

## Nominations for the American Dialect Society's 2007 Words-of-the-Year Vote

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**astronaut diaper** A garment, which might be called a fecal containment unit, worn by astronauts on long flights. It was brought to popular attention by astronaut Lisa Nowak who wore one in February while driving across five states to confront a love rival.

**atmospherics** A sense or understanding of the mood of a militarily controlled area, usually more informal than a sense of the "street."

**bacon** Impersonal email such as alerts, newsletters, and automated reminders that are nearly as annoying as spam but which one has chosen to receive. Popularized at the PodCamp conference in Pittsburgh in August 2007.

**bitch** Out of an increasing uneasiness with a younger generation's free use of slang like "bitch," and following on the 2006 lawsuit against Knicks president Isiah Thomas which said he called a coworker by this name (among others), this year a resolution by the New York City Council established a non-enforceable ban on the word. Also see "ho" and "nigger."

**boot camp flu** An adenovirus that is usually innocuous; however, in its latest strain it has led to pneumonia and death. So-named because it often occurs among new military recruits who are susceptible to it because they are highly stressed and live in close quarters.

**boom** An instance of a military explosion in the phrases **left of boom**, which describes the US military's efforts to root out insurgents before they do harm, and **right of boom**, which describes efforts to minimize attacks with better equipment, systems, and medical care.

**chief sustainability officer** A business executive hired to meet environmental regulations and to find ways to profit through environmentally friendly products and services.

**colony collapse disorder** A disease that has killed millions of pollinating bees nationwide and threatens to harm the nation's agricultural output. Suspected culprits are a virus, mites, and insecticides.

**crowdsource** Using the skills or tools of many widespread freelance participants, professional or amateur, paid or unpaid, to work on a single problem.

**drama-price** To lower the asked dollar amount for real estate so as to attract buyers' attention. Also a noun.

**draw-down** A reduction in military forces in an operation, the opposite of a **troop surge**.

**email bankruptcy** Choosing to delete or ignore a very large number of email messages after falling behind in reading and responding to them. This often includes sending a boilerplate message explaining that old messages will never receive a personal, specific response. Although Lawrence Lessig is often credited with coining this term, at best he can be said only to have popularized it, as its first use was in 2002, well before he publicly declared his own email bankruptcy.

**earmarxist** A congressman or senator who adds earmarks—money designated for a particular person or group—to legislation. Coined by the blog Redstate to refer to Democrats.

**exaflood** A very large amount of data which is predicted to soon be the total volume of all traffic on the Internet.

An exabyte is 1.074 billion gigabytes.

**exploding ARM** An *Adjustable Rate Mortgage* whose rates soon rise beyond a borrower's ability to pay.

**forever stamp** A postage stamp that, bought now, will be sufficient to mail a first-class letter at any time in the future, despite price increases.

**FTW** *For The Win*. A bragging exclamation or interjection of approval, such as "K-Fed got the kids FTW" or "I was able to open the file with Photoshop. FTW!!!" Originally part of the patter of the game show *Hollywood Squares* and later found in online games such as *World of Warcraft*. Now largely used ironically and sarcastically.

**global weirding** n. An increase in severe or unusual environmental activity often attributed to global warming. This includes freakish weather and new animal migration patterns.

**gorno** A movie that is gory almost to the point of being fetishistic. A blend of *gore* and *porno*.

**guap** (A lot of) money. Less common variant spellings include **gwap** and **gwop**. Used notably in the song "Chain Hang Low" by Jibbs in 2006.

**-hawk** A suffix that indicates a haircut similar to a mohawk. Sanjaya Malakar, a contestant on *American Idol*, sported what he called a **ponyhawk**. Shawn Andrews of the Philadelphia Eagles described his haircut as a **brohawk**, something akin to a short mohawk on a black man. An older use is **fauxhawk**, in which the hair is styled in a vertical strip but none is cut.

**ho** Slang for "whore," though its use in slang has ameliorated somewhat to merely refer to a tough or streetwise woman. Subject of an unenforceable ban by the New York City Council and part of the famous phrase that saw radio shock jock Don Imus kicked off the air. See **bitch** and **nappy-headed ho**.

