

Emoji Submission: ERASER



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1 Abstract

This is a proposal for the addition of an ERASER emoji (✏️) to the Unicode character set. An *eraser* emoji completes the set of stationery emoji and can be used to express several meanings.

2 Introduction

Erasers, also known as *rubbers*, are small pieces of rubber or plastic and an essential tool in school, office and visual arts.

In 1770, the British mathematical instrument-maker Edward Nairne discovered that a natural mass from the india gum tree – called rubber – can be used to wipe pencil strokes from paper and started to sell small rubber cubes for this purpose. His invention was mentioned by the theologian and chemist Joseph Priestley [3, p. xv] in the same year. Today, rubbers are normally made of synthetic instead of natural materials and are often attached to the top end of pencils. Erasers are not only used to correct spelling mistakes, but also to remove auxillary lines on drawings or other artworks.

Vendors may choose to implement a stand-alone rubber or a pencil top with an attached rubber. Like its counterpart, the Writing Hand character (U+270D), the eraser may appear at the end of a word or a sentence to indicate that that certain word is considered to be erased. To make this feature available to both LTR and RTL scripts, it *should* be possible to swap the direction of the rubber emoji, either with BiDi properties or with a ZWJ sequence as proposed in UTS #51 Section 2.5.

3 Names

3.1 CLDR short name

Recommended name: eraser

3.2 CLDR keywords

Recommended keywords: rubber, artgum

4 Images

5 Selection Factors – Inclusion

5.1 Compatibility

Although some symbol fonts like Font Awesome[2] and the SAP UI5 Icon set[1] include an eraser emoji, but all vendors use the Private Use Area.

5.2 Expected usage level





Frequency The eraser has already been mentioned as a tool icon in ISO/IEC JTC1/SC 35 (L2/03-444) and is widely used in image manipulation programs like Paintbrush or GIMP, see 2. Despite of this broad distribution in different applications, there is still no character for the eraser, although other tools like pencil, paintbrush or scissors have one.

In figure 1 you can see that the terms “rubber” and “eraser” clearly enter the middle of the series of existing emoji in its topic area. This is a strong indicator for inclusion.

Multiple usages The main usage of the eraser emoji is to indicate the correction of a mistake. As mentioned above, the eraser can be attached after a word or a text to indicate a misspelled word that should be erased. In current “instant messenger language” this is sometimes done with the asterisk or with the replace syntax of the POSIX program SED. Similar to the interrobang it can also used to mark a word as irony. In a task list the eraser instead of the checkmark can indicate that an item is not required anymore. (Just scoring the item out would be ambiguous could be also mean that the item has actually been done.) As the term “rubber” is also a colloquial term for “condom” the emoji may also be have a suggestive meaning (safer sex), especially in combination with the aubergine (U+1F346). More usages can be found in section 6.3.

Use in Sequences It is possible to make use of ZWJ sequences to combine the eraser with other paper-related emoji. For example, you may add a small eraser in the bottom corner of several emoji like *clipboard* (U+1F4CB), *page facing up* (U+1F4C4) or *world map* (U+1F5FA U+FE0F) to show that you delete a personal task, some text from a manuscript or your travel plan from a map.

Example usage of the emoji:

- Sally really likes  loves apples!
- I finally erased him out of my life.  
- How can I delete my account? 

5.3 Image distinctiveness

To avoid confusion with the bar of soap (U+1F9FC), the glyph of the rubber emoji should either be attached on the top end of the pencil (as seen in most implementations

for the pencil (U+270F)) or be orange with a smaller blue area (which can be used to erase ink), see figure 5. If the latter option is used, the designer also has to keep care that the eraser glyph also looks distinct from the magnet (U+1F9F2), which may also appear as a bar magnet.

If the UPPER RIGHT PENCIL (U+2710) is ever implemented as an emoji, it should be kept care that it looks different to the new ERASER character. While the *upper right pencil* may have a rubber on its top, this is not mandatory, because its actual intention is the usage for ornaments and text borders in combination with the other pencil dings. To avoid confusion, the ERASER emoji should only show a part of the pencil or be depicted as a stand-alone eraser.

