

Contacts for Word of the Year:

American Dialect Society

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(For immediate release)

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“App” 2010 Word of the Year, as voted by American Dialect Society

WYNDHAM GRAND HOTEL, PITTSBURGH—JAN. 7—In its 21st annual words of the year vote, the American Dialect Society voted “*app*” (noun, an abbreviated form of *application*, a software program for a computer or phone operating system) as the word of the year for 2010.

Presiding at the Jan. 7 voting session were ADS Executive Secretary Allan Metcalf of MacMurray College, and Ben Zimmer, chair of the New Words Committee of the American Dialect Society and executive producer of *VisualThesaurus.com*. Zimmer is also the “On Language” columnist for the *New York Times Magazine*.

“App has been around for ages, but with millions of dollars of marketing muscle behind the slogan ‘There’s an app for that,’ plus the arrival of ‘app stores’ for a wide spectrum of operating systems for phones and computers, app really exploded in the last 12 months,” Zimmer said. “One of the most convincing arguments from the voting floor was from a woman who said that even her grandmother had heard of it.”

Word of the Year is interpreted in its broader sense as “vocabulary item”—not just words but phrases. The words or phrases do not have to be brand-new, but they have to be newly prominent or notable in the past year, in the manner of *Time* magazine’s Person of the Year.

The vote is the longest-running such vote anywhere, the only one not tied to commercial interests, and *the* word-of-the-year event up to which all others lead. It is fully informed by the members’ expertise in the study of words, but it is far from a solemn occasion. Members in the 121-year-old organization include linguists, lexicographers, etymologists, grammarians, historians, researchers, writers, authors, editors, professors,

university students, and independent scholars. In conducting the vote, they act in fun and do not pretend to be officially inducting words into the English language. Instead they are highlighting that language change is normal, ongoing, and entertaining.

In a companion vote, sibling organization the American Name Society voted “*Eyafjalljökull*” as Name of the Year for 2010 in its seventh annual name-of-the-year contest. It’s the name of an Icelandic volcano which spewed enough ash this year to severely disrupt flights across Europe.

AMERICAN DIALECT SOCIETY VOTE TALLIES

The number after each nomination is the number of votes it received. Numbers separated by slash marks indicate a run-off. Voting totals for each category might not be identical because the number of voters might have changed for each category.

WORD OF THE YEAR

app: application program for a computer or phone operating system. As in "there’s an app for that," an advertising slogan for the iPhone. 52/69 WINNER
nom: Onomatopoeic form connoting eating, esp. pleasurably. Can be used as an interjection or noun to refer to delicious food. 34/51.
junk as used in *junk shot* (attempt to fix BP oil spill), *junk status* (Greece’s credit rating), *don’t touch my junk* (protest against TSA pat-down procedure). 17
Wikileaks as proper noun, common noun, and verb. 12
trend verb: to exhibit a burst of online buzz. 12

MOST USEFUL

nom Onomatopoeic form connoting eating, esp. pleasurably. Can be used as an interjection or noun to refer to delicious food. 49/72 WINNER
fat-finger verb: to mistype, as by accidentally striking more than one key on a keyboard/pad. 16
junk *junk shot* (attempt to fix BP oil spill), *junk status* (Greece’s credit rating), *don’t touch my junk* (protest against TSA pat-down procedure). 46/42
vuvuzela: South African plastic trumpet used by fans during the FIFA World Cup matches.

