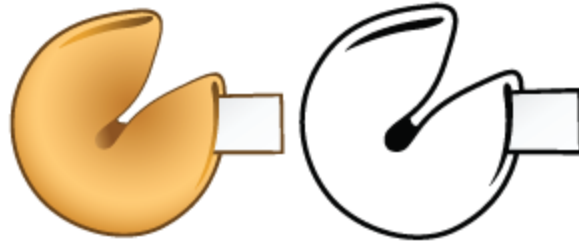


Fortune Cookie Emoji Submission

To: Unicode Consortium

From: Jennifer 8. Lee, Namrata Mujumdar, Yiyang Lu, and Emojination

Date: December 29, 2015



Art created by Yiyang Lu. Licensed for non-commercial use: free to share and use.

Abstract

We are requesting the addition of a FORTUNE COOKIE emoji, as we believe it holds high cultural and iconic value in the United States, not merely as a dessert but also as symbol of fate and wisdom.

Laments for the missing “fortune cookie emoji” on Twitter, as well as the more than 1 million photos on Instagram with #fortunecookie and #fortunecookies hashtags, demonstrate the pent-up demand for an emoji depicting the curvaceous yellow confectionary.

Introduction

More than 4 billion fortune cookies are made each year in the United States, enough for every man, woman, and child in the country to eat one every month (Lee, 2008).

The fortune cookie dramatically rose in popularity in the United States during the second half of the 20th century. While commonly associated with Chinese food and Chinese culture in the United States, the fortune cookie was originally developed in Japan (Lee, 2008).

Factors for Inclusion

A. Compatibility

The fortune cookie is not currently being used as an emoji-like character by any of the major platforms as far as we are aware.

B. Expected Usage Level

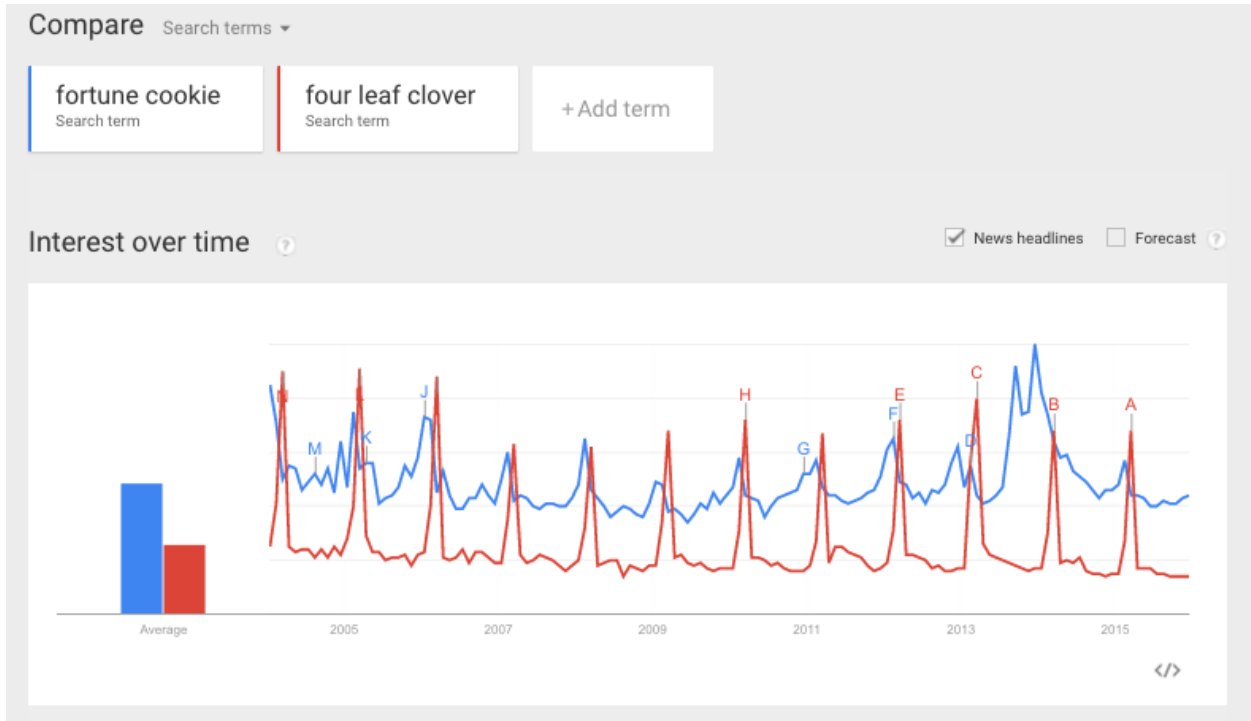
1. Frequency

The expected usage level within the United States is extremely high, given the fortune cookie's iconic shape and symbolic meaning. It is popular on social media, with over 1 million posts on Instagram tagged with either #fortunecookie or #fortunecookies, the overwhelming majority of which are photos of people's fortunes. We expect that many people would share their fortunes on Twitter and other social media, and use a fortune cookie at the end as punctuation/decoration as demonstrated in this tweet below.

"Examine the situation before you act impulsively." -My Fortune Cookie *there is no fortune cookie emoji*¹

Below we compare the fortune cookie with the four-leaf clover, another fortune-themed emoji, on Google trends.