5.4 Completeness

There are already lots of stationery emoji (e. g. pencil, fountain pen, black nib, crayon, writing hand and paintbrush). However, there is no eraser yet. Adding an eraser to the Unicode standard allows a vendor-independent cross-platform encoding. The example glyph for the pencil (U+270F) already has an rubber attached on its top. Adding the eraser as a separate character completes the set.

5.5 Frequently requested

Figure 3 shows a selection of Twitter users who complain the lackage of an eraser emoji.

6 Selection Factors – Exclusion

6.1 Overly specific

As there are several different forms of erasers and the name of the emoji does not mention a special form, a eraser emoji is not overly specific.

6.2 Open-ended

The rubber enhances the set of the stationery emoji without opening the door for further office items. Just because a rubber is added, there is still no reason for a staple remover, a parabola stencil, a paperweight or other seldom-used office items. As you can see in Google Trends (figure 1) there is clearly a demand for erasers.

6.3 Already Representable

In Unicode 11.0 three related emoji were introduced: the sponge (U+1F9FD), the bar of soap (U+1F9FC) and the broom (U+1F9F9) which have in common that they all can be used to sweep or scrub something, but they have their special use cases: to clean surfaces, the human body or the floor. If you want to remove texts or drawings from paper, you require an eraser.

The figurative meaning of all these items has a different flavor. The sponge can be used to *brush something away* or to *remove make-up*, the bar of soap is usually connected to personal hygiene and the broom may be used to express a cleanup action in a broader sense.

Although the process of erasing something can already be represented with the wastebasket (U+1F5D1), that does not always apply. Whereas the broom and the wastebasket emoji may refer to the cleanup or the discardment of a whole thing (for example a project), the eraser can be used to express the fixup of single errors. As far as I investigated, there is no other existing emoji which is suitable to fulfill this purpose.

6.4 Logos, brands, UI icons, signage, specific people, deities

There are no well-known companies or brands which feature a rubber in their logo. After some research, I come to the conclusion that there is no current patent on the shape and appearance of the Pelikan BR40 eraser, so it will be fine to use it for inspiration. There are no official traffic or other signs which show a rubber. As the rubber is no person and there is also no known group which worships a rubber, there is also no problem here. The rubber, however, is used as a UI icon, especially, but not restricted to, image manipulation software. Because of the wide usage of that symbol, this does not matter.

6.5 Transient

Despite the ascension of e-mails and the concept of paperless offices, erasers are still an essential item in every pencil case. This is also supported by the constant demand without any fluctuations, as seen in figure 1.

6.6 Faulty Comparison

There are no known issues here.

7 Sort location

7.1 Category

Recommended category: writing

7.2 Emoji before

Recommended emoji before: pencil (U+270F)

8 Other Information

The attached reference glyphs are made available in the Public Domain: [black-white, color](#). The black-white reference emoji was made from scratch (the used font is URW

Chancery L Medium Italic) and the color emoji is a composition of two open cliparts ¹² and recolored to match the most common eraser design.

References

- [1] SAP AG. *SAP UI5 Icons – Eraser*. 2018. URL: https://sapui5.hana.ondemand.com/test-resources/sap/ui/core/Icon.html#__container367-name (visited on 03/08/2018).
- [2] Font Awesome. *Eraser Icon*. 2017. URL: <https://fontawesome.com/icons/eraser?style=solid> (visited on 02/10/2018).
- [3] J. Priestley. *A Familiar Introduction to the Theory and Practice of Perspective*. Eighteenth century collections online. J. Johnson and J. Payne, 1770. URL: <https://books.google.de/books?id=yh4PAAAAQAAJ>.