MOST CREATIVE

prehab Preemptive enrollment in a rehab facility to prevent relapse of an abuse problem. 45/65 WINNER
-sauce Intensive suffix, as in *awesome-sauce* ‘great’ and *lame-sauce* ‘stupid’. 37/51
spillion An immense number, especially of gallons of oil in the Gulf spill. Also **spillionaire**, person made rich by money from BP’s spill cleanup fund. 29
phoenix firm A troubled company that reemerges under a new name. 13

MOST UNNECESSARY

refudiate Blend of *refute* and *repudiate* used by Sarah Palin on Twitter. 72/WINNER
ironic moustache Facial hair worn as a statement of retro hipsterdom. 6
star whacker Imagined celebrity killer (alleged by actor Randy Quaid and his wife Evi). 16
hipsterdom: the state of being hip beyond all recognition. So hip you're unhip. 14

MOST OUTRAGEOUS

gate rape Pejorative term for invasive new airport pat-down procedure. 55/67 WINNER
terror baby Baby born to a terrorist family on U.S. soil in order to establish citizenship. 52/56

bed intruder Perpetrator of a home invasion in Huntsville, Ala., made famous by viral video. 22

MOST EUPHEMISTIC

kinetic event Pentagon term for violent attacks on troops in Afghanistan. 84/WINNER

corn sugar Corn Refiners Association's rebranding of high fructose corn syrup. 1.

enhanced pat-down TSA's term for controversial new frisking procedure. 21

bed intruder Perpetrator of a home invasion in Huntsville, Ala., made famous by viral video. 19

MOST LIKELY TO SUCCEED

trend Verb: to exhibit a burst of online buzz. 73/WINNER

hacktivism Using computer hacking skills as a form of political or social activism. 34

-pad Combining form used by iPad and other tablet computers (ViewPad, WindPad, etc.). 22

telework Term used at federal level for work by an employee away from the office. 9

LEAST LIKELY TO SUCCEED

culturomics Research project from Google analyzing the history of language and culture 44/85
WINNER

fauxhemian Winner of a Gawker poll to replace the term "hipster." 31

skyaking Jumping out of a plane in a kayak. 47/33

top kill / top hat / junk shot Various failed techniques to fix the BP oil spill. 11

ELECTION TERMS (new category)

All terms agreed to be losers. The entire category was deleted by acclamation.

Aqua Buddha Fictitious deity in collegiate scandal involving Rand Paul, raised during his Kentucky Senate campaign.

mama grizzly Sarah Palin's term for a fiercely conservative female candidate.

man up Exhortation to be responsible or "act like a man," used by Sharron Angle against Harry Reid in Nevada Senate race.

Obamacare Pejorative term for the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010.

FAN WORDS (new category)

gleek A fan of the TV show "Glee" (*Glee* + *geek*) 90 WINNER

belieber A fan of pop singer Justin Bieber (*Bieber* + *believer*) 3

little monster A fan of pop singer Lady Gaga, so called by the singer herself. 0

Twihard A fan of the "Twilight" books and movies. 7

Yat Dat A native-born fan of the New Orleans Saints. 14

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Founded in 1889, the American Dialect Society is dedicated to the study of the English language in North America, and of other languages, or dialects of other languages, influencing it or influenced by it. ADS members are linguists, lexicographers, etymologists, historians, grammarians, academics, editors, writers, and independent scholars in the fields of English, foreign languages, and other disciplines. The society also publishes the quarterly journal *American Speech*.

The American Dialect Society began choosing Words of the Year in 1990. Winners are listed below. A full account of the previous choices may be found on the American Dialect Society's website, www.americandialect.org.

Not all words chosen for a particular year are destined to become permanent additions to the vocabulary. *Y2K* in 1999 and *chad* in 2000 are examples of prominent

terms that faded quickly. An explanation of which words are likely to succeed may be found in *Predicting New Words: The Secrets of Their Success* by Allan Metcalf, published in 2002 by Houghton Mifflin.

