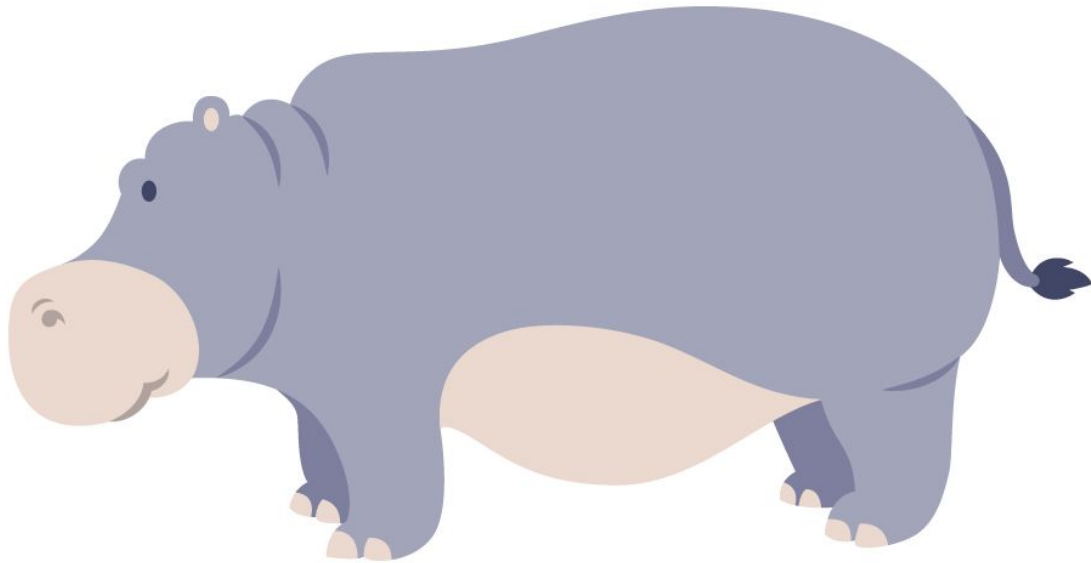


HIPPO Emoji Submission

To: Unicode Consortium

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Abstract

The HIPPOPOTAMUS, or HIPPO for short, is one of the last remaining popular charismatic megafauna that still does not have its own emoji symbol. In addition to the beloved status of the hippo species, symbolically hippos represent a wide diversity of cultural and metaphorical meanings. Specifically, we were asked by Africans to add hippo — as unlike zebras and giraffes, hippos actually have overlapping habitat with humans and are highly aggressive, thus posing daily threats to communities. Notably, the HIPPOPOTMUS is ranked by National Geographic as the most dangerous animals in the Africa. As a result, we feel that HIPPOPOTAMUS is an important addition for be added the emoji lexicon.

Introduction

The hippopotamus, a native Sun-Saharan African mammal¹ that likes to roam landlocked bodies of water² is notorious for being dangerous due to its long teeth. Despite continuous population decline³, discussion around this charismatic megafauna

¹ <http://www.awf.org/wildlife-conservation/hippopotamus>

² <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/mammals/h/hippopotamus/>

³ <http://animals.sandiegozoo.org/animals/hippo>

species has experienced a digital renaissance⁴. Users want a HIPPO emoji not only because this particular species is widely considered adorable, but also because the HIPPO emoji can signify culturally what other animal emojis simply cannot: fatness⁵, hunger⁶, and a whimsical lethargy⁷.

Names

CLDR Short Name: Hippopotamus

Other Keywords: Hippo

Factors for Inclusion

I. Compatibility

The major platforms do not currently offer a HIPPO emoji, but hippos are nonetheless in demand. One platform which currently offers the HIPPO emoji is free-emoticons.com, which offers a downloadable hippopotamus emoticon that works for SMS messages and various Mail platforms⁸. The other platform providing a HIPPO emoji is *HippoCute - Hippo Emoji And Stickers!*, an iTunes app you can purchase for \$0.99 that provides access to a variety of hippo emojis and stickers⁹. However, relying on these HIPPO emoji platforms requires either actively seeking out and downloading or buying access to the HIPPO emoji. Thus, the addition of a Unicode HIPPO emoji would make this emoji more widely accessible to all users. And if users want to further personalize their hippo related messages, they can always purchase the *HippoCute* app.