¹<https://openclipart.org/detail/289602/eraser-3>

²<https://openclipart.org/detail/182344/notes>

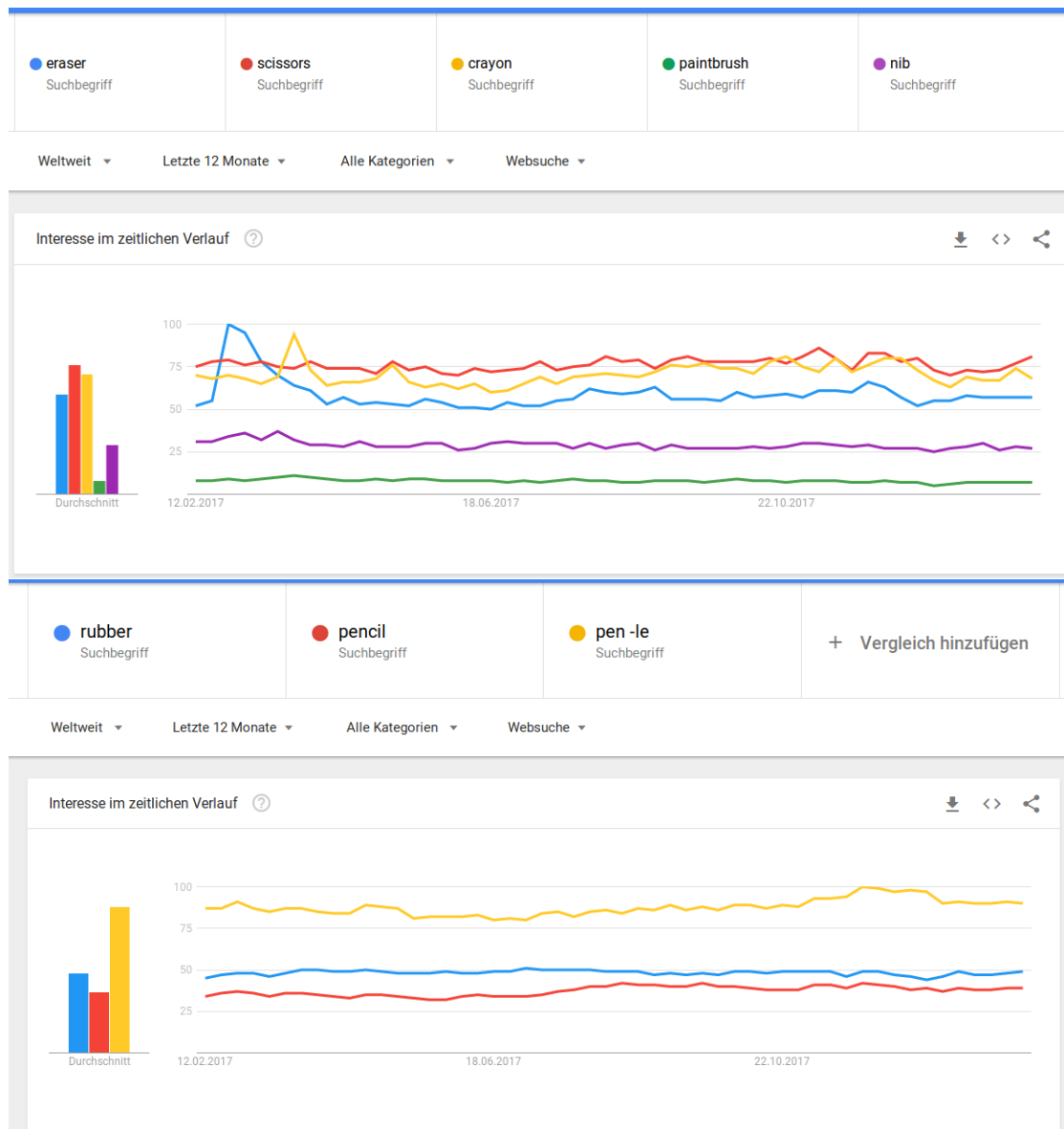


Figure 1: Google Trends, *eraser* compared to other stationery items. Note that I had to exclude the word “le” because of false positives from the French politician Marine Le Pen.

