

Oxford English Dictionary News

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Editorial

14 June 2001 was a red-letter day in the quarterly publication of *OED Online*. For the first time, the range of text published included the addition of some 250 new words and senses across the alphabet, a proportion that will increase with future ranges.

The preparation of entries for new items has always been at the forefront of the *OED* revision programme. Since the publication of the *Additions* volumes in the 1990s the new-words team has continued to research and define both older established lexical items which had not been included in the First Edition and Supplements, and English as it has evolved in the late 20th century throughout the various English-speaking regions of the world. In this issue of *OED News* are some 'taster' entries for two new items published this quarter – *doh!* and

cyberphobia. The first is an expression popularized by Homer Simpson, although he was by no means the first to use it; the second is just one of the many *cyber-*compounds which emerged in the 1990s. Jennie Price also looks at the process of tracking and capturing the English language around the world, while some of the compilers of the new *AskOxford* language information website allow us to sample its helpful wares.

Bernadette Paton, Newsletter Editor and Principal Editor, *OED*

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OED: We're right on message

The latest release of material on *OED Online* is the first to contain new entries from across the alphabet.

Quarterly online publication provides an opportunity to publish new material more frequently than before, and to make available research on words and phrases which, as part of the main revision programme, would not be published for some years in their alphabetical sequence. Our aim in the new-words team is to apply the *OED*'s historical approach to contemporary material. This first batch of 250 or so entries is designed to reflect both the diversity of the language we record, and the depth of our research. Many of the terms are quite familiar, but their origins

and early history are sometimes surprising.

They range from political hot potatoes such as **GM** foods, **human BSE**, and the **postcode lottery**, to cultural icons such as **Bollywood**, the **mullet** haircut, and Homer Simpson's **doh!** We hope that the two complete sample entries for contemporary items shown overleaf give a taste of the new material being added to the *OED* while the side bars show the complete list of new words published this release.

This first batch of 250 or so entries is designed to reflect both the diversity of the language we record, and the depth of our research.

Michael Proffitt, Principal Editor, New Words, *OED*



- A & E
- Accident and Emergency
- acid jazz
- alcopop
- alternative energy
- arsed
- asylum
- asylum seeker
- bad hair day
- Balti
- big beat
- Bollywood
- Bosman
- boy band
- Brit-
- Britpop
- browser
- B2B
- call centre
- care assistant
- care attendant
- caregiver
- caregiving
- care group
- care in the community
- care worker
- casualty department
- cat flap
- CCTV
- channel surf
- channel surfer
- channel surfing
- chat room
- cheese
- cheesy
- Child Support Agency
- clubber
- clubbing
- .com
- control freak
- CSA
- cybercafe
- cybercash
- cybercrime
- cybercriminal
- cybercultural
- cyberculture
- cyberia
- cyberian
- cyberlaw
- cybermall
- cybernaut
- cyberphobia
- cyberphobic
- cyberphobia
- cyberporn
- cybershop
- cybershopper
- cybershopping
- cybersquatter
- cybersquatting
- cybersurfer
- cyberworld



For those who are frightened of their computers...

For when things go badly wrong...

Varieties of English World English and the OED

An important part of the work of the new-words team of the OED project is to increase our coverage of vocabulary from the major varieties of World English.

We are very fortunate to be able to use as the basis of our research a number of comprehensive regional dictionaries, such as the *Australian National Dictionary*, the *Dictionary of New Zealand English*, the *Dictionary of South African English on Historical Principles*, and the *Dictionary of Caribbean English Usage*.

Of course we cannot include every word covered in these regional dictionaries, and have to make a decision – as with all new entries – based on the amount of available quotation evidence. Quotations that we find in regional dictionaries are backed up by examples from our Reading Programme, which includes text from all over the English-speaking world, as well as newspapers and magazines contributed partly by members of staff in branches of Oxford University Press worldwide. These are further supplemented by suggestions and contributions from interested members

of the public and by research in electronic newspaper archives and similar databases.

Many of the resulting words (as well as some of the earliest of this type documented in the First Edition of the OED) describe flora and fauna, and it is interesting to see how many words originating in British English have travelled across the seas to be applied to a different species in a new land: compare, for example, the British magpie with the unrelated, but similarly coloured Australian birds of the same name.



Slang words tend to start life quite specific to a certain variety of English, nowadays often subsequently becoming more widely used via film and television. Some regional slang words making their debut in *OED Online* are (from North America) *marble orchard*, a cemetery; (from Australia) *mail*, information, rumour; and (from the U.S. Military) *Maggie's drawers*, a red flag used to indicate a miss in target practice. For U.S. and Australian slang in particular, we have a number of useful dictionaries which we regularly consult to check currency and find new examples. Some curious facts emerge from our research: why, for example, is a linen department in a shop sometimes called a *Manchester department* in Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa, but not apparently elsewhere?

