2006 Words of the Year Nominations

These are the words chosen as candidates for the 2006 words-of-the-year categories. The final votes in all categories will take place from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Friday, Jan. 5. The Word of the Year is usually nominated from among winners of the categories below, although new, passionate, last-minute nominations have sometimes been accepted from the floor.

MOST USEFUL
climate canary: an organism or species whose poor health or declining numbers hint at a larger environmental catastrophe on the horizon.
data Valdez: an accidental release of a large quantity of private or privileged information. Named after the 1989 oil spill by the Exxon Valdez in Prince William Sound, Alaska.
flog: a fake blog created by a corporation to promote a product or a television show.
sharrow: an arrow-like design painted on a roadway to mark a bicycling route.

MOST CREATIVE
Fed-Ex: tabloid nickname for K-Fed, a.k.a Kevin Federline, husband of Britney Spears.
to julie: to organize an event. Also as a noun. From Julie McCoy, the character of cruise director on the television show The Love Boat, which ran from 1977 to 1986.
lactard: a person who is lactose-intolerant.
snowclone: an expression whose structure is borrowed to create new, similar expressions. Examples: X is the new Y (“blue is the new black”) and X is dead; long live X! (“the king is dead; long live the king!”).

MOST UNNECESSARY
the decider: with the definite article, a person who makes decisions for other decision-makers, as spoken by President George W. Bush.
Fox lips: lips colored and lined with makeup to seem more prominent, said of female anchors on Fox News.
SuriKat: the supposed nick-name of the baby girl of Tom Cruise and Katie Holmes.

MOST OUTRAGEOUS
Cambodian accessories: Angelina Jolie’s adopted children, of which one is Cambodian.
firecrotch: a person with red pubic hair.
amaca: an American citizen treated as an alien.
tramp stamp: a tattoo on a woman’s upper bottom or lower back.
sudden jihad syndrome: an outburst of violence from a seemingly stable and normal Muslim.

MOST EUPHEMISTIC
lancing: the forced public outing of a closeted gay celebrity, after ‘N Sync singer Lance Bass.
lyric malfunction: obscenities scrubbed from the Rolling Stones’ Super Bowl performance.
surge: an increase in troop strength.
waterboarding: an interrogation technique in which the subject is immobilized and doused with water to simulate drowning; reported to be used by U.S. interrogators against terrorism detainees.

MOST LIKELY TO SUCCEED
carbon: in combining forms about reducing waste emissions, used as shorthand for air pollution.
the decider: with the definite article, a person who makes decisions for other decision-makers, as spoken by President George W. Bush.
macaca moment: an ethnic or racial gaffe caught on video.
m-, man-, men- as “man-fixes” in compounds and blends such as mooobs, manboobs, murse, man purse, mancation, man crush, manmaries, mennaissance, etc.

LEAST LIKELY TO SUCCEED
grup: a Gen-Xer who does not act his or her age.
pwn: to “own” someone; to defeat, beat, or best someone. From mis-typing in online gaming.
stay the course: to continue an action or undertaking despite it being less successful than desired.

NEW CATEGORY: PLUTO-RELATED WORDS
dwarf planet: new International Astronomical Union designation for Pluto and other not-quite-planetary bodies in the solar system.
planemo: an object in outer space with mass insufficient to achieve fusion but large enough to be made roughly spherical by its own gravity to be plutoed: to be demoted.
pluto: originally chosen by the General Assembly of the International Astronomical Union as a category for trans-Neptunian objects, like Pluto, that did not warrant designation as true planets. However, the term was already in use in geology to refer to a large mass of intrusive igneous rock believed to have solidified deep within the earth. Another candidate name was plutonoid.