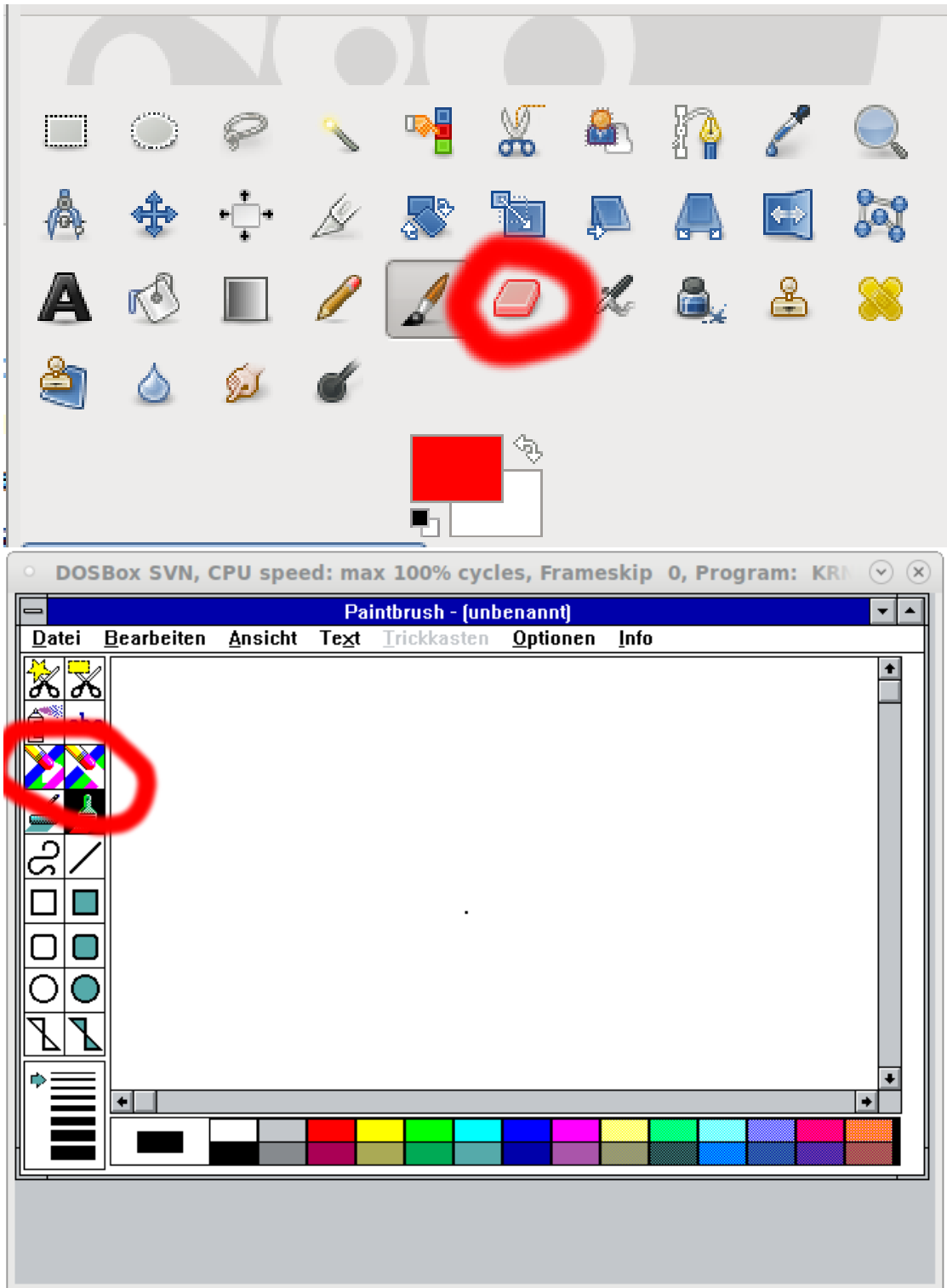
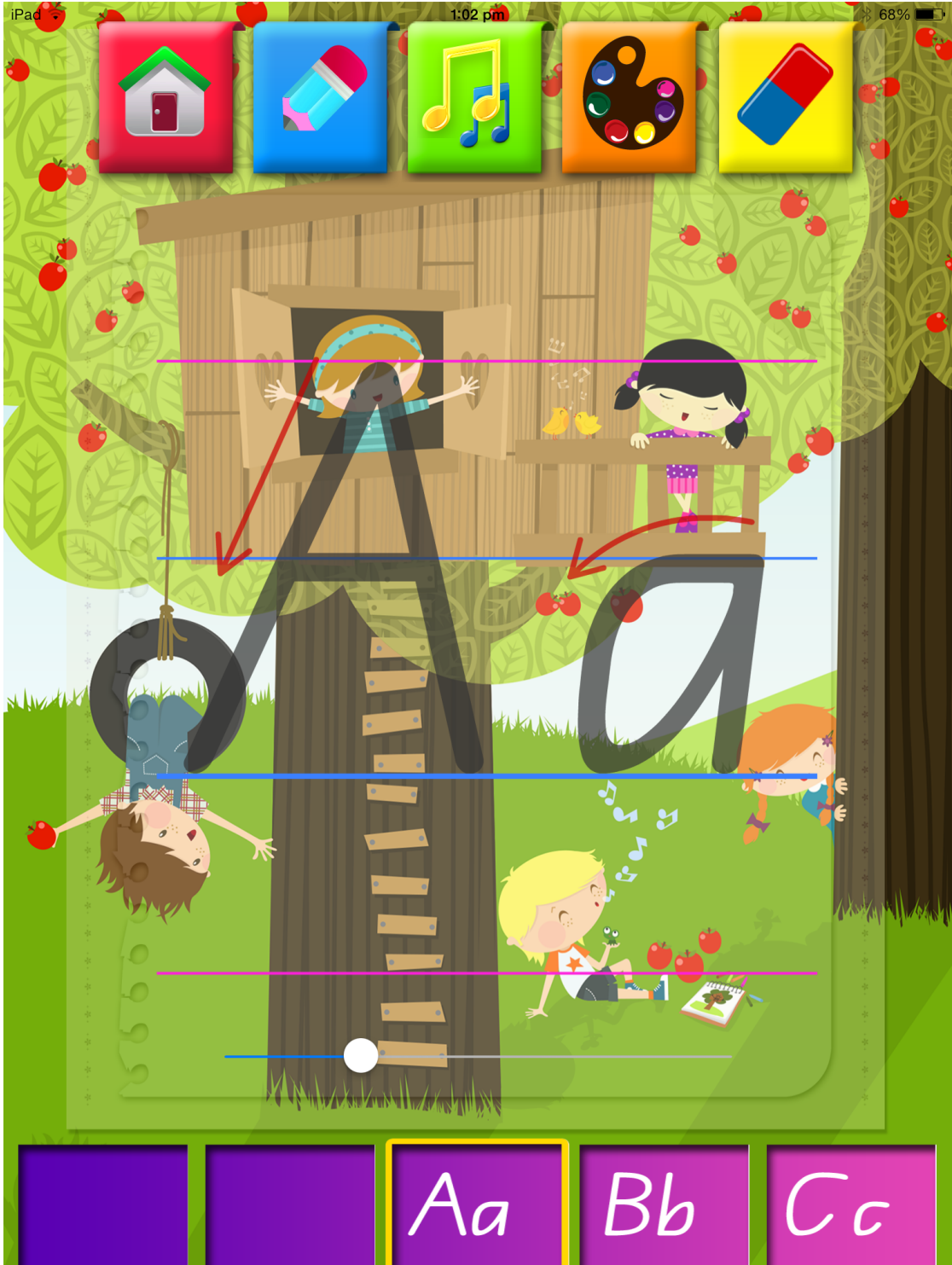
