

Dodo Emoji Submission

To: Unicode Consortium

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Abstract

This proposal requests the addition of a DODO emoji to the Unicode Emoji Standard. The dodo is a distinctive extinct bird that symbolises obsolescence and extinction. It is well represented in popular culture, art and literature.

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 dodo, and why it should be considered for emoji representation.

Introduction

“The Dodo never had a chance. He seems to have been invented for the sole purpose of becoming extinct and that was all he was good for” —
Will Cuppy, *How to Become Extinct* (1941)



Dodo from a copy of a 1626 painting by Roelant Savery

The Dodo (*Raphus cucullatus*) is a large extinct flightless bird belonging to the family Columbidae (pigeons and doves). It has a distinctive and (sometimes considered) comic appearance, and is widely used as a metaphor for something or someone that is obsolete or that is no longer living or functional. This bird features in the expressions “as dead as a dodo” and “go the way of the dodo”.

The dodo is well represented in popular culture, art and literature. Notably, a dodo features in the Caucus-Race episode of Lewis Carroll’s fantasy novel *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (1865). The dodo also occurs in various later adaptations of the novel, and in the 1951 Disney animated film *Alice in Wonderland* the role of the dodo is expanded.

Illustration by John Tenniel of the Dodo in “A Caucus-Race and a Long Tale” for Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*



1. Identification

A. CLDR short name: dodo

B. CLDR keywords: bird | dodo | extinct

2. Sample images

A. Color image



Source: <http://www.clipartlord.com/2012/10/29/free-extinct-dodo-clip-art/>

License: Free use (“You can use this Dodo clip art for your personal or commercial use”)

B. Black and white image



Source: <https://openclipart.org/detail/234998/silhouette-dodo>

License: Public domain

3. Selection factors — Inclusion

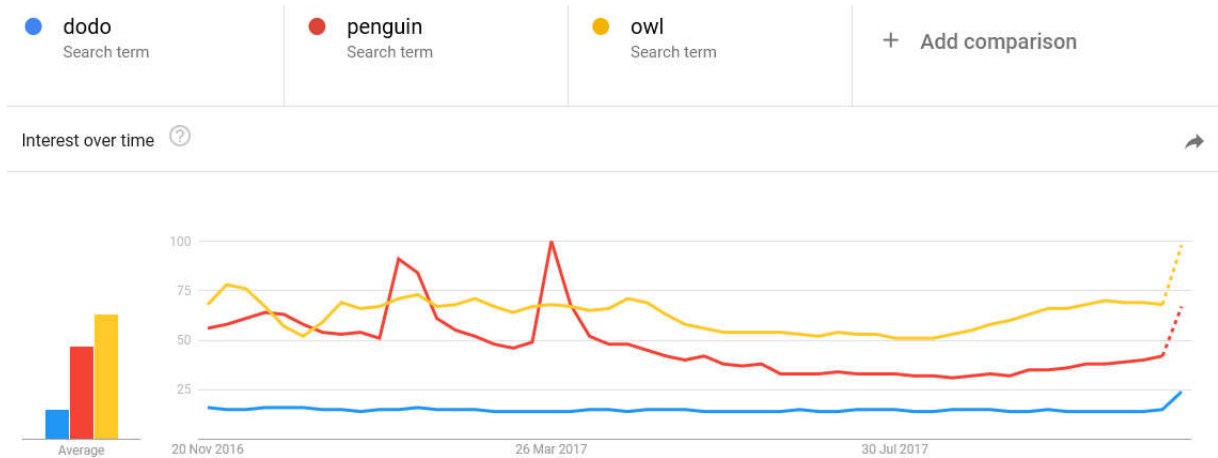
A. Compatibility

No compatibility factors.

