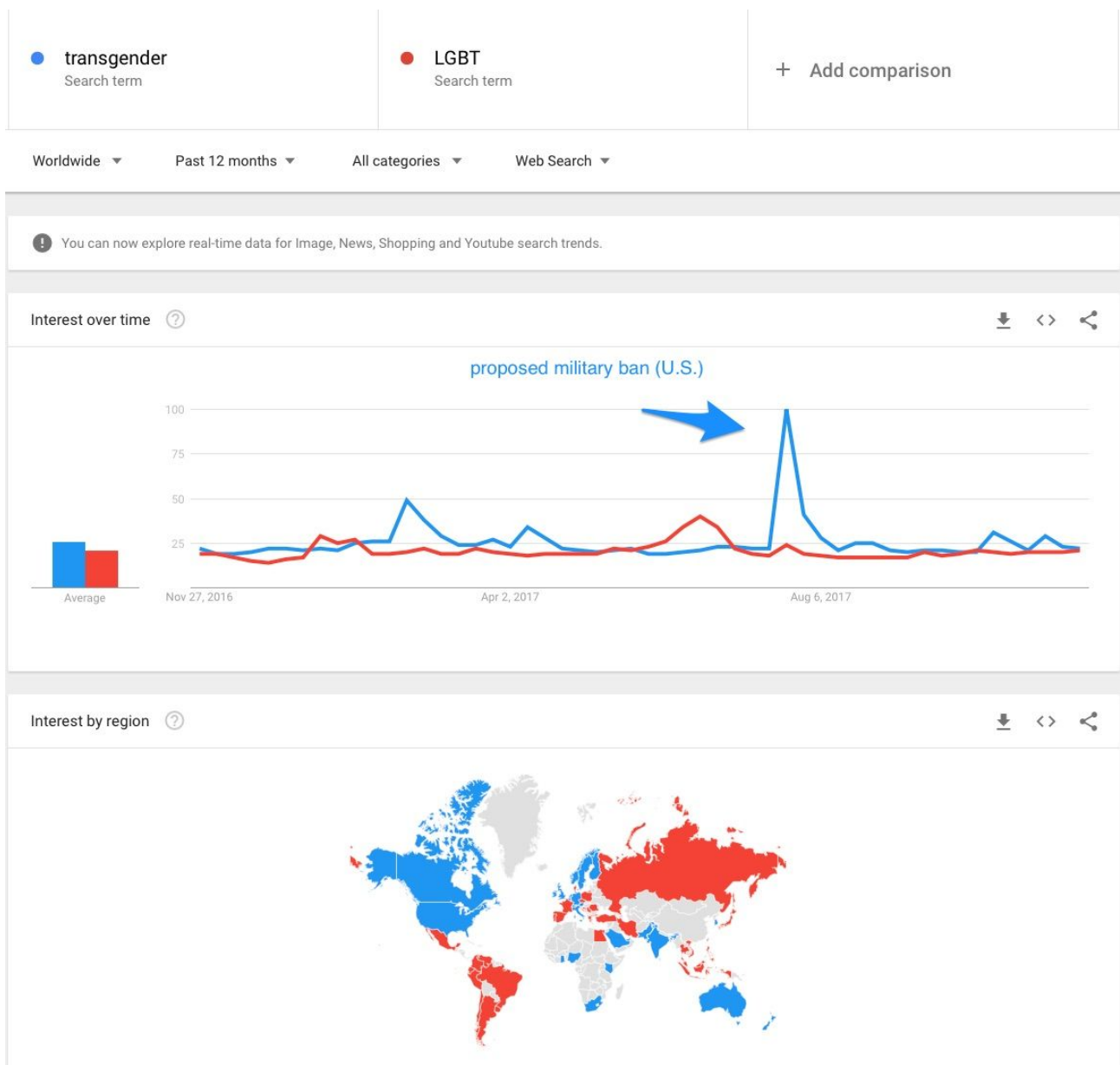
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<sup>2</sup> <http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/How-Many-Adults-Identify-as-Transgender-in-the-United-States.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.gallup.com/poll/201731/lgbt-identification-rises.aspx>

