

Proposal for WOMAN'S FLAT SHOE Emoji

Submitted by: Floriane Hutchinson

Date: July 1, 2017

Abstract

I am requesting the addition of a WOMAN'S FLAT SHOE emoji to complement the existing footwear emoji category. A non-heeled version of the functional SHOE would fill a notable gap in the current emoji set as the stiletto, boot, and mule all possess substantial heels while the brogue is a classic men's style and the trainer/sneaker is undeniably sporty. Featuring a very thin heel, the casual FLAT SHOE style can but does not necessarily need to include a ribbon-like binding around the low top of the slipper. A FLAT SHOE would help pave the way to a more gender non-sexualized pictorial representation of the footwear category.

Images

Color Optional



Credit: Aphelandra Messer

Introduction

The ballet flat has enjoyed an almost 500-year old history and was originally conceived and designed to be non-gender specific, worn by men and women alike. Its global ubiquity—geographically and socio-economically—is undeniable. Unlike the high-heeled SHOE (which was introduced by royalty and used as an external sign of class and wealth, “well-heeled”) or the stiletto SHOE (an opulent and thin heeled version most often associated with fetishism and seduction and made popular in the 50s during the era of *Mad Men*, and most recently by *Sex in the City*), the dolly SHOE is perennial, democratic, inclusionary and non-ageist. Varying styles of flat SHOES are seen across the globe where the lasts and the upper silhouettes are similar and the material and adornments vary. The FLAT SHOE transcends fashion trends as evidenced by the fact

that it is available in cotton, leather, exotic skins, plastic (jelly), satin, and cotton and at all price points.

Names

SHOE (FLAT)

Selection Factors Inclusion

A. Compatibility

There is currently a a 5-SHOE line up. However, we need an alternative to the default stiletto emoji currently in place for WOMEN'S SHOE. None of the large platforms carry a flat shoe.

B. Expected Usage Level

The expected usage of shoe is already high. It is one of the basic vocabulary words taught in early childhood during the prime period of language acquisition and appears in all regions of the world.

“One, two, buckle my shoe”

“There was an old lady who lived in a shoe”

Furthermore, common parlance and expressions using the word shoe are multifunctional.

“If the shoe fits, wear it.”

“Waiting for the other shoe to drop”

“Put yourself in someone else’s shoes”

“Shoestring budget”

“Goody two shoes”

Furthermore, according to Instagram, the frequency of flat shoe related hashtags **exceeds 5M**. A breakdown is below:

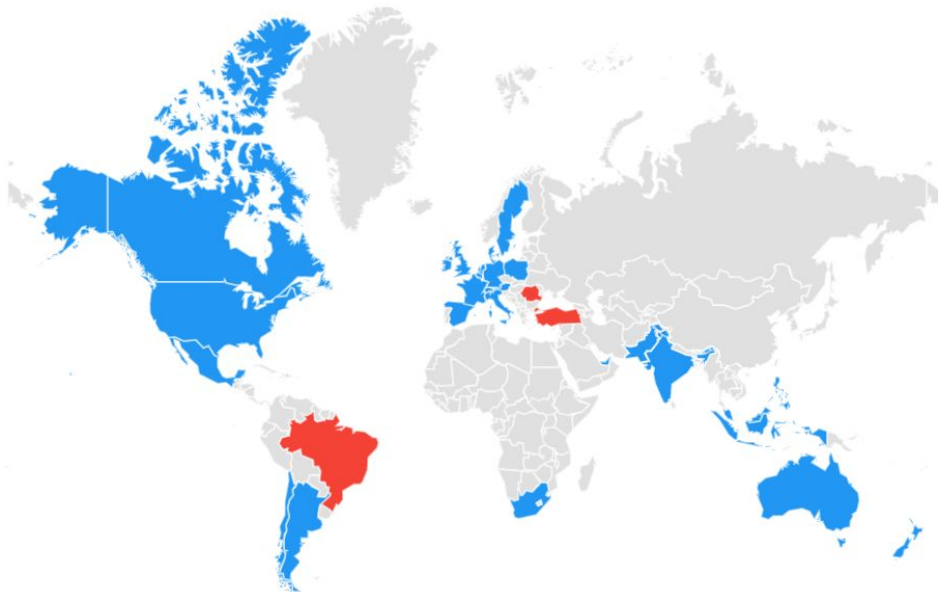
#stiletto: 1.1M

#flats + #flatshoes: 5.3M

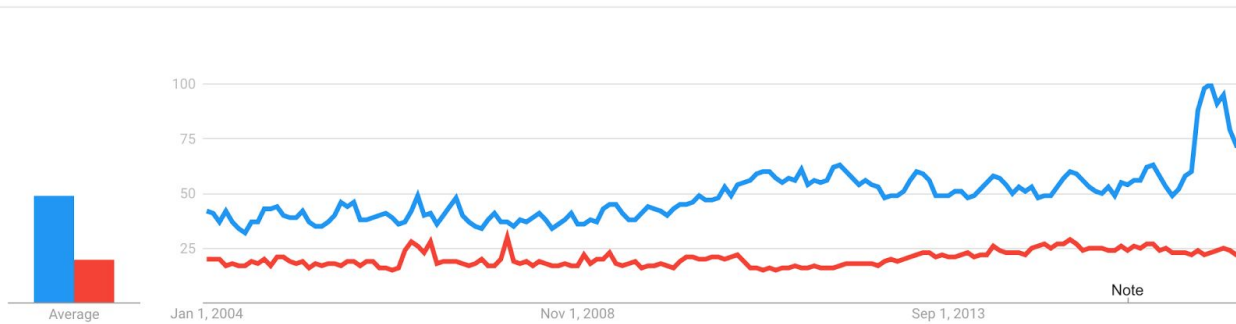
#highheels: 5.7M

#sneakers: 17.8M

In terms of interest levels via Google Trends, flat shoes and ballerina shoes are geographically significantly more pervasive than stilettos, which are isolated to three countries. Furthermore, a comparison between flat shoes + ballerina versus stilettos shows a very steady increase whereas stilettos have remained flat over the last decade.



Interest over time ?



C. Image Distinctiveness

The FLAT SHOE emoji would be visually distinctive from the stiletto heel model which currently occupies the default SHOE position. Given the majority of women wear flat shoes (only about 30% wear heels, and usually only to work), this emoji would be reflective of the reality of female shoe-wearing habits.

D. Completeness

The FLAT SHOE emoji would pictorially represent the largest shoe style worn by women across the globe.

E. Frequently Requested

Although a FLAT SHOE emoji is not highly requested, it is due to broader social and cultural forces at play. Currently, the high heeled SHOE ranks in the top 20% emojis used (<http://www.emoji.com/view/emoji/409/smileys-people/high-heeled-shoe>). Implicit bias can lay dormant forever until there is a course correction made.

Selection Factors Exclusion

F. Overly Specific

A FLAT SHOE emoji would not be overly specific and in fact veers toward the non-sexualized generic.

G. Open Ended

The FLAT SHOE is unique in that it is secondary nature to so many cultures globally and deserves to be acknowledged as an emoji in the footwear category.

H. Already Representable

Although one can arguably represent FLAT SHOE with options currently available in the category, each existing emoji is style specific: stiletto/high-heeled, mule, boot, brogue, and sneaker. Furthermore, within the female category specifically, all three emojis include heels which are neither representative of conventional shoes nor worn by the majority of women. The high-heeled stiletto is highly suggestive both due to shape, history/origins, and the colors used (bright vixen red).

Sort location

The Proposed sort location would in the Clothing and Accessories category, immediately preceding the HIGH-HEELED SHOE.

Other Information

Author Bios

Florie Hutchinson is a Palo Alto based mother of three young daughters who is an emoji enthusiast and would like to address implicit gender biases when she is not promoting artists and museums through media strategy work. In addition to offering an alternative to an erotic fire-engine red stiletto heel shoe, she hopes to raise women who are proud to wear flats and have an emoji that confirms that their height and leg lengths are perfect, as they are.