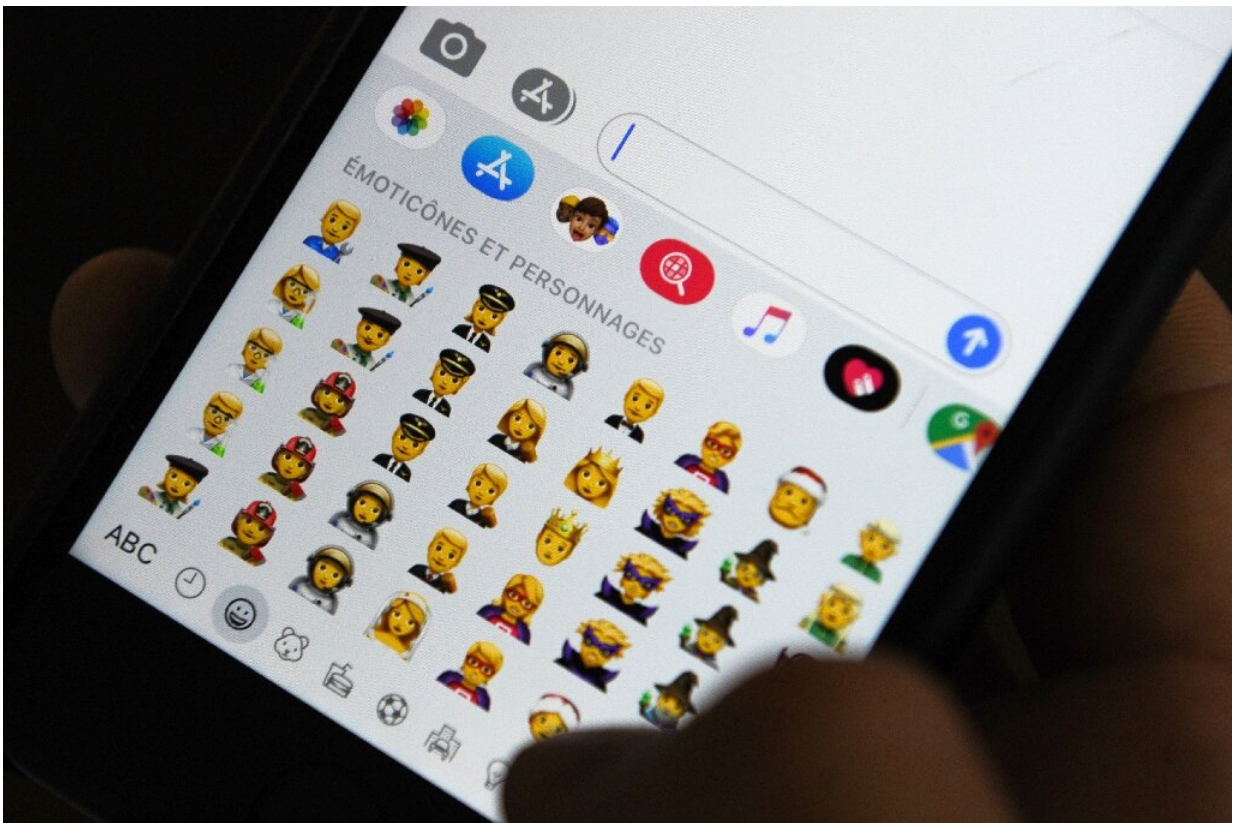


Make glasses cool with new emojis, urges UK schoolgirl

November 3 2022, by Helen ROWE



There are currently only three emojis with glasses.

British schoolgirl Lowri Moore is just 13 but has achieved a lot in her short life, championing children who like her wear glasses.

Aged nine, she persuaded Disney to create a bespectacled heroine for the first time, in the hit film "Encanto".

Her #GlassesOn campaign has meanwhile struck a chord with thousands of young people and their parents around the world.

Now she has another US giant in her sights.

The teenager from Nottinghamshire, central England, is urging the body responsible for all new emojis to give people the option to put glasses on them.

She says many people believe that children being stigmatised for wearing glasses is a thing of the past.

But she argues many children still resist wearing their glasses for fear of appearing "different or uncool".

Research shows children with spectacles are over 35 percent more likely to be bullied at school, and not wearing them can have far-reaching consequences.

"We are in touch with a professor who works in Botswana to give children glasses and he said that most of the children that get glasses don't want to wear them for fear of being different and not cool," Lowri told AFP.

'Biggest fan'



Aged just nine, Lowri got Disney to make its first heroine with glasses, in the film 'Encanto'

She said that without glasses you need, "you won't be able to learn and that will limit your job options and you will probably really struggle in life all because you didn't wear your glasses. That's not fair."

Lowri's latest campaign was sparked when her mother Cyrilyn tried to find an emoji relevant to her daughter.

"She was looking for an emoji that would represent me but all she found was a nerd.

"She kept on looking and there was a granny and a teacher but obviously that doesn't represent me," she said.

Lowri said it was great there were some bespectacled emojis, but three was not enough.

"It's not really positive so we're just asking for the option of putting glasses onto already existing emojis," she said after handing in copies of her letter at the London offices of tech giants Google and Meta on Wednesday.

Lowri's campaigning began in 2019 when she wrote to Disney calling for more characters with glasses in their films.

Two years later, the "Encanto" character Mirabel Madrigal hit the big screen.

Director Jared Bush revealed he had been inspired by the schoolgirl's letter, telling her: "I am your biggest fan, I'm so impressed by you."

The director also said he had wanted to let her know much earlier, but had to keep it secret until the movie was in the bag.



'If you struggle to see, you struggle to learn', said Jessica Thompson of the IAPB, which works in over 100 countries worldwide.

'Negative stereotypes'

In her latest letter, Lowri praised the Unicode Consortium, the non-profit organisation based in California that oversees new emojis, for offering users more choice.

But she urged them to go further.

"I'd love to see the option to add glasses to face emojis, similar to changing skin colour or hair colour as you have already made available," she wrote.

Having the current "nerd" emoji as the only one available for young people could be "damaging as it helps to confirm the negative stereotype and stigma that we are trying hard to destroy", she added.

Lowri's campaigning success was recognised earlier this year when she was named "Campaigner of the Year" by the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB).

Failing to wear glasses can prevent children's eyes from developing normally and lead to avoidable eye conditions.

Jessica Thompson of the IAPB, which works in over 100 countries worldwide, said Lowri's advocacy was helping to highlight the damage to children's futures of not wearing glasses.

"If you struggle to see, you struggle to learn," she told AFP.

Wearing glasses was the single "most effective" health intervention for schoolchildren, "reducing the odds of failing a class by 44 percent", she added.

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