American Dialect Society
2011 Words of the Year
NOMINATIONS to be voted on by
the American Dialect Society
Jan. 6, 2012, Portland, Oregon

MOST USEFUL
humblebrag - expression of false humility,
especially by celebrities on Twitter
FOMO - acronym for “Fear of Missing Out,”
describing anxiety over being inundated by
information on social media
occupy - verb, noun, and combining form
referring to the Occupy protest movement
tablet - lightweight portable computer with a
touchscreen to input data

MOST CREATIVE
bunga bunga - name for sex parties allegedly
involving former Italian Prime Minister
Silvio Berlusconi
kardash - unit of measurement consisting of
72 days, after the short-lived marriage of
Kim Kardashian and Kris Humphries
(coined by Weird Al Yankovic)
Mellencamp - a woman who has aged out of
being a “cougar” (after John Cougar
Mellencamp)

MOST UNNECESSARY
planking - posing for a photograph, esp. in a
public place, with one’s body in a stiff,
prone position, for circulation online
bi-winning - term used by Charlie Sheen to
describe himself proudly, dismissing
accusations of being bipolar
amazeballs - slang form for “amazing”

MOST OUTRAGEOUS
deather - one who doubts the official story
of the killing of Osama bin Laden
assholocracy - government by obnoxious
multi-millionaires
botoxionist - a doctor who administers Botox
injections

MOST EUPHEMISTIC
artisan, artisanal - faux-fancy term used to
describe food and other products
job creator - a member of the top one-
percent of moneymakers
regime alteration - alternative to “regime
change” promoted by Obama administration
in some Middle Eastern countries

MOST LIKELY TO SUCCEED
Arab spring - a series of popular uprisings in
Middle Eastern countries against dictatorial
regimes
cloud - online space for the large-scale
processing and storage of data
tiger mom, tiger mother - an exceedingly
strict parent (after Amy Chua’s memoir,
“Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother”)

LEAST LIKELY TO SUCCEED
Tebowing - posing for photograph
praying on one knee, after Denver
Broncos quarterback Tim Tebow
9-9-9 - tax plan proposed by Herman
Cain (9% business tax, 9% personal
income tax, 9% federal sales tax)
brony - Adult male fan of the “My
Little Pony” cartoon franchise

OCCUPY WORDS (new category)
occupy - verb, noun, and combining form
referring to the Occupy protest movement
the 99%, 99 percenters - those held to be at
a financial or political disadvantage to the
top moneymakers, the one-percenters.
people’s mic, human microphone - method
of amplifying a person’s speech by having
surrounding people repeat it line by line
twinkling - system of wiggly hand gestures to
register approval or disapproval

WORD OF THE YEAR
Nominations to be made at final meeting.