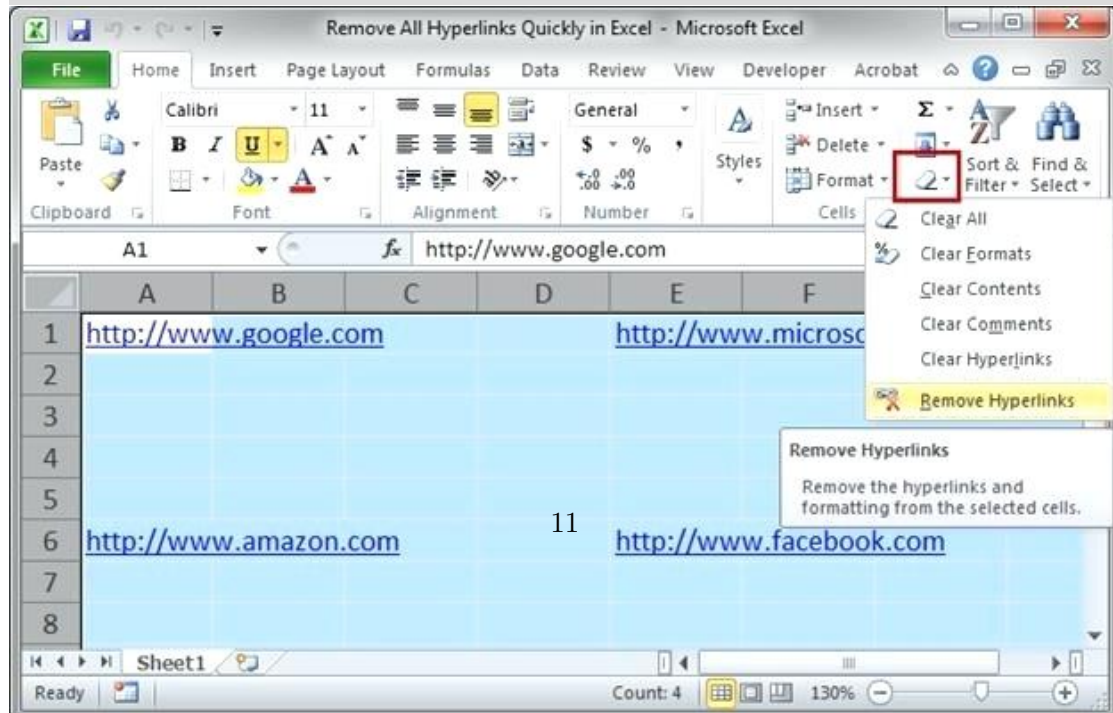
