Universal Multiple-Octet Coded Character Set
International Organization for Standardization
Organisation internationale de normalisation
Международная организация по стандартизации

We appreciate the effort taken in document *__N3607__ Towards an encoding of symbol characters used as emoji* in terms of adding more useful symbols to the UCS. For example, symbols for common UI interface elements (STOPWATCH, SPEAKER, etc.) seem well qualified for encoding as characters in the UCS, based on usage.

However, the Emoji proposal (documents **N3582** *Proposal for Encoding Emoji Symbols*, N3583 *Emoji Symbols Proposed for New Encoding* and N3585 *Emoji Sources*) has a fundamentally different purpose than *__N3607__ Towards an encoding...* does. The purpose of the Emoji proposal is to encode a set of UCS characters for interoperability with emoji character sets that (1) are in extremely wide use in mobile devices and increasingly in email and other text interchange on the Internet (for more information on usage, see **N3582** *Proposal for Encoding Emoji Symbols*), and (2) have source mapping tables to establish the identity of the characters. Thus we feel that the most effective way forward is for the authors of *__N3607__ Towards an encoding...* to separate out their additions into a separate, stand-alone document where their proposed additional symbols can be considered on their merits.

Once characters are in the UCS, they are in some sense all equal. However, the origin of the character *is* often vital. For example, the CJK Ideographs are defined in the UCS in terms of their mapping to source sets (Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and others); similarly, the U+270D (✍) WRITING HAND is defined by reference to its original source, the Dingbats font designed by the famous German typographer Hermann Zapf. Encoding such characters is *very* different in kind than encoding a new character for a medieval manuscript symbol, for example. Changes in the glyph or character name that would make the character unrecognizably different from the source sets is a serious mistake. It would be as if we had taken in a particular ideograph from the

GB2312-80 Chinese encoding standard and changed the glyph to make it unrecognizably different, or changed the WRITING HAND to show a glyph for a hand at a computer keyboard.

Over a number of years, the Unicode Symbols group has carefully worked out the issues of resolving the different source sets for emoji to come up with a comprehensive set that maintained the needed semantics and presented images that would be sufficiently representative to be useful. The resulting unified set has support by the carriers in question. It provides a timely solution both for them and for the many companies, organizations, and individuals that need to work with these characters. The review process has been conducted within the Unicode consortium, and then publicly since November 2008, providing extensive opportunities for resolving issues. As for proposals for encoding of unified CJK ideographs, a crucial part of the proposal is the mapping to the source sets, and that source-mapping information is provided with the proposal in **N3585** *Emoji Sources*.

This does not mean that we expect the characters in **N3582** *Proposal for Encoding Emoji Symbols* to be standardized without further review, feedback, and modifications. There are certainly changes in glyph, name, or location that could result in improvements. However, we believe that such suggestions are best handled via the normal process — ballot comments — where member bodies have time to study the issues and ensure that the suggested changes do not cause problems for interoperability or in the intended function of these characters in the applicable domains of usage.

We agree that document *N3607 Towards an encoding...* does have some useful suggestions for possible changes to glyphs, names, or locations for the characters proposed by document **N3582** *Proposal for Encoding Emoji Symbols*. And those can be accommodated using the normal process, as described above. In addition, we would welcome a new version of document *N3607 Towards an encoding...* separately proposing additional symbols in semantic domains related to the emoji symbols, and providing sources for those characters, to help in their evaluation. The justifications for adding such symbols would not, however, be because of interoperability but rather for other reasons that can be spelled out in more detail in a revised document.