

The Unicode Consortium

Back in 1999, when the mobile internet first flickered to life on Japan's i-mode, email was confined to a snug 250 characters. Emoji are not American but were born in Japan. Shigetaka Kurita's horizontal rain and naval-ensign sun were among the first 176 emoji's offered.

There are now more than 2,700 emoji, and new ones are introduced every year. But which emoji appear on the major keypads: That is left to the whims of the Sanhedrin of emoji - the Unicode Consortium.

There are twelve dues-paying members with full voting rights make up the consortium: one each from Oracle, IBM, Microsoft, Adobe, Apple, Google, Facebook, Shopify, Netflix, the German software company SAP, the Chinese telecom company Huawei, and the government of Oman. UC Berkeley, as well as the governments of India and Bangladesh, have lower-level memberships. The consortium's chief task is to set the Unicode Standard that gives order to the way text is encoded and represented in the world's writing systems.

Since 2015 it has had to okay and reject religious symbols. And one day it may have to decide whether to endorse an emoji family with two gender-fluid parents, or, as is allowed in Oman, a family with one husband and four wives.

Getting approval takes persistence. Bearing the rules firmly in mind - your emoji can't represent a deity, a logo, or a specific person (living, dead, or fictional) - you must write a full-dress proposal for your prospective emoji, to which you're often asked to make revisions, as well as provide speculative data for frequency of use. You must also mock up the icon you're proposing in both color and black and white. Designers almost certainly won't use applicants' designs - emoji images are generally proprietary to the vendor (chiefly Apple or Google) - but they want to get an idea of how you envision it.

The next monthly meeting of the Vernon PC Users' Club will be Tuesday, November 13th, at 7:00 PM in the cafeteria at the Schubert Centre.

We start off every meeting with a 'TANSQ' session. Come check us out!

Call Betty at 250-309-1590 or Grace at 250-549-4318 for more information.