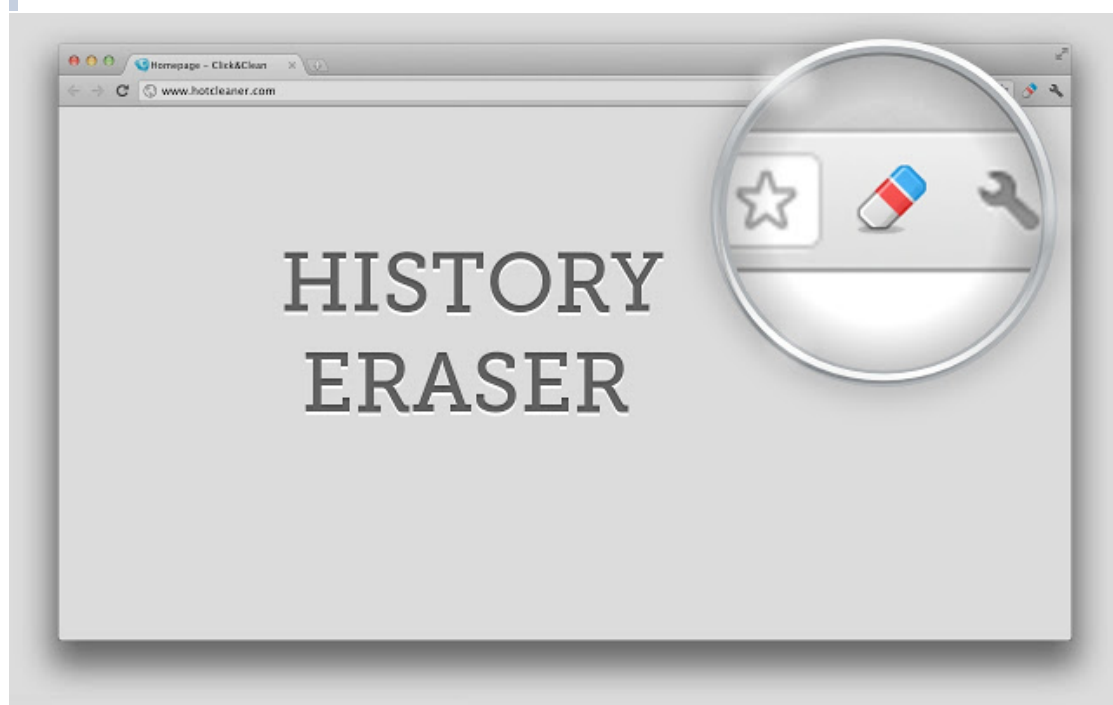
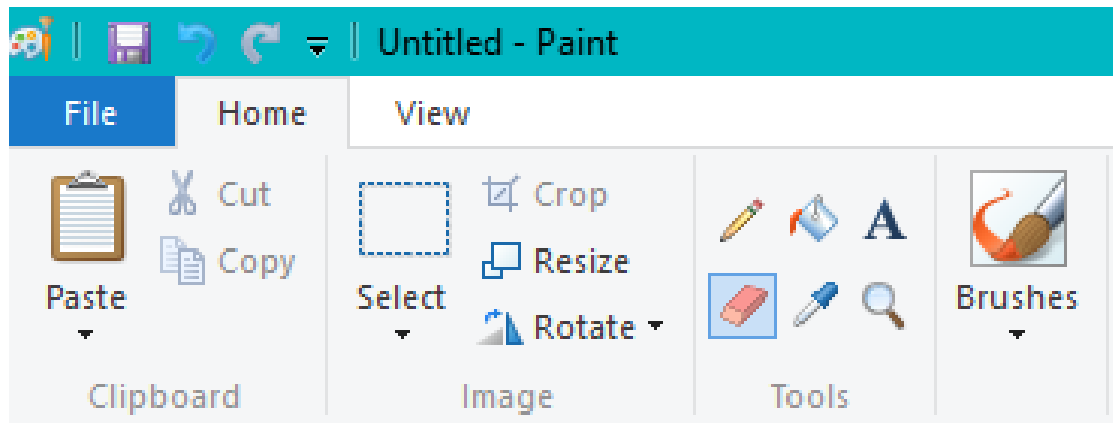