II. Expected Usage

Evidence of Frequency

According to Google Trends, people search the word HIPPO as frequently as they search for the word koala, which already has its own emoji. And when compared with another popular charismatic megafauna like the giraffe which has its own emoji, HIPPO ranks close behind. It would appear that the noticeable spike in Google searches for the

⁴ <https://twitter.com/hippoemoji?lang=en>

⁵ <http://animals.sandiegozoo.org/animals/hippo>

⁶ <https://twitter.com/BrittaGH/status/830624934384766976>

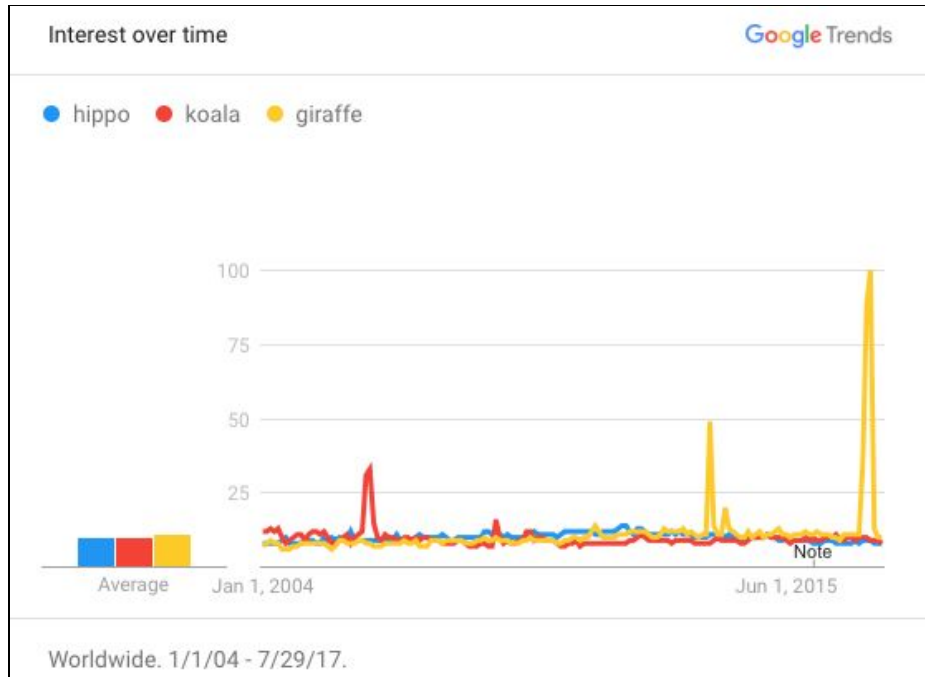
⁷ <https://twitter.com/oohnataliie/status/569767291975368704>

⁸ <http://www.free-emoticons.com/search.php?keyword=Hippopotamus>

⁹ <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/hippocute-hippo-emoji-and-stickers/id1237685777?mt=8>

word “giraffe” that occurred in April 2017 coincided with a high-profile giraffe birth at the Animal Adventure Park in New York.¹⁰

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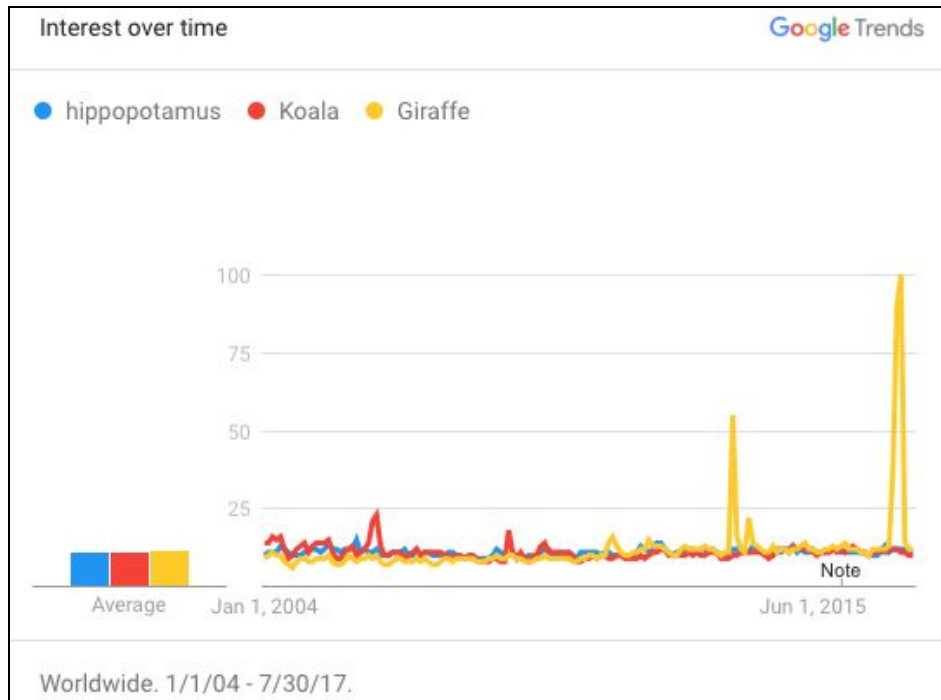