¹ https://twitter.com/theDay_dreamer/status/545382029094051840 (Retrieved December 15, 2015)



While largely indigenous to the United States, the American-style fortune cookie has now also spread to Italy, Germany, England, Brazil, and even China.

2. Multiple Usages

While it is technically a dessert served primarily in Chinese restaurants, the fortune cookie has a layered meaning beyond other confectionary due to its distinctive shape and its hidden paper slip inscribed with a fortune. The cookie symbolizes luck, fate, soundbite Chinese wisdom, and the mysteries of the unknown.

3. Emotional Content

The fortune cookie generally has a strong positive connotation in American culture, in part because fortunes cookies are familiar ritual that ends Chinese meals. Americans place enough trust in the fortune cookie to regularly play the lucky numbers suggested in lotteries. In 2005, 110 people placed second in the Powerball lottery, versus the projected 3 or 4, because they played numbers from fortune cookies distributed by

Wonton Food.² This happened again several months later, and also in Brazil. (Lee, 2008).

4. Persistence

Fortune cookies have been notable in the United States since the end of World War II, and became even more popular in the 1960s, when they were used in two different presidential campaigns. Their shape is expected to be popular for the foreseeable future, as long as Chinese restaurants are popular in the United States and Americans expect dessert.

C. Image Distinctiveness

The folded crescent shape of the cookie is incredibly distinctive and resonant in the United States. It has such cultural cachet that it is used for numerous consumer goods, including fortune cookie jewelry, fortune cookie soap, fortune cookie baby booties, fortune cookie handbags, and ceramic fortune cookies.

It is also used in major art works. A piece by Hung Liu at the USC Pacific Asia Museum in 2014 covered train tracks with 100,000 fortune cookies in order to represent the Chinese men who gave their lives building the Transcontinental Railroad.³

D. Completeness

Since current emoji are heavily skewed toward Japanese foods, a strong case for completeness cannot be made based on the existing lineup. However, the fortune cookie would help fill out the slate of other Asian food emoji currently in the pipeline, including CHINESE TAKEOUT BOX, CHOPSTICKS, and DUMPLING. It would simply feel incomplete to have a TAKEOUT BOX without the FORTUNE COOKIE. Together they are a shorthand for Chinese food and Chinese culture in the United States.

² Lee, Jennifer. "Who Needs Giacomo? Bet on the Fortune Cookie." The New York Times. May 11, 2005 http://www.nytimes.com/2005/05/11/nyregion/who-needs-giacomo-bet-on-the-fortune-cookie.html?_r=1&pagewanted=all (Retrieved January 19, 2016)

³ Chen, Anna. "Go Metro to check out the new exhibition at the USC Pacific Asia Museum" The Source. February 4, 2014 <http://thesource.metro.net/2014/02/04/go-metro-to-check-out-the-new-exhibition-at-the-usc-pacific-asia-museum/> (Retrieved December 15, 2015)

E. Frequently Requested

A cursory search on Twitter finds many people looking for a fortune cookie emoji that they believe already exists: “*spent a solid 8 minutes trying to find a fortune cookie emoji that is apparently non existent. Cool*”⁴; “Thanks for entering! Good luck! (insert fortune cookie emoji here if there was one)”⁵; “Umm..I just realized there isn't a fortune cookie emoji. This is a sin. #bringfortunetotexting”⁶; “People are not persuaded by what we say but rather by what they understand. *fortune cookie emoji*”; “Is there not a fortune cookie emoji? I just spent 10 minutes trying to find it I coulda swore it exists...”⁷

Factors for Exclusion

F. Overly Specific

The fortune cookie shape, while distinct, is not overly specific, as it is widely recognized in Western culture.

G. Open-Ended

The fortune cookie rises above other cookies and desserts (many of which are already represented in emoji) in that it carries a lot of secondary meaning in culture. It has more layered interpretation in emoji compared to COOKIE, DONUT, SHORTCAKE, ICE CREAM and CHOCOLATE BAR.

H. Already Representable

The complex implicit meaning of the cookie is not currently representable in the emoji. There is a round COOKIE, but that does not carry the same connotation. The four-leaf clover emoji that has some elements of “luck,” but lacks the connotation of fate. You could combine a four-leaf clover with the cookie to get a semblance of the meaning, or a Chinese flag plus cookie, which hints at it. The main problem of course is that the cookies are not actually from China, but have their origins in Japan.

⁴ <https://twitter.com/ItsJustJackieG/status/661355106273771520> (Retrieved December 15, 2015)

⁵ <https://twitter.com/PostGuam/status/646807904977350656> (Retrieved December 15, 2015)

⁶ <https://twitter.com/jkee96/status/641775753621843968> (Retrieved December 15, 2015)

⁷ <https://twitter.com/gabeAlfassy/status/602261021751791616> (Retrieved December 15, 2015)

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

No logos, brands, or deities are involved in the fortune cookie. Though the fortune cookie itself has been used for branding.

Other Character Properties

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

General Category: So

Canonical Combining Class: 0

Bidirectional Class: ON

Decomposition Type:

Decomposition Mapping:

Numeric Type:

Numeric Value:

Bidirectional Mirrored: N

Unicode 1 Name:

ISO Comment:

Simple Uppercase Mapping:

Simple Lowercase Mapping:

Simple Titlecase Mapping:

Fortune cookie *in situ* in Apple emoji keyboard.

Art created by Yiyang Lu. Licensed for non-commercial use: free to share and use.

