

**Title:** Proposal for New RGI Emoji Sequences: WASHING HANDS

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## **Abstract**

Handwashing saves lives. Agencies including WHO, UNICEF and CDC have invested huge amounts of resources on promoting simple handwashing practices. Knowledge and awareness around the importance of handwashing has escalated in recent months due to escalation of the coronavirus pandemic. There is already evidence that increased handwashing due to the coronavirus outbreak has reduced transmission of other infections. We seek to ride this wave of engagement, keeping handwashing on people's minds and sharing its importance. Handwashing seems simple but it matters: from birth, handwashing with soap can be the difference between life and death<sup>1</sup>. Up to 50% of cases of malnutrition around the world are due to poor hygiene and sanitation, and diarrhea is one of the biggest killers of children in poorer countries. Handwashing can reduce the risk of diarrhea by 40%. We can take handwashing for granted in wealthy countries where access to clean water and sanitation is easy. Yet around the world 900 million children can't wash their hands at school, 35% of hospitals have no running water or soap, and around 50% of households in the poorest countries lack access to clean water and soap<sup>2</sup>.

When it comes to health, combating malnutrition, and keeping children in school, handwashing promotion is the mainstay of viral control for Governments, agencies and experts. Millions are spent each month communicating online about the importance of handwashing and an emoji would be a very important step towards a common understanding of its importance throughout the world - particularly in developing countries. It is an everyday skill needed for hundreds of millions of children and families around the world, and a bedrock of them achieving a healthy, happy life. Handwashing will never go out of fashion.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/index.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/stories/infographic-get-facts-handwashing>

## 1. Identification

- A. CLDR short name: **WASHING HANDS**
- B. CLDR keywords: **hand-washing | handwash | wash-hands | hand**
- C. Code points:

 **U+1F9FC** BAR OF SOAP

**U+200D** ZERO WIDTH JOINER

 **U+1F44F** CLAPPING HANDS SIGN

Optionally, one of:

**U+1F3FB** EMOJI MODIFIER FITZPATRICK TYPE-1-2













**U+1F3FC** EMOJI MODIFIER FITZPATRICK TYPE-3

**U+1F3FD** EMOJI MODIFIER FITZPATRICK TYPE-4

**U+1F3FE** EMOJI MODIFIER FITZPATRICK TYPE-5

**U+1F3FF** EMOJI MODIFIER FITZPATRICK TYPE-6

## 2. Images

|  | 144px   | 72px  | 36px  | 18px  |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| Color<br>no skin tone<br>modifier                    |  |  |  |  |
| Color<br>with skin tone<br>modifier<br>(medium-dark) |  |  |  |  |
| Black and White                                      |  |  |  |  |

Handwashing emoji images by [lemi.travel](https://lemi.travel) are licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

### 3. Sort location.

Category: **hands after 1f44f clapping hands**

### 4. (leave blank)

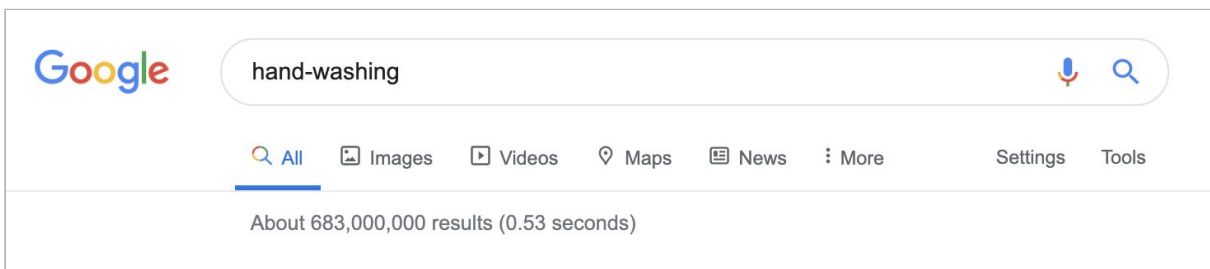
### 5. Selection factors — Inclusion.

