

Mammoth Emoji Submission

To: Unicode Consortium

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Author: Andrew West

Abstract

This proposal requests the addition of a MAMMOTH emoji to the Unicode Emoji Standard. The Woolly Mammoth (*Mammuthus primigenius*) is an extinct hairy pachyderm with distinctive long curving tusks. Mammoths were culturally significant animals to Stone Age humans, and since the identification of the species from fossil remains by Georges Cuvier in 1796, woolly Mammoths have occupied an important position in our understanding and appreciation of Ice Age megafauna. A mammoth is often used as a metaphor for something gigantic.

Background

As part of ballot comments on ISO/IEC 10646 5th edition PDAM 1.3, the UK national body made a request to SC2 to encode pictographic characters representing Mammoth and Dodo in order to help fill a gap in the representation of extinct animals in the Universal Coded Character Set (see WG2 [N4870](#) pages 21-22). The WG2 meeting in Hohhot, China in September 2017 unanimously recommended the acceptance of these two pictographic characters (see WG2 [N4874](#) Recommendation M66.11), and they are provisionally assigned to 1F9A1 and 1F9A2 respectively (see WG2 [N4904](#) "Additional repertoire for ISO/IEC 10646:2017 (5th ed.) Amendment 2.2"). The current document provides additional information on the mammoth, and why it should be considered for emoji representation.

Introduction



Recreation of a scene in late Pleistocene northern Spain, by Mauricio Antón

Species of mammoths lived across Europe, Asia, Africa and North America from the early Pliocene (about 5 million years ago) through to the early Holocene (about 4,000 years ago), and were known to and hunted by early humans. The Woolly Mammoth (*Mammuthus primigenius*) is known from about 400,000 years ago, and a population of Woolly Mammoths survived on Wrangel Island in the Arctic Ocean until about 4,000 years ago. The Woolly Mammoth was an important animal for Stone Age people, and palaeolithic cave paintings with scenes depicting Woolly Mammoths have been found at various sites in Europe.



Cave art depicting a woolly mammoth, from the Rouffignac Cave, France

Not only are Woolly Mammoths known from fossils and cave paintings, but a number of frozen and mummified mammoth bodies have been discovered in the permafrost of Siberia. Some scientists have even raised the possibility of resurrecting the Woolly Mammoth species by cloning from preserved mammoth tissue.¹ This possibility has ensured that the Woolly Mammoth is not only a subject of scientific interest, but are also of great interest to ordinary people, children and adults alike.

An indication of the huge popularity of Woolly Mammoths in modern society is given by the *Ice Age* series of animated children's films (2002–2016), the main character of which is Manny a Woolly Mammoth.

Not only is the Woolly Mammoth the most well-known example of Pleistocene megafauna, but the mammoth is often used as a metaphor for something gigantic, such as a “mammoth sale” or a “mammoth gaming session”. A Mammoth emoji could be used in combination with other emoji to express sentiments such as “Wow, that's a mammoth hamburger!”.

¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2017/feb/16/woolly-mammoth-resurrection-scientists>



The frozen mammoth calf "Lyuba"

Severn Tunnel electrification upgrade a 'mammoth task'

A six-week closure to upgrade the Severn Tunnel for electric trains to use in and out of Wales is costing £10m, Network Rail has said.

It is shut until 21 October so the work, which is part of the wider **£2.8bn scheme** to electrify the main line from London to south Wales, can take place.

Three teams of 200 engineers are working 24 hours a day for six weeks.

Their work has included **installing a state-of-the-art power rail** in the tunnel roof.

Tim Butler, of Network Rail, said fitting five years' of work into six weeks was a "mammoth task".

Jordan Davies reports.

