American Dialect Society 2012 Words of the Year

NOMINATIONS to be voted on by the American Dialect Society

Jan. 4, 2013, Boston

MOST USEFUL

YOLO: acronym for "You Only Live Once," often used sarcastically or self-deprecatingly -(po)calypse, -(ma)geddon: hyperbolic combining forms for various catastrophes hate-watching: continuing to follow a television show despite having an aversion to it beardruff: dandruff from one's beard

MOST CREATIVE

mansplaining: a man's condescending explanation to a female audience

alpacalypse: the Mayan apocalypse predicted

for Dec. 21, 2012 (*alpaca* + -*lypse*)

gate lice: airline passengers who crowd around

a gate waiting to board

dancelexia: inability to pull off dance moves

(such as misspelling "YMCA")

MOST UNNECESSARY

legitimate rape: type of rape that Missouri Senate candidate Todd Akin claimed rarely results in pregnancy

Frankenstorm: term for Hurricane Sandy's hybrid storm system (after Frankenstein's monster)

HD: abbreviation for "high-definition," used for things that could not be high-definition **feels**: slangy shortening of "feelings"

MOST OUTRAGEOUS

Dunlop effect: when one's stomach protrudes over ill-fitting pants ("belly done lop over the belt")

legitimate rape: type of rape that Missouri Senate candidate Todd Akin claimed rarely results in pregnancy

slut-shaming: attacking a woman for socially stigmatized sexual activity

butt-chugging: an alcohol enema, used in college fraternity hazing rituals

MOST EUPHEMISTIC

disruptive: destroying existing business models **Gray Thursday**: name given to Thanksgiving as a shopping day before Black Friday **self-deportation**: policy of encouraging illegal immigrants to return voluntarily to their home countries

ratchet: slang term originally referring to "urban divas" now used to mean "ghetto"

MOST LIKELY TO SUCCEED

fiscal cliff: threat of spending cuts and tax increases looming over end-of-year budget negotiations

superstorm: an unusually large and destructive storm, such as Hurricane Sandy

MOOC: acronym for "massive open online course"

marriage equality: legal recognition of samesex marriage

big data: large collections of digital information used for revealing behavioral insights

LEAST LIKELY TO SUCCEED

cray-cray: slangy shortening and reduplication of "crazy"

Gangnam style: the trendy style of Seoul's Gangnam district, as used in the Korean pop song of the same name

Windows Metro: name originally used for the Windows 8 operating system

phablet: mid-sized electronic device between a smartphone and a tablet

ELECTION WORDS

47 percent: portion of the population that does not pay federal income tax (as used by Romney) Etch-a-Sketch: metaphor of reinvention used by Romney campaign adviser Eric Fehrnstrom Eastwooding: photo fad inspired by Clint Eastwood's unscripted speech at the RNC Romney/Obama: names of candidates used for blends (Obamaloney, Obamageddon, Romnesia, Romney Hood)