#### A. Compatibility

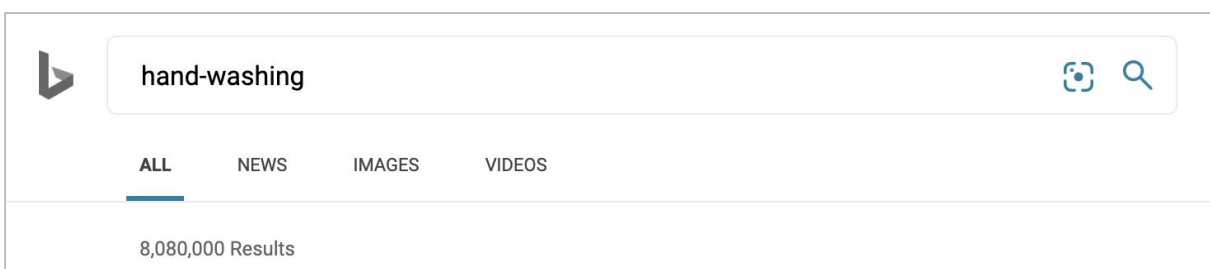
Twitter have implemented as a Twitter emoji using the hashtag #safehands and #handwashing recommended by the World Health Organization.

#### B. Expected usage level

- Frequency
  - **B.1.a Google Search**



- **B.1.b Bing Search**

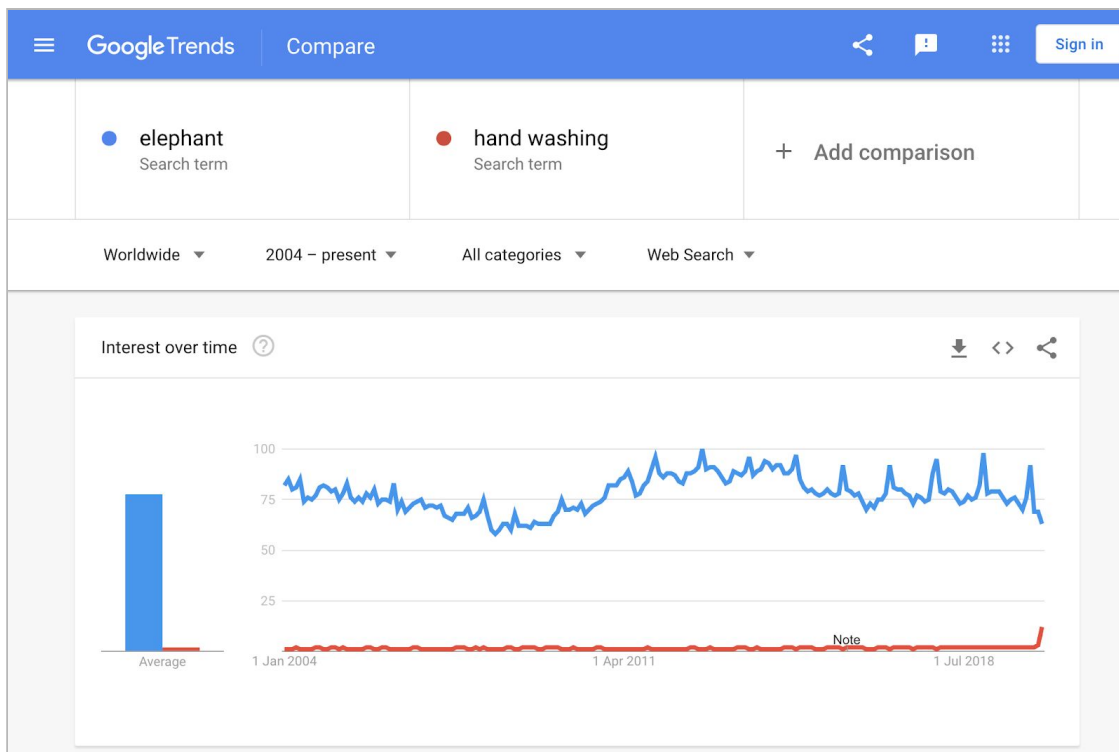


### ■ B.1.c Google Video Search

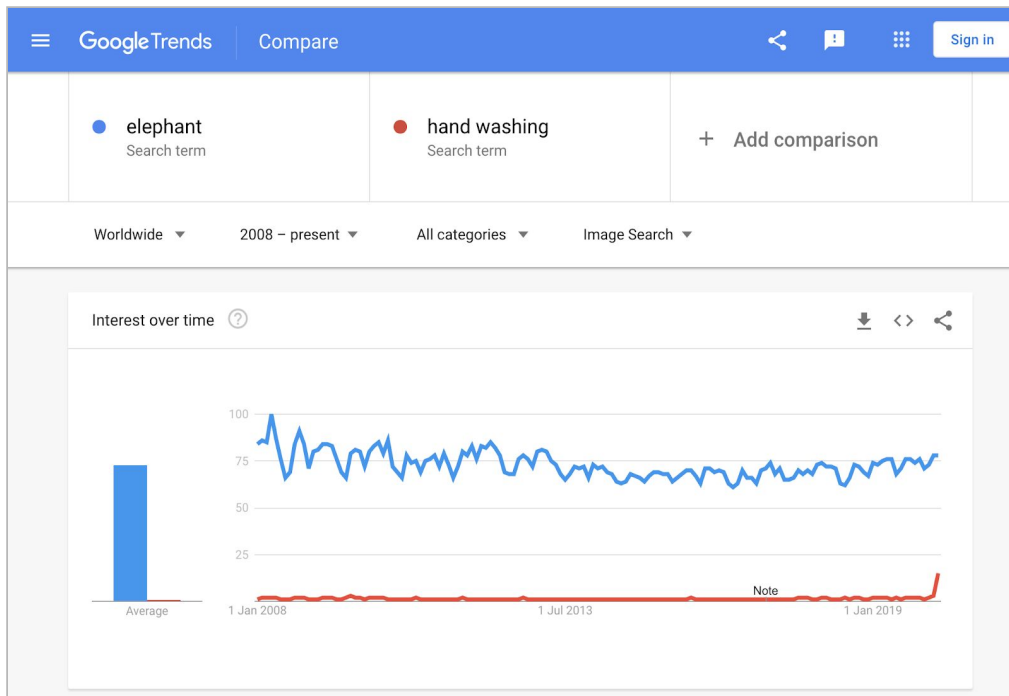
The screenshot shows a Google search for 'hand-washing' with the 'Videos' tab selected. The search results are as follows:

- Handwashing - Clean Hands Save Lives | CDC**  
https://www.cdc.gov › handwashing  
Jan 14, 2020 - Uploaded by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)  
Handwashing can help prevent illness. It involves five simple and effective steps (Wet, Lather, Scrub, Rinse ...)
- WHO: How to handwash? With soap and water - YouTube**  
https://www.youtube.com › watch  
Oct 20, 2015 - Uploaded by World Health Organization (WHO)  
Hand hygiene, either with soap and water or with alcohol-based handrub, is one of the best ways to avoid ...
- How to wash your hands - NHS**  
https://www.nhs.uk › Live Well › Healthy body  
Washing your hands is one of the simplest ways you can protect yourself and others from illnesses such as ...

### ■ B.1.d Google Trends: Web Search



### ■ B.1.e Google Trends: Image Search



#### ■ Multiple usages

Metaphorically to wash your hands of someone or something is to say or show that you do not want to be involved with them and that you are not responsible for them.

#### ■ Use in sequences

Not available.

#### ■ Breaking new ground

Yes. We believe handwashing is conceptually different to existing emojis, it represents an action as opposed to existing cleanliness emoji such as "bar of soap" or "shower" which only represent the objects involved in the action.