🕒 05 Oct 2016 | Wales

BBC News, 5 October 2016

1. Identification

A. CLDR short name: mammoth

B. CLDR keywords: mammal | mammoth | extinct

2. Sample images

A. Color image



Source: http://www.wpclipart.com/animals/extinct/mammal/mammoth/Mammoth_wooly.png.html

License: Public domain

B. Black and white image



Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mammuthus_Size_comparison.png

License: Public domain

3. Selection factors — Inclusion

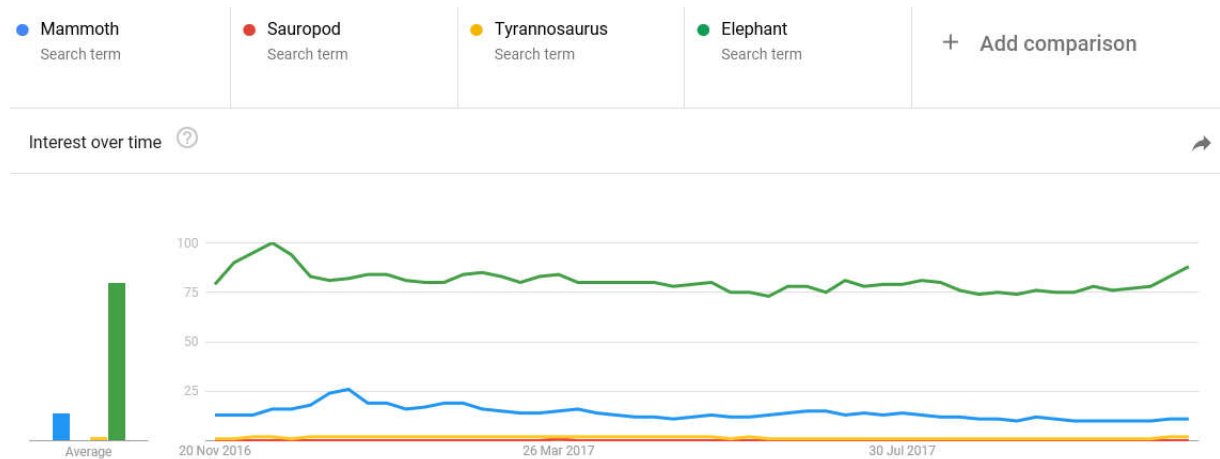
A. Compatibility

No compatibility factors.

