New emojis 2024

Two steps to visual writing

So what's next?

Pictomoji
Pictograms & Emojis
for Language

Jochen Gros

108 emojis announced for 2024 can change direction from left to right, so you can enter, for example: go to hotel. But the question of who goes remains, because abstract terms like *I* and *you* need to be represented by highly abstract pictograms, or pictograms as emojis - *pictomojis* for short.

You

I

We go to hotel.

 These four pictograms have been announced as emojis. Up to now, 25 emojis - all blonde - have not been able to represent the word *family* for general use, similar to a spoken language. So let's regard the new *pictomojis* as another step towards an emoji language with more pictograms to represent words and phrases. The style of these pictograms can vary, as can the typography of the letters.

 family

adult *mother, father*

father

State-of-the-Art in Visual Writing

Visual writing today means typing words with the option to insert 'synonyms' signs. This input method is used when typing Chinese or writing messages on WhatsApp. It can handle any kind of character that is linked to a word, but pictograms would often be closer to the word than emojis, as you can see in the example of *mother*, which is *muqin* 母亲 in Chinese.

You

We'll trigger full emoji sentences.

Me
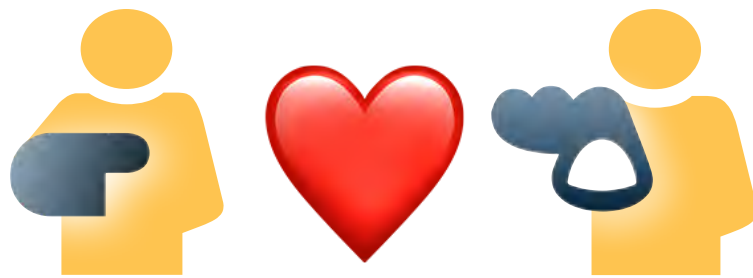
I like you. 👤🧑‍🦰👍👤😎

👤👱🏽‍♀️ Connote identity?

How would you like to write:

🧑💪🤷 😂 I am happy.

🧑💪🤔 You are a liar.

we

we

We are Europe.

me

you

Possessive Pronouns

有 *hand on meat:* have

have
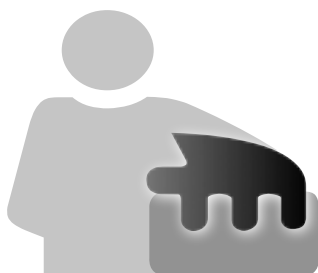
Genitive

Granny's dog is dead.

Possessive Pronouns

my dog 🧑 🐶
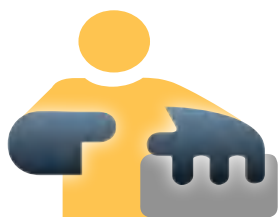
your money 🧑 💰

our chicken 👥 🐓 🐓
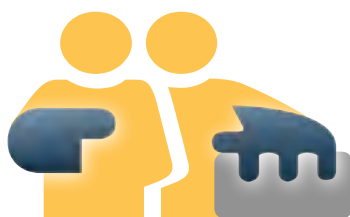
Auxiliary Verbs

要 *two hands pointing to the mid of a woman*: want, wish, desire, demand

want_{pizza}
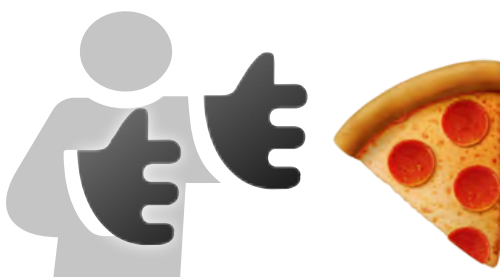
I want you to kiss me.

❤️ 🧑‍🤝 🗣️

🤩 🧑‍🤝 🛥️

desire yacht

ask for 🙏 🧑‍🤝
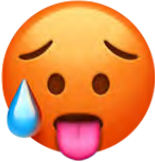
demand 👮 🧑‍🤝

need money 🔥 🧏💨 💰

need love 🔥 🧏💨 ❤️

need food 🧬 🧏💨 🍽️

need water 🥵 🧏💨 🚰

must have ID
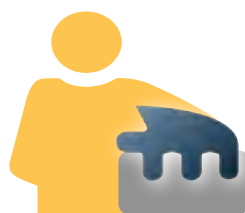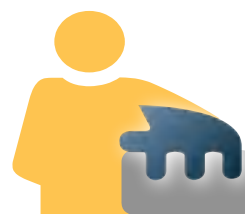
prohibit fishing

allow swimming

I cannot snorkel. 🙆💪🙅🤿

Yes we can. 😔🤼💪

Verbs

are almost naturally represented by animation or quasi-animation, as in comics.