### C. Distinctiveness

There are 6 existing emojis in the “hands” category where both hands are visible. The proposed emoji is distinct from all of them. It is closest in appearance to the “clapping hands” emoji and there is a risk of confusion at small sizes due to the small “sound” triangles used to indicate clapping. However we believe the large blue water bubbles mitigates against confusion, similar to existing hand-prop emojis being clearly distinguishable from hand emojis.

| <b>hands</b>     |                         |   |                        |
|------------------|-------------------------|---|------------------------|
| <b>No</b>        | <b>Code</b>             | <b>Sample</b>   | <b>CLDR Short Name</b> |
| 174              | <a href="#">U+1F44F</a> |    | clapping hands         |
| 175              | <a href="#">U+1F64C</a> |    | raising hands          |
| 176              | <a href="#">U+1F450</a> |    | open hands             |
| 177              | <a href="#">U+1F932</a> |    | palms up together      |
| 178              | <a href="#">U+1F91D</a> |   | handshake              |
| 179              | <a href="#">U+1F64F</a> |  | folded hands           |
| <b>hand-prop</b> |                         |   |                        |
| <b>No</b>        | <b>Code</b>             | <b>Sample</b>   | <b>CLDR Short Name</b> |
| 180              | <a href="#">U+270D</a>  |  | writing hand           |
| 181              | <a href="#">U+1F485</a> |  | nail polish            |
| 182              | <a href="#">U+1F933</a> |  | selfie                 |

### D. Completeness

This is an iconic representation of an action which is common and important to all of humanity.

## 6. Selection factors — Exclusion.

### A. Petitions or “frequent requests”

- We note that a previous request was rejected as “already representable”.
- However we believe that implementing this as a Emoji ZWJ sequence is the right approach
- There is strong interest and advocacy for this proposal from a range of stakeholders including small businesses who want to promote good hygiene amongst staff and customers, NGOs, and medical education professionals.
- The addition of hand hygiene emojis has been the subject of [scientific study](#)<sup>3</sup>.

### B. Overly Specific

- We do not believe this to be overly specific. It captures an action which cannot be communicated with a current single emoji.

### C. Open-ended

- It is unlikely that this would lead to additional “washing body-part” emojis such as “washing nose U+1F443)” or “washing tongue (U+1F445)” or “washing mechanical leg (U+1F9BF)” since only washing of hands is typically mandated by clinical guidelines to stop the spread of infectious diseases.

### D. Already representable

- Yes, which is why this is being proposed as a ZWJ sequence

### E. Logos, brands, UI icons, signage, specific people, specific landmarks, deities

- Not applicable as per instructions for ZWJ sequences.

### F. Transient

- Not applicable as per instructions for ZWJ sequences.

### G. Faulty comparison

- No, we are not proposing this in comparison to other emojis but in its own right.

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<sup>3</sup> Lotfinejad, N., Assadi, R., Aelami, M.H. et al. [Emojis in public health and how they might be used for hand hygiene and infection prevention and control](#). Antimicrob Resist Infect Control 9, 27 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13756-020-0692-2>

H. Exact Images



- Not applicable as per instructions for ZWJ sequences.

I. Region Flags Without Code

- Not applicable.

**7. Other information**

Note the Twitter version of the emoji uses more soapy bubbles. We recommend for general interchange the use of more watery blue bubbles which are clearer at small sizes.

| Twitter   | Proposed   |
|---|--|
|  The Twitter handwashing emoji shows two yellow hands being washed with pink and blue bubbles. |  The proposed handwashing emoji shows two yellow hands being washed with blue bubbles. |

WHO, UNICEF and the CDC support the proposal to Unicode.

This is CDC's formal statement:

“During the current COVID-19 public health crisis, handwashing is a key prevention message from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. We strongly request that Unicode develop a handwashing emoji, with diverse options showing soapy hands under running water. The addition of such an emoji would help to promote universal hygiene and disease prevention around the world. CDC joins UNICEF and others in this request.”