Figure 2: Eraser in different software applications








Stanford Men's Basketball @StanfordMBB · 2. Feb.
SHARMA. REJECTION.
(We really need an **eraser emoji** for this one)

@FS1

#GoStanford



Sharma Swat

5

Present & Correct @presentcorrect · 22. Sep. 2017
Things that should exist:

- squirrel libraries
- Conkers Live, a TV show
- bags of the crispy bits from lasagne
- eraser emoji**
- edible balloons

6 9 50

varian @moonvarian · 29. Aug. 2017
theres no **eraser emoji** so i had to make my aizawa tag a cat. its better this way

2

IG @iANN_xx · 19. Aug. 2017
Since they ain't gotta **eraser emoji**, I'll just flip this mf 🤪 upside down & get rid of some mfs 🤪🤪.

2


J.Rad @jareednikkoo · 20. Juli 2017
there's no **eraser emoji** so I'll just use this one lol.

2

R. Marie @Rmariee · 27. Juni 2017
Antwort an @bomingsoon
🤪 theres no **eraser emoji**

2

Anahí @anniecarlin · 22. Juni 2017
Mi artículo escolar favorito eran los borradores. Tenía miles de diferentes formar, tamaños y colores *insert **eraser emoji** here* #tbt



2

Giovanna Calvino @giovannacalvino · 12. Juni 2017
OK actually the 1st definition didn't involve a horse.
That's it I don't want to talk about this further
***eraser emoji** or something*

1 2

Go Gina @TracySassou · 4. Juli 2015
@DzYass mdrrrr graaaave pas ! C'est toi je vois bien que tu m'efface à la gomme petit à petit 🤪 (ya pas d'**emoji gomme**)

2

めぐり @yumeguri1613 · 2. Jan.
Antwort an @245fujico
ハビニューヤー~~~~!! 今年もよろしくお楽しみします!! 🤪🤪(ハビニューヤーの**消しゴムの絵文字**)
ひいえ~~~~!! ありがとうございます!! 🤪🤪🤪🤪🤪🤪🤪🤪🤪🤪🤪🤪

1

The Dad Network @thedadnetworkuk · 22. Jan. 2016
Antwort an @mrshsfavthings 12
@mrshsfavthings try to ignore it. We've had a few recently too. Must be the weather! Just erase it from your mind. ***rubber emoji**

1 1

Figure 3: Various Twitter users requesting an eraser emoji



Figure 4: An eraser. Source: *Hans, pixabay*



Figure 5: Pencils with erasers attached. Source: *stevebp, pixabay*