If you search
“hippopotamus”

instead of “hippo” using Google Trends, the results are also the same: hippopotamus and koala rank equally in interest over time and nearly match giraffe in search frequency. These charts suggest that people are likely to use hippo emojis with as much frequency as existing animal emojis like koala and giraffe.

¹⁰ <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation-now/2017/04/15/april-giraffe-going-into-labor/100496432/>

¹¹ <https://trends.google.com/trends/explore?date=all&q=hippo,koala,giraffe>



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Multiple Uses

The HIPPO emoji can be used to discuss the mammal itself, but there are a variety of other cultural uses for the word hippo. First, people can use the HIPPO emoji when they want to express that they are ravenous¹³, reference to the popular game Hungry Hungry Hippos or the large amount of food that hippos are known to eat on a daily basis¹⁴. If someone is feeling particularly sluggish, bloated, or slow they may want to use the HIPPO emoji to represent this physical state. Alternatively, the word hippo can also be used to describe someone who is fat and large in size (or someone who is just feeling this way temporarily, for instance after having eaten a large meal)¹⁵.

Additionally, the HIPPO emoji can be used for words containing “hippo” either in spelling or sound: such as *hippocampus* (a part of the brain), *hypocrite*, or *Hippocrates*.

Uses in Sequences

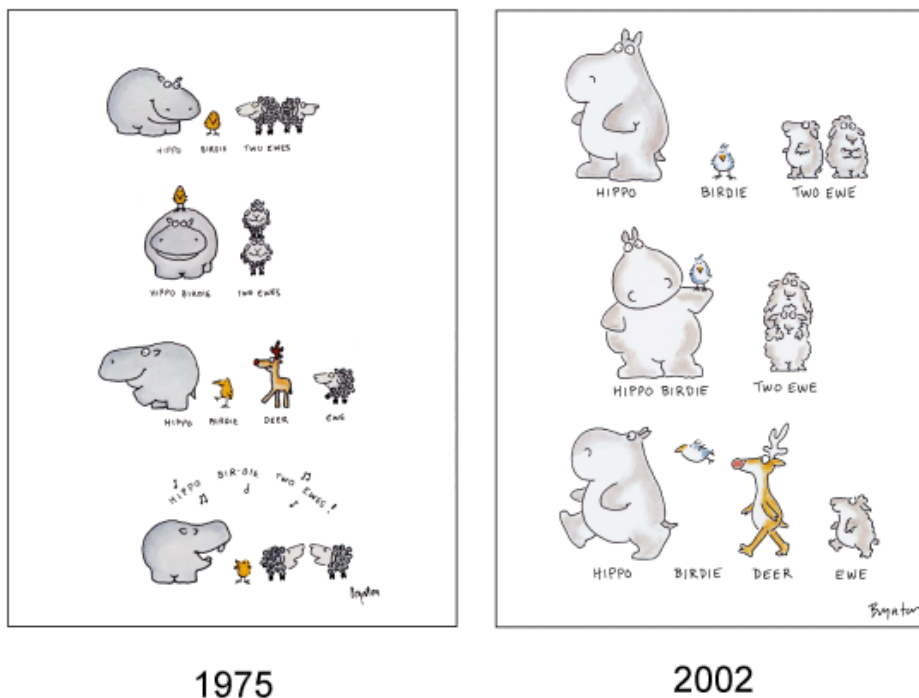
¹²https://trends.google.com/trends/explore?date=all&q=%2Fm%2F09f20,%2Fm%2F04cp_,%2Fm%2F03bk1

¹³ <https://twitter.com/hashtag/HippoEmoji?src=hash&lang=en>

¹⁴ <http://animals.sandiegozoo.org/animals/hippo>

¹⁵ <https://twitter.com/hashtag/HippoEmoji?src=hash&lang=en>

If someone wants to express hunger, they may include the HIPPO emoji with a variety of other food emojis. Users may also want to use the HIPPO emoji with two eweemojis and the many bird emoji to reference and pay homage to cartoonist Sandra Boynton’s famous birthday card “Hippo Birdie Two Ewes”¹⁶.