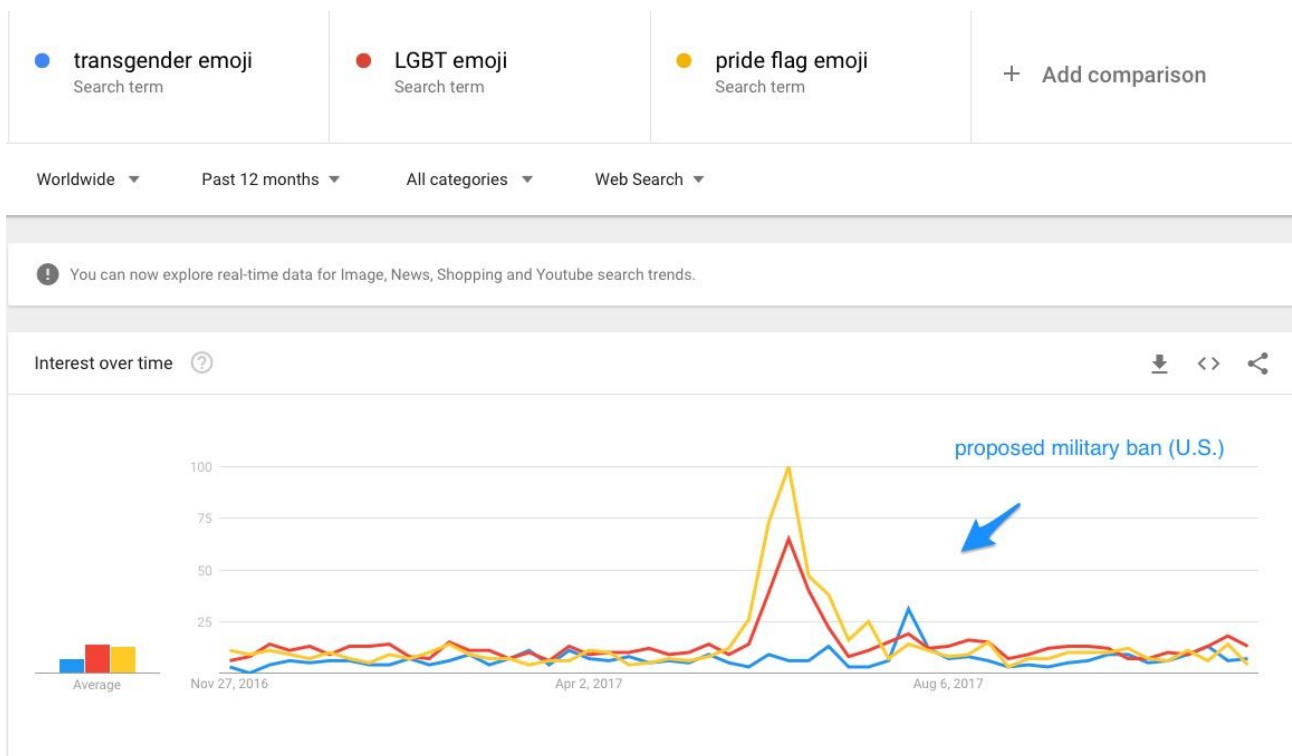
<sup>4</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/COMMFrontOffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/instruments/SPECIAL/surveyKy/2077>

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



Comparing the terms "transgender" and "LGBT" on Google Trends leads to very similar results, with the term transgender experiencing much greater interest in July, 2017, at the time of the proposed ban on transgender people serving in the U.S. military.

Furthermore, a different word from "transgender" may be used per country/language. As an example, In the Icelandic language, the word *kynsegin* has become a common term for genderqueer people and Google may not always index such words as synonyms of transgender.



With regard to “transgender emoji” significantly greater interest was also seen during the same period (July, 2017) compared to “pride flag emoji” or “LGBT emoji”.

Continuing on this trend, there are expected to be several major events in the next 12 months around transgender person health, public safety, and service policies in the United States (Title VII and Title IX of the Civil Rights Act, Affordable Care Act Section 1557). This is not to imply that the proposal is part of a cause; it is to note that the need for this expression is likely to see effects similar to what was seen in July, 2017.

Looking at social media, the hashtag #transgender has over 5 million posts on Instagram compared to 16 million for the baseline of #lgbt. This indicates that even if the transgender population is only a fraction of the total of LGBT, interest in the subject is proportionally very high.

### 3.B.2: Multiple usages

Just as with the Rainbow Flag, the Transgender Flag may be used to display affiliation with or to show support for the community the flag represents.

The transgender flag has been used as a symbol for those outside the typical gender binary. This includes groups such as intersex people, transmen and transwomen, as well as any non-binary groups of people such as genderqueer, agender and pangender people just to name some subgroups of the transgender community.