👋 to wave

speak 🗣, clap 👏, sleep 😴

🎲 to dice

cook ((👨‍🍳, eat ((🍽, buy ((🛒 etc.

💬 to speak, word

scream 😱💬, joke 🤡💬, bark 🐶💬

💭 to think, thought

dream 😴💭, fear 😱💭, believe 😇💭

👀💭 perceive

Emojis or pictograms? 🚶‍♀️ ➡️ 🏭

go 🚶➡️🎣

stride 🦚🚶

march 👮🚶

🍒🚶👎 Cherries go bad.

come home 🛣️🚶🏠

make 🧏

drum 🧏🥁

vote 🧏🗳️

cook 👨‍🍳🧏

try 🐤🧏

give books me

give money

get peanuts

get tired

Tenses

⏳ future

⏳ present

⏳ past

⏳😢 crying

eating ⏳🍽️🔪

ate 🍽️🔪⏳

I have eaten. 🧑🧑🍰🍴🍽️🔪⏳

will eat ⏳🍴🍽️🔪

I will have eaten. 🧑⏳🧑🍰🍴🍽️🔪⏳

weather forecast

news

history

Questions

when 🤷 ⌚

Where are you? 🤷‍♂️ 🗺️ 👉 🗣️

How much is the bag? 🤷‍♀️ |||||2315| 👉 👜

What way to hotel? 🤷‍♀️ 🛣️ ➡️ 🏨

🤷‍♀️ 🔢 how manny

You 🧖😂🤷‍♀️ happy ?

Imperative

You must

Be silent! 🤫

Dont cry! 😢

Buy American! 🛒🇺🇸

Meaning from Context

Go ahead 🌬️🧍‍♂️ 🚶 🚶

traveler 🧳🧍

suitcase 🧳🧍

travel sick 🧳🧍 🤮

destination 🧳🧍 🎯

friend 👥

single 😀 👥̸

girlfriend 👩‍🦰 👥

lonesome 🙁 👥̸

lonely 👥̸̸

member

leader

football club 🏈

gang 😈

gangster 😈

Adjectives

young 🐥   evil 😈   lazy 🦥

good 👍   hot 🌶️   busy 🐝

waterproof 💦🛡️

fireproof 🔥🛡️   ☀️🛡️   🦠🛡️

big _{mac} 🙌🍔

cheap 🤷 ||||||2315|

rich 🙌💰   poor 🤷💰

many 🙌 123 34   few 🤷 123 34

far 🙌🛣   near 🤷🛣

Dear 🤳 friend 🧑‍🤝‍🧑

true love 🤳 ❤️

really good 🤳 👍

🤳🦋 exited, in love

🤳🦋 horny

Substantives

🔑 🏠 🍺 🦆 💊 🪑 🔩 🏭 🚆 🐑 ✂️ ⛺

theatre 🎭 🏛️

university 🧑‍🎓 🏛️ 🧑‍🎓

peanut**s** 🥜   tree**s** 林 🌳🌳

forrest 森 🌳🌳🌳

kitchen 🚪👨‍🍳

car workshop 🚗🚪🛠️

mall 🚪🛒🛒

cafe ☕🚪🍰

Prepositions

at home ▶️ 🏠

from NY 🚶‍♀️ ⬅️ 🗽🌃

to school 🚶 ➡️ 👨‍🏫

lock down 🔒⬇️

on board ↩️ 🛳️

travel around 🧳🚶 🔄 🌍

give away 🧑‍🦱😊 ↗️ 🛣️

come together 🛣️🚶‍♂️ ➡️ 👥👥

Go green! 🫅

🫅 🥬

👤👍 🐓🐓

organic eggs 👤👍 🥚🥚
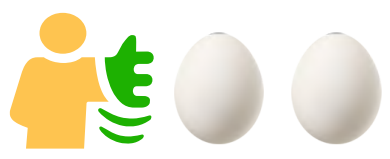
sustainable forrest 👤👍 🌳🌳🌳

veggie 🧑

I'm green 🫅

Sex and Crime?