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III. Image Distinctiveness

Although relatively similar in color, the HIPPO emoji is distinguishable from the elephant or rhinoceros emojis because it does not have a trunk like the elephant or a noticeable horn like the rhinoceros.

IV. Completeness

Addition of the HIPPO emoji would complete the group of large African herbivorous mammals¹⁸ that have their own emoji such as RHINOCEROUS, ELEPHANT, and

¹⁶ <http://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2016/02/sandra-boynton-shares-her-story/>

¹⁷ <http://www.sandraboynnton.com/sboynnton/hippobirdiecards.html>

¹⁸ <http://msi.ucsb.edu/current-projects/promoting-sustainable-hippopotamus-management-through-research-ecology-hippopotamus>

<http://www.awf.org/wildlife-conservation/rhinoceros>

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/mammals/a/african-elephant/>

GIRAFFE. More critically, the HIPPO emoji would round out the current list of animal emojis that fall into the charismatic megafauna¹⁹ category. This signifier refers to animals of considerable size that easily earn people's affection, such as pandas or giraffes²⁰.

V. Frequently Requested

The HIPPO emoji was one of the top 40 emoji requests across all categories received by Emojipedia in 2017²¹ which suggests that users will use the hippo emoji with considerable frequency. A hippo enthusiast also released a petition asking Apple for a HIPPO emoji and received 731 signatures²².

Another piece of evidence that the HIPPO emoji would reach high usage levels is the @HippoEmoji Twitter campaign that has advocated for the addition of this emoji since 2013. The @HippoEmoji Twitter campaign seems to have generated genuine grassroots interest from digital users who want to add a HIPPO to their emoji vocabulary. The dedicated #HippoEmoji hashtag has received heavy traffic, and countless Twitter users have used it as a space to express desire for or dissatisfaction about the lack of a HIPPO emoji.

To demonstrate this demand, here is a sample of posts people have made on Facebook and Twitter advocating for a HIPPO emoji.

Twitter:²³

"I'm really disappointed that there's no hippo emoji to show how hungry hungry I am #hippoemoji"

"I hate how there is no hippo emoji -.- #hippoemoji"

"THEY HAVE A RAM EMOJI AND AN EGGPLANT EMOJI BUT NOT A HIPPO EMOJI. WHY?? #getonthatemojiaakers #hippoemoji"

"@HippoEmoji is probably the best campaign ever #HippoEmoji...sick of using 🐘🐘 as a hippoooo"

¹⁹http://www.slate.com/articles/health_and_science/science/2016/06/in_the_future_zoos_will_host_struggling_native_animals_rather_than_keeping.html
<http://msi.ucsb.edu/current-projects/promoting-sustainable-hippopotamus-management-through-research-ecology-hippopotamus>

²⁰ <https://www.washingtonian.com/2010/09/01/wanted-more-big-animals/>

²¹ <http://blog.emojipedia.org/top-emoji-requests-2017/>

²²https://www.ipetitions.com/petition/HippoEmoji?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=pet_share_button

²³ <https://twitter.com/hashtag/HippoEmoji?src=hash>

Facebook:

“Where’s the hippo emoji!!!! 🙄🙄🙄”²⁴

“Random thought: can we petition for a hippo emoji??”²⁵

Factors for Exclusion

I. Overly Specific

It is not overly specific to include the emoji of such a popular mammal whose image conjures many possible cultural references and meanings.

II. Open-ended

The hippo is a unique, charismatic megafauna species that deserves its own emoji relative to its peers.

III. Already Representable

Although people could use the “panda face” emoji to represent lethargy and the “whale” emoji to convey hunger, the closest emoji one could use to represent the hippo species literally would be the rhinoceros or elephant emojis, but these would be incorrect and provide poor representation for the hippo.

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

It does not appear that the hippo is currently being used as an official and prevalent logo, brand, or signage for any company.

V. Transient

The hippo is a relevant emoji symbol as long as hippos continue to graze in Africa and live in zoos.

VI. Faulty Comparison

²⁴<https://www.facebook.com/redromina/photos/a.352100884960269.1073741834.222601977910161/658619687641719/?type=3&theater>

²⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/JaclynADeAugustino/posts/1830714087194463>

The HIPPO emoji stands on its own as an important addition to the current mammal emoji lexicon.