**hooter-hider** A cloth or short apron that gives a mother modesty when nursing a child.

**hypermile** To take extraordinary measures toward achieving maximum fuel efficiency in an automobile. Dates to 2004 but was the subject of much discussion in 2007.

**hyphenate** In the jargon of Hollywood, a person who both writes and produces a television show or movie. A variant is **multi-hyphenate**. See **show-runner**.

**I-reporter** CNN's name for citizen journalists who submit their own photos and stories about news events.

**islamofascism** A form of Islam seen as exclusionary to, or intolerant of, non-Muslims. Although the term is several decades old and has had wide currency since 9/11, its use reached new highs in 2007 as it became subject to a semantic war: Are we, by using this term, reinforcing the belief that our fight is against a religion rather than against terrorists?

**jailbreak** With software, to hack or break into an electronic device closed by the manufacturer so that it will run programs installed by the user. Used largely by jailbreakers of Apple's iPhone. Users who jailbreak risk **bricking** their phones, that is, rendering them inoperable.

**kinnear** To surreptitiously take a candid photograph, especially by holding the camera low and out of the line of sight. Coined in August 2007 by Stephanie Pearl-McPhee of the "Yarn Harlot" blog after she was unable to take a photo during an encounter of actor Greg Kinnear at an airport.

**liar's loan/liar loan** Money borrowed from a financial institution under false pretenses, especially in the form of a "stated income" or "no-doc" loan which can permit a borrower to exaggerate income. Dates to 1992 but became prominent in 2007 due to the rising mortgage crisis.

**life-stream** To make a thorough, constant digital record of one's own life in video, sound, pictures, and print.

**lip dub** A widely shared amateur video of people singing along to a popular song.

**lolcat** On the Internet, an odd or funny picture of a cat given a humorous and intentionally ungrammatical caption in large block letters. Originally called a **cat macro**.

**lopomo** Lower power mode; a state in which an electric power supply uses less energy.

**make it rain** To drop paper money on a crowd of people, especially in strip clubs, nightclubs, or casinos. Perhaps a back-formation from **rainmaker**, a person who is successful or influential, especially in business or politics.

**maternal profiling** Employment discrimination against a woman who has, or will have, children. This term is being popularized by members of MomsRising, a activist group promoting the rights of mothers in the workplace. A woman who is subject to maternal profiling is also often said to have bumped against the **maternal wall**.

**meat tag** Identifying information such as name, Social Security number, religion, blood type, etc., tattooed on a soldier's body. Although it dates to at least as early 1990, deaths of American soldiers in Iraq have brought this practice new attention. In Australia "meat tag" is a colloquial expression for "dog tag" or "identity disc."

**mobisode** A short version of a full-length television show or movie, suitable for playing on a mobile phone or other hand-held electronic device.

**mom job** Also known as a **mommy makeover**, this is a package of cosmetic surgeries that will reduce the visible effects of childbirth on a woman's body, such as stretch marks or sagging.

**multi-dad** Of a woman, to have children by more than one father. First popularized in the U.K.

**nappy-headed ho** An expression used on the Don Imus radio show, and repeated by the host, about the women's basketball team at Rutgers University. Nappy-headed means "having tight curly hair, typical of a black person" and "ho" is short for "whore." Not only was his show canceled, but the controversy brought on a national debate about the use of such terms between and across races, genders, generations, and in hip-hop music.

**Navy shower** A very short shower in which one turns off the water while lathering up. This old term is also known as a **GI bath**, but it's new to many in the drought-stricken Southeast. Its antonym is the **Hollywood shower**, a long, wasteful one.

**nigger, death of** Like Al Sharpton and Rick Rubin did with "def" in 1993, the NAACP in July held a funeral for the word "nigger," the latest salvo in an intergenerational battle over control of the word. It's between what might be called the Cosby generation—Bill Cosby has come out against using the word—and the Nas generation—who in defiance named his new album "Nigger."