American Dialect Society: Words of Previous Years

2009 WORD OF THE YEAR WINNER: *tweet*, noun, a short message sent via the Twitter.com service, and verb, the act of sending such a message **WORD OF THE DECADE WINNER:** **google** Verb meaning “to search the Internet.” Generic form of the trademarked “Google,” the world’s dominant Internet search engine. **MOST USEFUL** **fail** A noun or interjection used when something is egregiously unsuccessful. Usually written as “FAIL!” **MOST CREATIVE—**

WINNER: Dracula sneeze: Covering one’s mouth with the crook of one’s elbow when sneezing, seen as similar to popular portrayals of the vampire Dracula, in which he hides the lower half of his face with a cape. **MOST UNNECESSARY** **sea kittens** fish (according to PETA) **MOST OUTRAGEOUS** **death panel** A supposed committee of doctors and/or bureaucrats who would decide which patients were allowed to receive treatment, ostensibly leaving the rest to die. **MOST EUPHEMISTIC** **hike the Appalachian trail** To go away to have sex with one’s illicit lover. Follows on a statement by South Carolina Governor Mark Sanford, who went to Argentina to visit his mistress. **MOST LIKELY TO SUCCEED** **twenty-ten** A pronunciation of the year 2010, as opposed to saying “two thousand ten” or “two thousand and ten.” (twenty- as prefix until 2099) **LEAST LIKELY TO SUCCEED** name of the decade 2000-2009, such as Naughties, Aughties, Oughties, etc.

2008 Word of the Year, *bailout*, the rescue by the government of companies on the brink of failure, including large players in the banking industry. Most Useful: *Barack Obama*, both names as combining forms. Most Creative: *recombobulation area*, an area at Mitchell International Airport in Milwaukee in which passengers that have just passed through security screening can get their clothes and belongings back in order. Most Unnecessary: *moofing*, from “mobile out of office,” meaning working on the go with a laptop and cell phone. Created by a PR firm. Most Outrageous: *terrorist fist jab*, A knuckle-to-knuckle fist bump, or “dap,” traditionally performed between two black people as a sign of friendship, celebration or agreement. It was called the “terrorist fist jab” by the newscaster E. D. Hill, formerly of Fox News. Most Euphemistic: *scooping technician*, A person whose job it is to pick up dog poop. Most Likely to Succeed: *shovel-ready*, Used to describe infrastructure projects that can be started quickly when funds become available. Least Likely to Succeed: *PUMA*, An acronym for Party Unity My Ass, used by Democrats who were disaffected after Hillary Clinton failed to secure a sufficient number of delegates. It was later said to stand for Party Unity Means Action. New Category, Election-Related Words: *maverick*, a person who is beholden to no one. Widely used by the Republican Presidential and Vice-Presidential candidates, John McCain and Sarah Palin. Also in the adjectival form *mavericky*, used by Tina Fey portraying Palin on Saturday Night Live.

2007 Word of the Year, *subprime*, an adjective used to describe a risky or less than ideal loan, mortgage, or investment. Most Useful: *green- prefix/compounding form*, designates environmental concern, as in *greenwashing*. Most Creative: *googlegänger*, a person with your name who shows up when you google yourself. Most Unnecessary: *Happy Kwanhanamas!* [*Kwanza* + *Hanukka* + *Christmas*] Happy holidays! Most Outrageous: *toe-tapper*, A homosexual. Senator Larry Craig was arrested in June for an encounter in a public restroom in which toe-tapping was said to have been used as a sexual come-on. Most Euphemistic: *human terrain team*, a group of social scientists employed by the US military to serve as cultural advisers in Iraq or Afghanistan. Most Likely to Succeed: *green- prefix/compounding form*, designates environmental concern, as in *greenwashing*. Least

Likely to Succeed: *strand-in*, protest duplicating being stranded inside an airplane on a delayed flight. New Category, Real Estate Words: *subprime*, used to describe a risky or poorly documented loan or mortgage.

2006 Word of the Year, *to be plutoed*, *to pluto*, to be demoted or devalued. Most Useful: *climate canary*, an organism or species whose poor health or declining numbers hint at a larger environmental catastrophe on the horizon. Most Creative: *lactard*, a person who is lactose-intolerant. Most Unnecessary: *SuriKat*, the supposed nickname of the baby girl of Tom Cruise and Katie Holmes. Most Outrageous: *Cambodian accessory*, Angelina Jolie's adopted child who is Cambodian. Most Euphemistic: *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: *YouTube* as a verb, to use the YouTube web site or to have a video of one's self be posted on the site. Least Likely to Succeed: *grup*, a Gen-Xer who does not act his or her age. New Category, Pluto-Related Words: *to be plutoed*, *to pluto*, to be demoted or devalued.