The most prolific contributor of new vocabulary to the English language is, unsurprisingly, American English. Looking at the update of the range of entries from MARCIATION to MASSYMORE recently published in the New Edition online, we find about 70 entries which are labelled 'U.S.' or 'orig. U.S.', as well as a further ten or so originally, chiefly, or wholly 'N. Amer.' in *OED* Second Edition. In comparison, the segment of the First Edition of the *OED* dealing with this range shows us roughly 20 entries for specifically American terms (not all explicitly labelled at this time as

such) many of which were cited from the then recently published *Century Dictionary*, or from various editions of *Webster's*. When the *OED* was originally compiled resources were less abundant and the editors relied heavily on contributions received as a result of their appeal for readers in the 'English-speaking and English-reading public in Great Britain, the Americas, and the British Colonies'. As it turned out, the American readers were eventually set to work on much the same material as those in Britain, and it was left to a few prolific contributors such as Albert Matthews of Boston to provide examples of more specifically American usage.

The only other examples of vocabulary specific to a particular regional English in the First Edition of the *OED* in this range are a sense of *marrow-pudding* labelled *West Indian*, and Australian uses of *martin* and *Mary*. By contrast, the New Edition online brings us over 30 entries from Australia and New Zealand, Canada, the Caribbean, and South Africa, in addition to those from the United States noted above. This is as much a measure of how these Englishes have grown and settled into very distinctive varieties over the last century as it is of the vast increase in resources available to today's editors of the *OED*.

Jennie Price, Senior Assistant Editor, New Words, *OED*

dance music
deejay
deejaying
desert storm
desert storm syndrome
direct debit
DJ
DJ-ing
docusoap
doh!
domain
dot
dot com
double-click
drum and bass
duh!
dumb down
E col
emoticon
EU
Euro
European Monetary Union
European Union
fair-trade
FAQ
feelgood factor
frequently-asked questions
Friends of the Earth
full monty
functional food
gangsta
gangsta rap
gangsta rapper
gangster rap
gangster rapper
G8
generation X
generation Xer
genetically engineered
genetically modified
genetic engineering
genetic modification
GM
GMO
GNVQ
Good Friday Agreement
Greek salad
Group of Eight
Gulf War Syndrome
home page
homie
HTML
HTTP
human BSE
hyperlink
hypertext link
hypertext markup language
hypertext transfer protocol
icon
Income Support
information
superhighway
Internet
internet access provider
internet Protocol
internet relay chat
internet service provider
internetwork

AskOxford.com

At the beginning of May, Oxford University Press's new web site AskOxford (available free at www.askoxford.com) went live.

As the name implies, this site is the new online home of the OWLS service, where Oxford's dictionary editors answer enquiries from the general public about the English language (of which more later).

But that is merely the tip of the iceberg: the site contains a wealth of language-related information and resources. Electronic versions of the *Paperback Oxford Dictionary and Thesaurus*, the *Little Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*, and the *Oxford Dictionary of First Names* are included in the site, searchable from a query box at the top of each page. For schools, there are downloadable worksheets covering dictionary skills.

A 'Better Writing' section offers a 'Tip of the week', a database of common errors, and tips on spelling and grammar, and a guide to getting your message across using plain English. In the UK version of the site, there are also several sample letters, to give ideas for turns of phrase in various letter-writing situations.

The 'World of Words' contains insight into the world of dictionaries and lexicography. New words from each decade of the 20th century are discussed, and dictionary-makers past and present are profiled. Quotations and phrases are covered in depth, and here you can find a selection of recent quotes in the news. There is also, in the UK version, a section on the history and meaning of names.

In 'Global English', Penny Silva, Director of the *OED*, describes the development of the many different varieties of English spoken around the world.

And for light relief, 'Word Games' offers a 'word challenge', quick and cryptic cross-words, party games, a history of Scrabble,

and a section devoted to the game show *Countdown*.

Plans for the future development of the site include a 'History of English', a section on modern languages, and a larger collection of downloadable teaching materials.

Mark Dunn, Senior Editor, *OED Publication Group*

Just ask OWLS

Since 1983, enquiries from members of the public have been answered by members of staff of the *OED* and other English dictionaries under the name of the *Oxford Word and Language Service (OWLS)*.

Since 1996 this service has also had an e-mail address. When the *AskOxford* site was proposed, it was natural to think of making OWLS one of the resources available. However, the prospect of every websurfer sending e-mail queries to the *OED* was a daunting one, especially as the same questions are often asked over and over again. It was clear that, like any self-respecting information website, OWLS would need an FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) page to provide answers to the most common enquiries. Many had already been covered by our little book, *Questions of English* (OUP 1994). Thinking of our new electronic readership, we rewrote some of these and added a few more.

The result is a useful general resource giving easily available answers to some of those perennially vexing questions: is it *I* or *me*, *its* or *it's*, *pizzas* or *pizza's*; what is the word for a group of cats, a baby hedgehog, the opposite of a misogynist; *hungry*, *angry* – do any other English words really end in *-gry*; what is the longest English word; and why don't we just introduce phonetic spelling?

However, there is one question which we are still waiting to answer: what is the most common question asked by users of the *AskOxford* website? Watch this space!