An inline image of the flag and its variants have been adapted to indicate a user belonging to the transgender community on various online platforms. Images of the flag are also used to indicate venues and facilities welcoming or specifically accommodating for transgender and intersex people. Reddit's LGBT+ related sections are a good example as

### 3.B.3: Use in sequences

This proposal does not suggest a further use in a sequence. Nothing in particular prevents or discourages future use. Possible future variants are explored in section 6.B.

### **3.B.4: Breaking new ground**

While the transgender community has been underrepresented until recently and often included as a subset of the rest of the LGBTQ+ community, the transgender Flag has been used prominently side-by-side with the Rainbow Flag in the recent years to represent transgender people. That is expected to persist and numbers are only expected to go upwards in the future.

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 States. The first worldwide was painted just a day earlier, in Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada. (See Appendix: Images)

### **3.C: Image distinctiveness**

The Transgender Flag is an easily identifiable and unique symbol. As the Transgender Flag is a banner of three colours, arranged in five horizontal bands, it can be represented as very small sizes; down to 5 pixels high.

### **3.D: Completeness**

The Transgender Flag will complement the Rainbow Flag as a representation of living authentically in one's identity based on gender and sexual orientation.

### **3.E: Frequently requested**

A petition for a unicode character has been submitted to Unicode previously but it was rejected. This proposal may be considered a rewrite of that previous proposal, resolving issues and concerns that were raised.

## **4. Selection factors — Exclusion**

### **4.F: Overly specific**

The authors of this document do not think The Transgender Flag is overly specific, as it represents an umbrella term for a community which can be split into even further subgroups as described in section 3.B.2 in this document.

### **4.G: Open-Ended**

While there are further sub-divisions of gender identities and sexual orientation many of which with their own flags, the authors of this document do not think the inclusion of a Transgender Flag SWJ sequence would be open ended.

### **4.H: Already Representable**

While the Misc. Symbols block does include the Male With Stroke and Male and Female Sign (♂, U+26A7) — which may be used to represent transgender as well as intersex identities, the authors of this document do believe the Transgender Flag does have different uses.

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

This SWJ sequence or any graphical representation of the Transgender Flag does not represent any logos, brands, UI icons, signage, specific people or deities. As stated before, the original work falls into the public domain.

### **4.J: Transient**

People identifying as transgender or intersex in any way, shape or form have existed throughout history. As more people have been coming out publicly and identifying as such, non-cis gender identities are here to stay as they always have.

In addition, the availability of medically supervised transition and overall health care is increasing the proportion of transgender and gender nonconforming individuals visible, across the entire age spectrum.

#### **4.K: Faulty Comparison**

Even if the Rainbow Flag is still valid as an identifier for the whole LGBTQ+ community, 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.

### **5: Sort Location**

#### **5.A: Category**

Flags

#### **5.B: Emoji it Should Come After in That Category**

Rainbow Flag

### **6: Other Information**

#### **6.A: Inclusion in emoji-zwj-sequences.txt**

Furthermore, we propose to have the Transgender Flag included in emoji-zwj-sequences.txt under the category Other, next after the Rainbow Flag, as it would be considered its sibling.

#### **6.B: Extendability and Possible Future Additions**

While this proposal does not include a request for such additions, those may be included in future revisions of the Unicode standard, as the respective flags receive more common use:

1. By using Medium Small White Circle (◌, U+26AC) as the 4th element to represent the agender flag.
2. By using Male and Female Sign (♂, U+26A5) as the 4th element to represent intersex flag.
3. By appending the proposed sequence with a Variation Selector for genderqueer, non-binary and genderfluid flags.

Hence, it can be assumed that this proposal is for a sustainable and expandable solution, based on an established precedent.

#### **6.C. Changelog**

##### **November 26, 2017**

1. New major revision
2. Additional authors
3. Detailed technical proposal
4. New Google Trends data

##### **November 28, 2017:**

1. Aesthetic and layout changes
2. Additional data from the European Union
3. Some information on design moved from introduction article
4. Removal of Bianca Rey quote
5. Additional Photo
6. Removal of Intersex CLDR keyword
7. Other minor changes



## 6.D. Photos and Images



Transgender flag and Rainbow flag side by side — separate but equal. (Photo: Ted Eytan MD)



The First Transgender Flag at the US Smithsonian Institution (Photo: Monica Helms)



The Transgender Flag flown at the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office in 2016. (Photo: Flickr/foreignoffice, CC-BY)



JR's Bar and Grill, Dupont Circle, Washington DC, showing both flags, which the venue deemed necessary to represent everyone in the LGBT community. (Photo: Ted Eytan MD)