2005 Word of the Year *truthiness*, what one wishes to be the truth regardless of the facts. (From the *Colbert Report* with Stephen Colbert, a mock news show on Comedy Central.) Most Useful: *podcast*, audio or video file for downloading. Most Creative: *whale-tail*, the appearance of thong or g-string underwear above the waistband. Most Unnecessary: *K Fed*, Kevin Federline, Mr. Britney Spears. Most Outrageous: *crotchfruit*, a child or children. Most Euphemistic: *internal nutrition* force-feeding a prisoner. Most Likely to Succeed: *sudoku* number puzzle from Japan. Least Likely to Succeed: *pope-squatting* registering a likely domain name of a new pope before the pope chooses his new name in order to profit from it. Special nonce category, Best Tom Cruise-Related Word: *jump the couch*, to exhibit frenetic behavior like Cruise's couch-bouncing on Oprah Winfrey's talk show.

2004 Word of the Year: *red/blue/purple states*, red favoring conservative Republicans and blue favoring liberal Democrats, as well as the undecided *purple states* in the political map of the United States. Most Useful: *phish*, to induce someone to reveal private information by means of deceptive e-mail. Most Creative: *pajamahadeen*, bloggers who challenge and fact-check traditional media. Most Unnecessary: *stalkette*, a female stalker. Most Outrageous: *santorum*, byproduct of anal sex, using the name of a senator opposed to the practice. Most Euphemistic: *badly sourced*, false. Most Likely to Succeed: *red/blue/purple states*. Least Likely to Succeed: *FLOHPA*, Florida, Ohio, and Pennsylvania, important states in the 2004 presidential election.

2003 Word of the Year: *metrosexual*, fashion-conscious heterosexual male. Most Useful: *flexitarian*, vegetarian who occasionally eats meat. Most Creative: *freegan*, person who eats only free food. Most Unnecessary: *freedom* for "French," as in fries and kisses. Most Outrageous: *cliterati*, feminist writers or leaders. Most Euphemistic: *pre-emptive self-defense*, attack before a possible attack on oneself. Most Likely to Succeed: *SARS*, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, viral disease first reported in Asia in February. Least Likely to Succeed: *tomacco*, poisonous hybrid of tomato and tobacco. Best Revival of an old term: *spider hole*, World War II term for a hole deeper than a foxhole used for surprise attacks; in 2003, where Saddam Hussein was hiding.

2002 Word of the Year: *weapons of mass destruction* or *WMD*, sought for in Iraq. Most Likely to Succeed: *blog*, from "weblog," a website of personal events, comments, and links. Most Useful: *google* (verb), as in "to google someone," to search the Web using the search engine Google for information on a person or thing. Most Creative: *Iraqnophobia*, strong fear of Iraq. Most Unnecessary: *wombanization*, feminization, from Alexander Barnes's book "The Book Read Backwards: The Deconstruction of Patriarchy and the Wombanization of Being." Most Outrageous: *neuticles*, fake testicles for neutered pets. Most

Euphemistic: *regime change*, forced change in leadership.

2001 Word of the Year: *9-11*, *9/11* or *September 11*, terrorist attacks on that date. Most Likely to Succeed: *9-11*. Most Useful (tie): *facial profiling*, using video “faceprints” to identify terrorists and criminals, and *second-hand speech*, cell phone conversations heard by others in public places. Most Creative: *shuicide bomber*, terrorist with bomb in shoes. Most Unnecessary: *impeachment nostalgia*, longing for the superficial news of the Clinton era. Least Likely to Succeed: *Osamaniac*, woman sexually attracted to terrorist Osama bin Laden. Most Outrageous: *assoline*, methane used as fuel. Most Euphemistic: *daisy cutter*, large bomb that explodes a few feet above the ground. Most Inspirational: *Let’s roll!* words of Todd Beamer to start the attack that foiled the hijackers of United Flight 93 on September 11.