**NINJA** *No Income, No Job or Assets*. A poorly documented loan made to a high-risk borrower.

**nose bidet** A neti pot or nasal irrigator, said to help with allergy symptoms.

**pap** To take a photograph of someone or something, usually used to refer to paparazzi, from which the word is derived. Also as a noun.

**pecha-kucha** A method of delivering effective slideshow presentations, developed by Mark Dytham and Astrid Klein, of 20 slides which display for 20 seconds each. From the Japanese word for "chit-chat" or "chatter."

**phonemarking** An extension of the term earmarking, which is when money is set aside in legislation for very specific purposes. When a politician fails to get earmarks in place, he phones up the heads of federal agencies and makes a case for his favorite causes, making it an earmark by phone.

**post-kinetic environment** In military jargon, the site of an explosion, severe gunfire, or a destructive engagement.

**rape stand** A device used to hold a female dog in place for mating, a term brought to light by the scandal surrounding football player Michael Vick's links to a dog-fighting operation. A related word brought to light is **catmill**, a device like a treadmill on which a dog runs while chasing an animal just out of reach.

**rick-roll** On the Internet, to be presented with a link to something that is supposedly fantastic, long-sought, or funny, only to find that the linked page is a Rick Astley video.

**scratch and dent loan** A loan or mortgage that has become a risky debt investment, especially one secured with minimal documentation or made by a borrower who has missed payments. While not new, these loans when bundled became investment properties for hedge funds, leading to some major losses this year.

**side boob** The slight curve of breast that appears out of the sleeve hole of a gown or shirt.

**smeet** In the online multi-player game *Second Life*, to meet in the real world someone known to you in the online world. Said to be a blend of "second meeting."

**show-runner** A television producer who may also handle casting, writing, editing, and other tasks.

**Super-Duper Tuesday** The day that 20 US states will hold primary elections. Also known as **Tsunami Tuesday**.

**splurge** Soldiers' nickname for the **troop surge**, a term that surged to the fore at the end of 2006. Both terms refer to an increase in American soldiers in Iraq.

**subprime** Used to describe a risky or poorly documented loan or mortgage. The term was especially significant in 2007, due to its connection to a massive increase in foreclosure rates, the potential insolvency of some banks, a need for a Federal bailout, and the connection to the billions of dollars in losses by hedge funds which packaged subprime loans and resold them as investment properties.

**Tivoization** A company's use of free or open source software in a product that is closed to the experimentation of users.

**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. Also see **wide stance**.

**truther** Someone who espouses a conspiracy theory about the events of 9/11.

**Tsunami Tuesday** See **Super-Duper Tuesday**.

**tumblelog** A web site or blog that is a collection of brief links or sentences to things a person has encountered in their web-browsing, a sort of digital commonplace book.

**va-j-j** Also **va-jay-jay** or **vajayjay**. A euphemism for the vagina. Its first surge of popularity occurred in an episode of *Grey's Anatomy* in 2006, but use of the term by Oprah propagated it further. A widely circulated October 2007 article in the *New York Times* cemented its place in the national lexicon. The first recorded use so far found is by white geek rapper MC Paul Barman on his 2000 album *It's Very Stimulating*.

**vegansexual** A person who eats no meat, uses no animal-derived goods, and who prefers not to have sex with non-vegans.

**walkshed** The area that can be conveniently reached on foot from a geographic point. Comparable to **viewshed**, the landscape or topography visible from a geographic point, especially that having aesthetic value, and **foodshed**, the area which can reasonably and inexpensively be expected to provide food for a consumer.

**waterboarding** An interrogation technique that simulates drowning. Though much-discussed as part of the nomination hearings of Attorney General Michael Mukasey, first widespread reports of the technique's existence were made in 2004.

**wide stance, to have a** To be hypocritical or to express two conflicting points of view. When Senator Larry Craig was arrested (see **toe-tapper**) in a public restroom and accused of making signals with his foot that police said meant he was in search of a anonymous sex, Craig said it was a misunderstanding and that he just had a wide stance when using the toilet.

**windshield cowboy** A cattle rancher who works while driving a pickup truck instead of riding a horse; generally, a mildly deprecating term for an aspiring rancher who is considered a pretender. Laura Bush notably used this term to refer to her husband.