

Nominations for the 2008 Word of the Year

to be voted on by the American Dialect Society

January 9th in San Francisco

<http://americandialect.org/woty2008/>

Political and Economic Words of the Year

Nominated by **Ben Zimmer**, executive producer of the **Visual Thesaurus**,

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Political Nominations:

maverick: self-identified political status of McCain and Palin (also Tina Fey's adjective
mavericky: "We are not afraid to get mavericky in there...")

vet (verb): an old term (originally from "veterinarian") with new prominence after questions were raised about the vetting of Palin

game-changer: optimistic term used to describe McCain's selection of Palin (though some saw it as merely a **hail Mary pass**)

going rogue: used by McCain staffers to describe Palin when she went off-message on the campaign trail

lipstick on a pig: phrase that Republicans said Obama used as a veiled insult of Palin (based on her **pit bull/hockey mom** Convention joke)

PUMA: acronym for "Party Unity My Ass," used by disgruntled Hillary Clinton supporters after Obama locked up the nomination

hopey changey: derisive epithet incorporating Obama's two main buzzwords (also **dopey hopey changey**)

H8: text-message abbreviation for "hate" -- opponents of California's Proposition 8 called it "Proposition H8"

Blago-sphere: the surreal world inhabited by Rod Blagojevich

czar: inter-agency point person to coordinate policy; Obama may be appointing a health czar, an energy czar, a car czar, a technology czar, etc.

Economic Nominations:

bailout: WOTY frontrunner, though it's been used in the financial sense since the Great Depression (based on the aviation term for an emergency landing, but also suggesting bailing water out of a boat, as well as getting bailed out from prison)

TARP: acronym for Troubled Assets Relief Program -- quickly turned into a verb ("Citibank got TARPed")

getting/taking a haircut: accepting a less-than-optimal financial return (dates to 1955); Nancy Pelosi says the restructuring of the auto industry is "a barbershop" since "everybody's getting a haircut"

going underwater: falling into negative equity; nearly one in seven homeowners are now underwater, owing more on their mortgages than their homes are worth

credit tsunami: Alan Greenspan's term for the cataclysmic financial crisis (also **financial tsunami**)

toxic assets: assets of dubious value held by investment banks and other financial institutions; Paulson abandoned a plan to use the bailout fund to buy up toxic assets

recessionista: person who remains stylish on a budget (also **frugalista, recession chic**)

Madoff: possible new term for "Ponzi scheme"; also used as a verb, as in "he Madoff with our money"

Alt-A: the next wave of mortgages to default after the subprime collapse; Alt-A mortgages are considered less risky than subprime but riskier than prime ("A-paper") mortgage loans

shovel-ready: used to describe infrastructure projects that can be started quickly when Obama's economic stimulus package is passed