2000 Word of the Year: *chad*, a small scrap of paper punched from a voting card. Most Likely to Succeed: *muggle*, Harry Potter term for a non-wizard; a mundane, unimaginative person. Most Useful: *civil union*, legal same-sex marriage. Most Creative: *dot bomb*, a failed dot-com. Most Unnecessary: *sudden loss of wealth syndrome*. Least Likely to Succeed: *kablokeys*, used in phrases like “It scared the kablokeys out of me.” Most Outrageous: *wall humping*, rubbing a thigh against a security card scanner to allow access without removing the card from one's pocket. Most Euphemistic: *courtesy call*, an uninvited call from a telemarketer. Brand New (coined during the year, not previously attested): *unconcede*, to rescind a concession as presidential candidate Al Gore did on election night. (It was later discovered that candidate Bob Dole had *unconceded* the presidential election in 1996, and there were occasional instances of that word going back several centuries.)

(Also chosen in January 2000: Word of the Decade: *web*. Word of the Twentieth Century: *jazz*. Word of the Millennium: *she*.)

1999 Word of the Year: *Y2K*. Most Likely to Succeed and Most Useful: *dot-com*, a company operating on the web. Most Original: *cybersquat*, to register a web address intending to sell it at a profit. Most unnecessary: *Milly*, dance commissioned by the city of Chicago for the millennium. Most Outrageous: *humanitarian intervention*, use of military force for humanitarian purposes. Most Euphemistic: *compassionate conservative*. Brand New (coined during the year, not previously attested): *Pokémania*, obsession with Pokémon.

1998 Word of the Year: prefix *e-* for “electronic” as in *e-mail* and newly prominent *e-commerce*. Most Likely to Succeed and Most Useful: *e-*. Most Original: *multislacking*, playing at the computer when one should be working. Most Unnecessary: the entire Monica Lewinsky word family, including *Big She* as a synonym for M.L., and the verb *Lewinsky*, to engage in what might be sexual relations. Least Likely to Succeed: *compfusion*, confusion over computers. Most Outrageous: *Ejaculation Proclamation*, the President’s confession. Most Euphemistic: *senior moment*, momentary lapse of memory due to age. Brand New (coined during the year, not previously attested): *-agra* or *-gra* (from the drug name *Viagra*), suffix denoting substance prompting men to perform unusually, as in *Directra* that causes men to ask for directions.

1997 Word of the Year: *millennium bug*, also known as *Y2K bug* or *Y2K problem*, that causes computers to think that the year after 1999 is 1900. Most Likely to Succeed: *DVD*, Digital Versatile Disk, optical disk expected to replace CDs. Most Useful: (tie) *-[r]azzi*, an aggressive pursuer, and *duh* (with a falling intonation), expression of someone else’s stupidity. Most Original: *prairie dogging*, popping one’s head above an office cubicle for the sake of curiosity. Most Unnecessary: *heaven-o*, replacement for “hello.” Most Outrageous: *Florida flambe*, fire caused by Florida electric chair. Most Euphemistic: *exit bag*, bag placed over the head to assist in suicide. Brand New (coined during the year, not previously attested): *El Nonsense*, illogical association of an event with El Niño.

1996 Word of the Year: *mom* as in *soccer mom*, newly significant type of voter. Most

Likely to Succeed: *drive-by*, designating brief visits or hospital stays. Most Useful: *dot*, used instead of “period” in e-mail and URL addresses. Most Original: *prebuttal*, preemptive rebuttal. Most Unnecessary: *Mexican hustle*, another name for the Macarena (which is not Mexican). Most Outrageous: *toy soldier*, land mine. Most Euphemistic: (tie) *urban camping*, living homeless in a city, and *food insecure*, said of a country where people are starving. Most Controversial: *Ebonics*, African-American vernacular English.