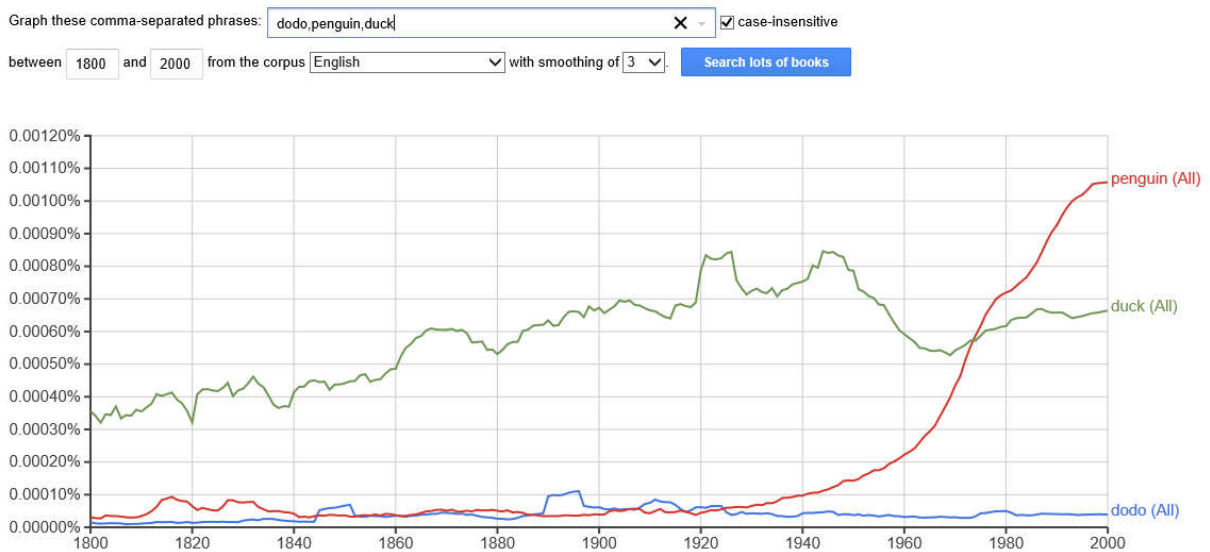
B. Expected usage level

1) Frequency

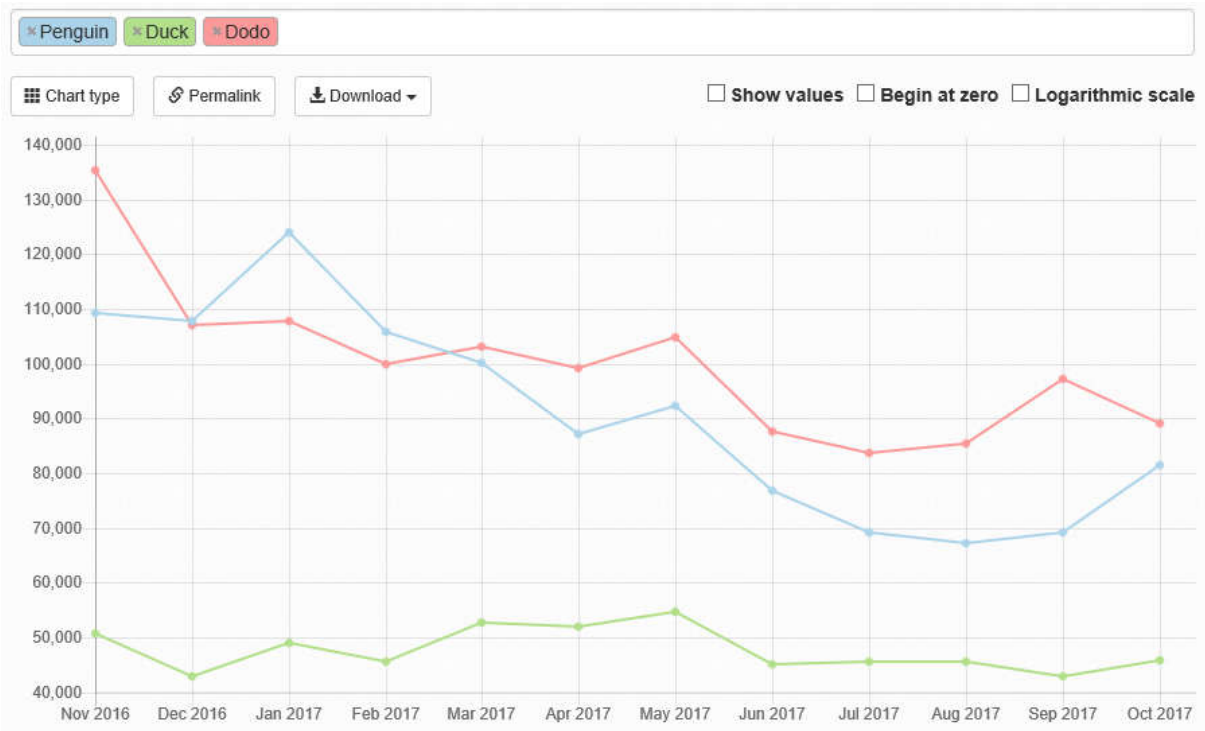
Google Trends shows a consistent search interest in “dodo” over the past year, although it is significantly lower than the interest shown in “penguin” and “owl” for example:



The Google Ngram chart below shows that the word “dodo” has a relatively low frequency of occurrence in printed books over the last two hundred years compared with “penguin” and “duck”, although “dodo” was more frequent than “penguin” during early 20th century.



The above chart indicates how much has been written about the dodo, but we can gauge the relative popularity of the dodo for readers by looking at Wikipedia page statistics for the articles on Dodo, Penguin and Duck:



This chart shows that over the past year the article on the Dodo has been viewed more often than the articles on both Penguin and Duck, with 1.2 million views over a year (100,000 views a month). This indicates a significant interest amongst internet users in the dodo.

2) Multiple usages

Dodo is used both literally to refer to the extinct bird, and also metaphorically to indicate something that is old-fashioned, obsolete, or extinct. The *Oxford English Dictionary* definition for “dodo, n.” states: “*transf.* and *fig.*, an old-fashioned, stupid, inactive, or unenlightened person”. Quotations from *Oxford English Dictionary* illustrating the metaphorical meaning of Dodo:

- 1874 L. Carr [Judith Gwynne](#) ll. viii. 177 He belongs to the Dodo race of real unmitigated..Toryism.
- 1886 [Pall Mall Gaz.](#) 11 Feb. 1/1 The old dodo at Scotland Yard, roused into a state of feverish activity..yesterday converted itself by a tremendous effort into a gigantic turkey-cock.
- 1922 F. S. Fitzgerald [Let.](#) 18 June (1964) 164 Tom Boyd wrote me that Bridges had been a dodo about some Y.M.C.A. man.
- 1950 A. Wilson (*title*) Such darling dodos.
- 1904 H. O. Sturgis [Belchamber](#) iv. 51 The Radicalism of Mill..is as dead as the dodo.
- 1935 [Ann. Reg. 1934](#) ii. 305 References appearing in the London newspapers to the effect that ‘war debts are as dead as the Dodo’ were cabled to the American press.
- 1960 [Guardian](#) 24 Mar. 11/1 Mr. Menzies..refused a request for a boycott..saying he had hoped this ‘was as dead as a dodo’.

The Google Ngram chart below shows how the expression “dead as a dodo” compares favourably with other animal-related expressions such as “play possum” and “go cold turkey”.



C. Image distinctiveness

The dodo is a distinct and easily-recognized bird, with a domed back, large hooked beak, and tiny wings. It is visually unlike any other current bird emoji. The dodo is also very distinct from the dove, which is the only other existing emoji for a bird belonging to the family Columbidae, because the dove is usually portrayed in flight whereas a dodo cannot fly (and looks as if it cannot fly).

D. Completeness

The dodo fills a gap in emoji for well-known extinct animals, and for animals that have a significant metaphorical usage.