sexy bikini 🧍‍♀️👙

horny 🫃🔥

fluid 🫃🎭

🫃))

shy 🫣🙈

genital 🫣

venereal disease 🫣🦠
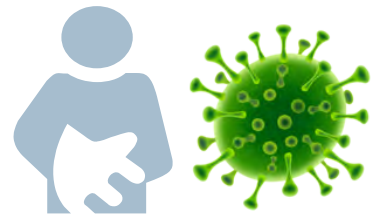
bladder 🫙🫣 pee 🫣🍷

🫣🦥

Emojis can't be naked.
Pictograms can.

paradise 🧍🌴🧍
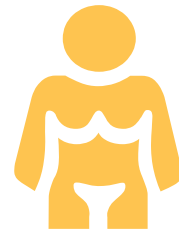
commit 😈👤👍

steal 😈👤👍💰

burgle 😈👤👍🚪

shoplifting 😈👤👍🛒

😈👤🔫

Review Epitomes and Metaphors

art 🔵

artist 🔵🧍

🧬🔵 talent

architecture 🏛️🔵

👗🔵 fashion

freedom

free election

free admission

liberal art

Napoleon

band stallion

boss
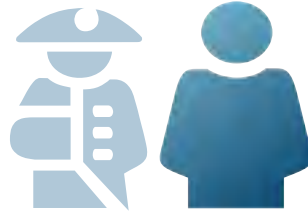
chief of staff

captain

Summaries of 🧑‍🎓💭 Theory

1. It's the economy and technology, stupid

It's the economy of handwriting that has overtaken the hieroglyphics, and it's digital technology that enables a rich, yet cheap, fast and easy-to-use representation of 'modern hieroglyphics', for example when typing words on WhatsApp and entering 'synonymous' emojis with just a tap. But while this *emoji-typing* indicates the current state of visual writing, the realistic style of emojis still limits the vocabulary to concrete terms like *house* 🏠, *hotel* 🏨 and *hospital* 🏥. Language, however, needs concrete as well as abstract terms, and so visual language needs not only emojis, but also pictograms to represent terms as abstract as *human* 👤. Experimental research should therefore consider and anticipate, as far as possible, the further evolution of visual language with more letter-sized pictograms that can be used together with emojis or as emojis, here called *pictomojis*. And then it seems likely that just a few pictograms for abstract terms like *I* and *you* will trigger the development of a visual language, much like a natural language evolves - it all starts as soon as you are able to type your first full sentence, which could be: 🤱❤️🤱.

2. A Puzzle of Pictograms and Emojis

For different reasons, pictograms and emojis are still on the threshold of language. Although Otto Neurath developed a pictogram language called *Isotype* almost a century ago, it was only the pictogram that caught on worldwide, not the language. What it lacked is only evident today in the cheap, easy and widely available use of emojis. Emojis, however, are still used much like emoticons, i.e. without the idea of an emoji language. Although they represent a substantial vocabulary from *Apple* and *Bus*, to *Yoga* and *Zebra*, they do not allow for full sentences, because near-realistically designed emojis cannot represent abstract terms. Take, for example, the personal pronouns *I* and *You*. How should emojis embody these terms? With what gender, age, colour, clothing, hairstyle, etc.? To do so, they would have to ignore all individual characteristics, but they cannot, otherwise they would become pictograms. So isn't it time to think of pictograms and emojis equally as visual characters, and treat them like puzzle pieces that fit together, each with its own advantages? And what are these advantages? Emojis are colourful, attractive and popular, they come pre-installed in digital fonts and can be used in all operating systems by typing 'synonymous' words. Pictograms, on the other hand, are best suited to represent abstract terms and thus expand the vocabulary and enable full sentences - as has already been proven in the history of pictograms, see *Isotype* (Otto Neurath) and *Pictoperanto* (Jochen Gros).

3. Dialectic Unity

The technology-driven evolution of visual language, which dates back to the printing of simple pictograms, has split in the digital revolution into a parallel 'vocabulary' and the separate use of abstract pictograms and near-realistic emojis. In fact, however, both types of visual characters belong to the same family of 'new hieroglyphics', and in their own way they embody a dialectical unity of the abstract and the concrete, the rational and the emotional. Thus, a true pictorial script is only possible when both historical lines of visualising language are considered as a whole and brought together. In terms of graphic design, this means that the next and decisive step in sentence building is only possible with letter-sized pictograms that can be used alongside emojis and in line with letters. And in doing so, emojis, pictograms and letters, which are fundamentally different in their semantic function, must each retain their own characteristics in a distinctive typography, but be seen and understood as a semantic unit, almost like a patchwork or a triad.