Jeremy Marshall, Associate Editor, *OED*, and Co-ordinator, *Oxford Word and Language Service (OWLS)*



Staff news

In February 2001 Penny Silva was appointed as the Director of the *OED*. The post had been vacant since December 1999: Martin Richardson, Publishing Director for Science and Medicine, Journals and *OED*, looked after the project during 2000.

Penny was Executive Director of the Dictionary Unit for South African English at Rhodes University in Grahamstown from 1991-98, and joined the *OED* in February 1999 as Deputy Chief Editor.

Her new role means that she has moved from involvement in the editing process and the management of the editorial groups to management of all the various aspects of the project, including technological support and the publication of *OED Online*.

John Carmichael, the manager of the Technology Group, left the *OED* at the end of April 2001 after two years in the project. John's meticulous management of the complex systems enabling the *OED* editors to do their work securely is greatly appreciated. The launch of *OED Online* took place during John's time in the project, and his cooperation with the Online Publication Group ensured that the conversion of batches of text for publication each quarter proceeded smoothly and to deadline. We wish him well in his future career.

internetworked
internetworking
jubbly
jungle
junglist
Kosovan
Kosovar
lad
ladette
leader of the opposition
lifestyle drug
millennium bug
MPEG
MP3
mullet
music video
name and shame
naming and shaming
National Vocational
Qualification
net
New Labour
new lad
new man
newsgroup
new variant CJD
nutraceutical
nvCJD
NVQ
off-message
on message
pants
pay and display
pay cable
pay channel
pay-per-view
peace accord
peace agreement
peace dividend
peace initiative
peace process
peace settlement
peace treaty
performance-enhancing
phat
postcode lottery
PPV
quality time
retail park
retail therapy
road rage
roid
roid rage
Scottish Vocational
Qualification
search engine
serial killer
serial killing
serial marriage
serial monogamist
serial monogamy
shell suit
six-pack
slack

smiley
smiley face
snail mail
spam
spammer
spamming
special-needs
student loan
superhighway
surf (the net)
surfer
surfing
SVQ
third way
trailer trash
trip-hop
24-7
urban folklore
urban legend
urban myth
video diary
video on demand
WAP
web
web-based
webcam
webcast
webcasting
web-enabled
webliography
webmeister
web publisher
web publishing
webzine
wireless application
protocol
World Wide Web
W3
WWW
year 2000
Y2K
zero tolerance

Quotable quotes

Some thoughts from the *OED* and its files on

Over-assiduous recycling...

1614 B. Jonson *Bartholmew Fayre*, To be euer busie, and mis-take away the bottles and cannes..before they be halfe drunke off.

...they did what?...

1802 E. Forster tr. *Arabian Nights*, They showed a piece of wood, which they falsely affirmed to be a mole, of which the sultana had been delivered.

...clubbing in Regency London...

1818 Keats *Letters* 5 Jan, I am getting initiated into a little band...Stopping at a tavern they call hanging out. Where do you sup? [is] Where do you hang out?

...if the cap fits....

1897 *Dictionary of National Biography*, As he advanced in years, Smellie developed a slouching gait and became somewhat slovenly in his dress and appearance.

...don't try this at home...

1924 D. C. Minter *Children's Parties*, Musical Arms. This game is played in the same way as Musical Chairs, without, however, using chairs.

...and a health warning for dentists...

1998 *Medline* (article title), Viagra presents special concerns for the hygienist and the dental team.

Interesting antedatings

Revision of the entries in the June *OED* Online update has revealed an earlier origin than previously thought for many words, including:

megabyte (antedated to 1965 from 1973),
melancholy adj. (a1393 from 1526),
membrane (?a1425 from 1519),

memo (1705 from 1889),
memorably (1608 from 1755).

...the Internet's biggest,
most prestige-laden
reference book... *The Guardian*

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Online

www.oed.com

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Appeals

Words or phrases which appear on the Appeals List are those currently being drafted or revised for the *Oxford English Dictionary* for which the documentary evidence is incomplete. Often these are slang or colloquial items which cannot be researched in specialist texts and are most likely to be turned up by a general reader in popular or non-specialized literature.

Usually the appeal is for an earlier example than our current earliest (e.g. 'antedate 1970' for a word for which our earliest example comes from 1970), but sometimes the appeal is for an interdating where there is a large gap in the *OED's* quotation evidence (e.g. 'interdate 1589-1910').

Occasionally we ask for a postdating (e.g. 'postdate 1875'), if an editor feels that an item being revised is still current but has failed to find any recent examples through the usual avenues of research.

gaffer tape
antedate 1988

gay (stupid; 'lame')
antedate 1978

mukluk
(*telegraph, word of mouth*)
antedate 1945, postdate 1966

muggins (*card game*)
any information

multiplicatively
antedate 1914 (appears 1895 in *dicts.*)

mumpishly, *adv.*
(*glumly, sulkily*)
any examples

nit nurse
antedate 1985

wife-beater
(*sleeveless T-shirt, vest*)
antedate 1997

OED APPEALS AND SUBMISSIONS

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