1995 Word of the Year: (tie) *World Wide Web* on the Internet, and *newt*, to make aggressive changes as a newcomer. Most Likely to Succeed: *World Wide Web* and its variants *the Web*, *WWW*, *W3*. Most Useful: *E.Q.* (for *Emotional Quotient*), the ability to manage one’s emotions. Most Original: *postal* or *go postal*, to act irrationally, often violently, from stress at work. Most Unnecessary: *Vanna White shrimp*, large shrimp for the restaurant market. Most Outrageous: *starter marriage*, a first marriage not expected to be the last. Most Euphemistic: *patriot*, one who believes in using force of arms if necessary to defend individual rights against the government.

1994 Word of the Year: (tie) *cyber*, pertaining to computers and electronic communication, and *morph*, to change form. Most Promising: *Infobahn*, the Internet. Most Useful: *gingrich*, to deal with government agencies, policies, and people in the manner of U.S. House Speaker Newt Gingrich. Most Imaginative: *guillermo*, an e-mail message in a foreign language. (The Spanish name *Guillermo* has the nickname *Memo*.) Most Trendy: *dress down day* or *casual day*, a workday when employees are allowed to dress casually. Most Euphemistic: *challenged* indicating an undesirable or unappealing condition. Most Beautiful: *sylvanshine*, night-time iridescence of certain forest trees.

1993 Word of the Year: *information superhighway*, network linking computers, television, telephone, and other electronic means of communication. Most Likely to Succeed: quotative *like* with a form of the verb *be* to indicate speech or thought. Most Useful: *thing* premodified by a noun, e.g. “a Chicago thing.” Most Imaginative: *McJob*, a generic, unstimulating, low-paying job. Most Amazing: *cybersex*, sexual stimulation by computer. Most Unnecessary: *mosaic culture* to describe a multicultural society. Most Outrageous: *whirlpooling*, assault of a female by a male group in a swimming pool. Most Euphemistic: *street builder*, a homeless person who constructs a shanty. Most Unpronounceable: *Jurassosaurus nedegoapeferkimorum*, a new dinosaur.

1992 Word of the Year: *Not!* expression of disagreement. Most Likely to Succeed: *snail mail*, *s-mail*, mail that is physically delivered, as opposed to e-mail. Most Useful: *grunge*, a style of clothing. Most Original: *Franken-*, genetically altered. Most Amazing: *Munchhausen’s syndrome by proxy*, illness fabricated to evoke sympathy for the caregiver. Most Unnecessary: *gender feminism*, belief that sex roles are social, not biological. Most Outrageous: *ethnic cleansing*, purging of ethnic minorities.

1991 Word of the Year: *mother of all* —, greatest, most impressive. Most Likely to Succeed: *rollerblade*, skate with rollers in a single row. Most Successful: *in your face*, aggressive, confrontational, flamboyant. Most Original: *molecular pharming*, *pharming*, genetically modifying farm animals to produce human proteins for pharmaceutical use. Most Amazing: *velcroid*, a person who sticks by the (U.S.) president, especially for photo opportunities. Most Unnecessary: *massively parallel*, many small computers yoked together.

1990 Word of the Year: *bushlips*, insincere political rhetoric. Most Likely to Succeed: (tie) *notebook PC*, a portable personal computer weighting 4-8 pounds, and *rightsizing*, adjusting the size of a staff by laying off employees. Most Useful: (tie) *technostupidity*, loss of ability through dependence on machines, and *potty parity*, equalization of toilet facilities for the sexes. Most Original: *voice merging*, the oral tradition of African-American preachers using another’s words. Most Amazing: *bungee jumping*, jumping from a high

platform with elastic cables on the feet. Most Unnecessary: *peace dividend*, anticipated saving in military spending due to improved relations with the Soviet Union. Most Outrageous: *politically correct, PC*, adhering to principles of left-wing social concern.

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