E. Frequently requested

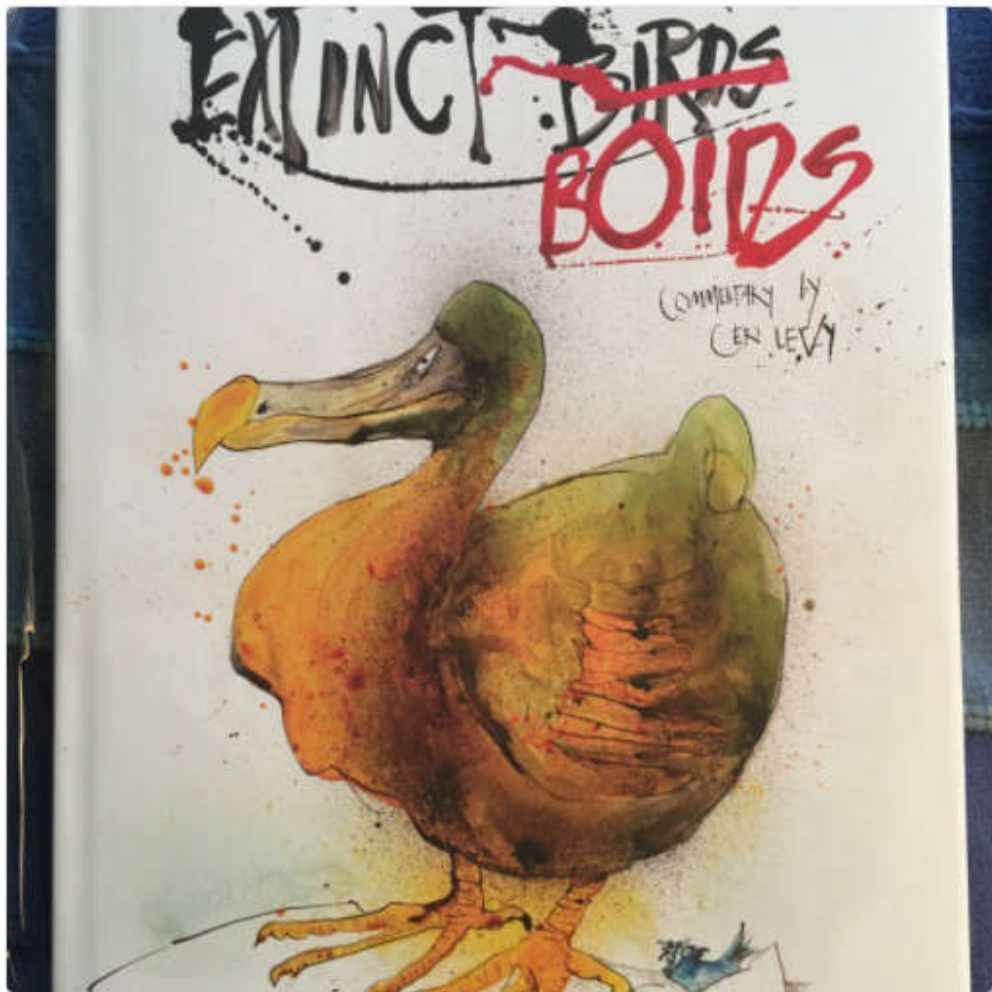
A dodo bird emoji is frequently requested on Twitter. A sample tweet bemoaning the lack of a dodo emoji is shown below.



Sadiah Qureshi @SadiahQureshi · May 31



A gorgeous book and a brilliant present for a historian of extinction. Where's the dodo emoji when you need it?



4. Selection factors — Exclusion

F. Overly specific

Not overly specific because the dodo does not belong to a more general class of extinct flightless birds used to represent extinction.

G. Open-ended

Not open-ended as there are no other extinct flightless birds with the same position in popular culture as the dodo. Other extinct flightless birds such as the Elephant Bird (*Aepyornis*), the Giant Moa (*Dinornis*) and the Terror Bird (*Phorusrhacos*) are not nearly as well known as the dodo, and do not have metaphorical usages.

H. Already representable

No. Some twitter users have resorted to using the chicken emoji as a substitute, but that is not an acceptable solution as it loses its meaning in transmission.

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

Images of a dodo have been used as company or brand logos, but such usages are marginal.

J. Transient

No. The Dodo has been an iconic animal for several hundred years.

K. Faulty comparison

No.

5. Sort location

A. Category: animal-bird

B. Emoji it should come after in that category: Dodo should come after dove.

6. Other information

None.