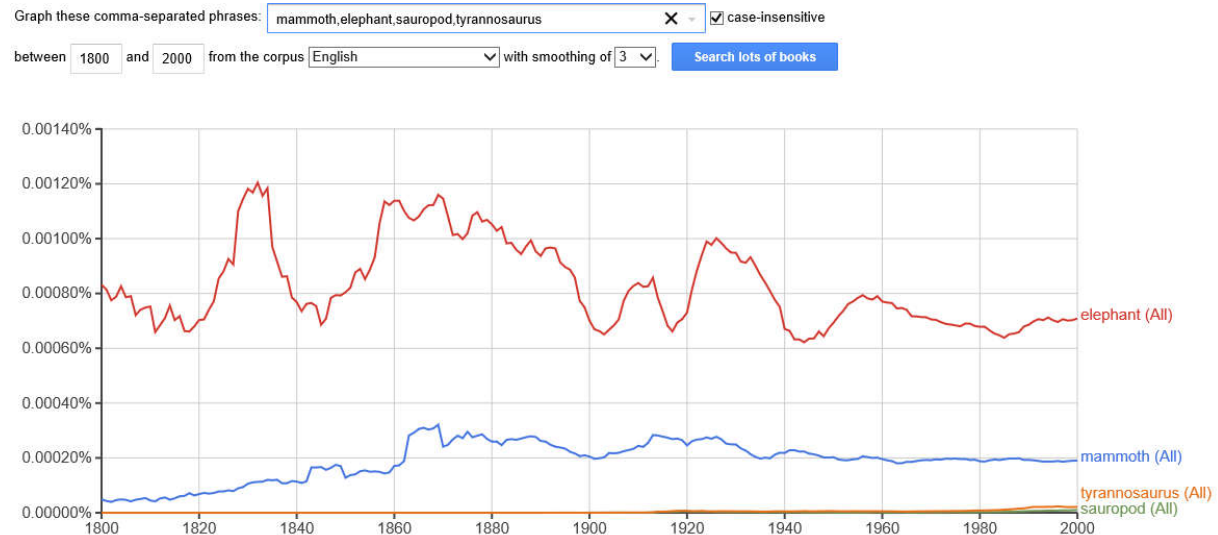
B. Expected usage level

1) Frequency

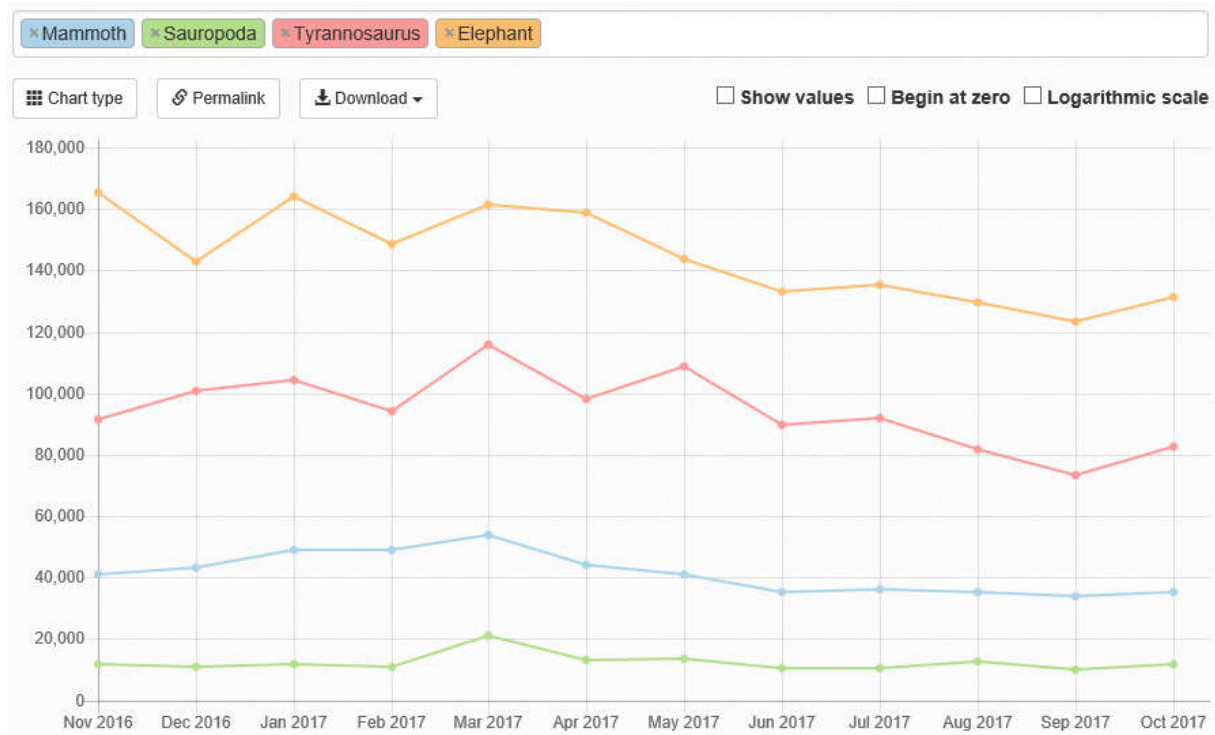
Google Trends shows a consistent search interest in “mammoth” over the past year, although as would be expected it is considerably lower than the interest shown in “elephant”. However, “mammoth” shows significantly higher interest than “sauropod” and “tyrannosaurus” combined.



The Google Ngram chart below shows that the word “mammoth” does not occur as frequently as “elephant” in printed books over the last two hundred years, but has a much higher frequency than “sauropod” and “tyrannosaurus” which are the only two currently encoded emoji for prehistoric animals.