4. 🧑 and 🧑 get the Rosetta Stone Rolling

Given that writing technology has shaped culture, from the invention of the alphabet to the mechanical typewriter, the question today is: what happens now that the computer has become not only a better typewriter but also a perfect sign writer - as we can see in the use of emojis? So, shouldn't some kind of emoji pidgin have emerged by now? Well, it doesn't seem quite that simple. A project as fundamental as the introduction of a new visual language requires a radical rethinking. But this kind of rethinking usually happens very slowly, or only after a lead time, even when the time is right. A good example is the history of emojis, where a few emoticons popularised the use of signs in emails and chats before Apple, Google & Co. could risk to jump on the bandwagon. Now, of course, it seems very doubtful whether the next step towards visual writing can, will or should also be taken in the same way? But it could be, since many typographers can create a digital font with pictograms and figure out how to use them together with emojis. And then it seems quite likely that just a few pictograms, such as those for *I* and *you*, will trigger a kind of 'grassroots movement', especially in emails and chats, where linguistic structures can emerge in much the same way as in a natural language. Ultimately, however, visual language will only become commonplace if the stone keeps rolling until it hits the UNICODE consortium, where Apple, Google & Co. set the global standard for all letters and characters, including emojis and pictograms.

5. Writing Transcends Language

Now that the technologically driven development of visual characters in the form of pictograms and emojis has reached the frontier of language, such questions also arise: Who is really interested in illustrating or replacing words by visual signs, and to what extent? Which application might benefit most: email or chat, news or advertising, children's books or poetry? And what are the likely social, political and cultural issues? In general, all that can be said for now is that visual signs challenge to the most basic human cognitive faculty. And now visual terms add emotions and connotations to the verbal terms that are impossible to write with letters. So the interplay of pictograms, emojis and letters will result in a multi-layered semantics of writing. This may be hard to imagine when looking at childish emojis and experimental pictograms, but as we move further towards visual writing, we are dealing with a hybrid writing, in which the meaning of a sentence could result from a synergy of three semantic categories: pictograms, emojis and letters. In other words, writing could gradually transcend verbal language, until one day it could be said: "Whereof we cannot speak, thereof we must remain silent" - or write about it in a triad of characters.

Future Options

1. Artistic typography and nonlinear sentences.

I love you

2. 🎞 Animated pictograms & emojis

Hugs and kisses

3. Pictogram handwriting

References

Pictomoji is based on *Pictoperanto*, which itself refers to an article published as *A language of icons*.

Gros, J.: A language of icons. In: Ryan Abdullah, and Roger Hübner (Eds.). Pictograms Icons & Signs – A Guide to Information Graphics, pp. 226-237. Thames & Hudson, New York 2006.
German edition 2005: Jochen Gros: Entwicklung einer Icon-Sprache, in: Piktogramme und Icons, Pflicht oder Kür? Rayan Abdullah und Roger Hübner [Hrsg.], Verlag Hermann Schmidt Mainz.
Japanese edition 2006: ISBN 4-86100-387-3
Chinese edition 2007: ISBN 978-7-5006-7441-2

Pictoperanto, printed in 201, is a visual language with an almost complete grammar in different typographies. Its input system was tested before as *icon-typing*.

Jochen Gros: Pictoperanto – Pictograms, Icons, Pictorial Fonts. Norderstedt 2011. German and English. ISBN 978-3-8423-7864-3.

Jochen Gros: Icon Typing. Pictograms and Icons in OpenType. German and English, Norderstedt 2006. ISBN 3-8334-3261-6.

With the rise of emojis, it seemed only natural to combine the pictograms of *Pictoperanto* with state-of-the-art emojis to illustrate the idea of *Pictomoji*.

Gros, J: Visual Writing at the State-of-the-Art. In: M.M. Soares et al. 2021. HCII Lecture Notes in Computer Science, vol 12779, pp. 385–400, 2021. Proceedings: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-78221-4_26
Short and revised paper PDF.

Further references: emoji-language.com

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