The above chart indicates how much has been written about the mammoth, but we can gauge the relative popularity of the mammoth for readers by looking at Wikipedia page statistics for the articles on Mammoth, Sauropoda, Tyrannosaurus and Elephant:



This chart shows that over the past year the article on the mammoth has been viewed more often than the article on sauropods, but less often than the articles on Tyrannosaurus and Elephant. The Mammoth article had just under half a million views over a year (41,000 views a month). The article on Woolly Mammoth has slightly more views (557,000), and both articles are considerably more viewed than Woolly Rhinoceros (126,000).

2) Multiple usages

The mammoth is widely used as a metaphor for something huge, usually in a positive sense.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* definition for “mammoth, *adj.*” states: “Comparable to the mammoth in size; huge, gigantic.” Quotations from *Oxford English Dictionary* illustrating the figurative meaning of mammoth:

- 1801 T. Jefferson *Let.* 22 Oct. in [Papers](#) (2008) XXXV. 479, I recieved..a present of a quarter of a *Mammoth-veal* which at 115. days old weighed 438. lb.
- 1802 O. Oldschool in [Port Folio \(Philadelphia\)](#) 30 Jan. 31/3 A baker in this city offers *Mammoth bread* for sale.
- 1803 J. Davis [Trav. U.S.A.](#) ix. 329 Its extraordinary dimensions induced some wicked wag of a federalist to call it the Mammoth Cheese.
- 1822 J. Flint [Lett. from Amer.](#) 309 (*note*) The great cave in Kentucky is called the Mammoth Cave, although none of the remains of that animal have been found in it.
- 1854 J. S. C. Abbott [Napoleon](#) (1855) I. xv. 262 All the streets of the mammoth metropolis.
- 1896 [Westm. Gaz.](#) 20 June 7/1 Yorkshire made another mammoth score.
- 1924 W. R. Inge [Lay Thoughts](#) (1926) iii. ii. 192 The new journalism, with its ‘mammoth combines’, is good business, but bad democracy.

C. Image distinctiveness

The mammoth does look similar to an elephant, but it is easily distinguished by its humped back, domed head, long curving tusks, and long reddish hair. These features mean that even at small emoji sizes and in black and white a mammoth profile is distinct from that of an elephant.

D. Completeness

The mammoth fills a gap in emoji for prehistoric extinct animals. In particular there are currently no emoji for Pleistocene megafauna.

E. Frequently requested

A mammoth emoji is frequently requested on Twitter. A sample tweet bemoaning the lack of a mammoth emoji is shown below.



4. Selection factors — Exclusion

F. Overly specific

Not overly specific because the proposed emoji can represent all species of mammoth as well as other extinct pachyderms such as the mastodon.

G. Open-ended

Not open-ended, as the only other extinct Ice Age animal that could be a plausible emoji candidate is the *Smilodon* (sabre-toothed cat).

H. Already representable

No, as the elephant emoji does not represent the literal or metaphoric meaning of mammoth. Some tweets on Twitter try to represent a mammoth using elephants or other animals, or a sequence of an elephant and a furry animal, but there is no obvious or consistent way of doing this, and it is not obvious to recipients what is meant:

- Congrats! 🐘👉 [pretend that is a Mammoth emoji]
- love u more 💖🐘 (there's no wooly mammoth emoji)
- Is that emoji 🐘 supposed to be a mammoth? 🐘🐘🐘
- Yea i kno that was a sheep but aint no mammoth emoji bih
- 🐘 (there isn't a wooly mammoth emoji)
- 🐘🐘 (there is not wooly mammoth emoji sadly)

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

Because the Woolly Mammoth is such a popular animal it has been used as company and brand logos, but such usages are secondary.

J. Transient

No. The Mammoth has been an iconic animal since the Stone Age.

K. Faulty comparison

No.

5. Sort location

A. Category: animal-mammal

B. Emoji it should come after in that category: Mammoth should come after elephant.

6. Other information

None.