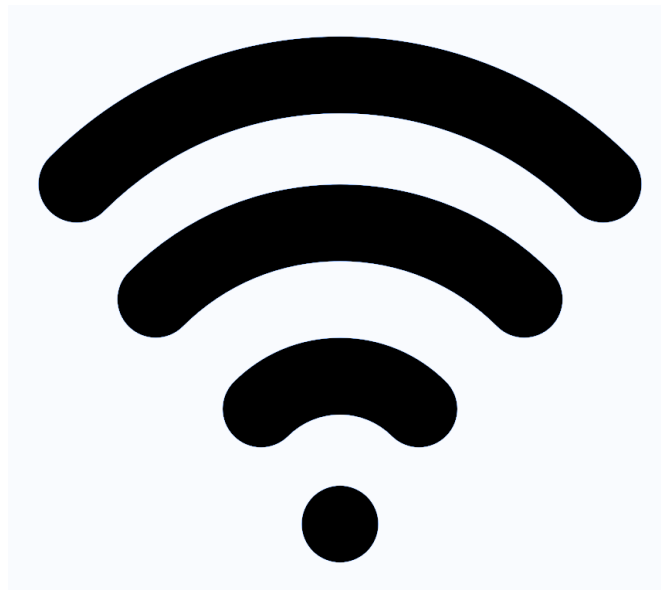


Internet Expands Definition of Commonly Used Words

VOCABULARY WORDS

1. commemorate /kə'mem·ə'reɪt/ (verb) to show honor to the memory of an important person or event in a special way
Example: The ceremonies commemorated the 20th anniversary of the founding of the school.
2. lexical /'lek.sɪ.kəl/ (adjective) relating to words
Example: I took a lexical approach by teaching each English word by using pictures.
3. dawn /dɔ:n/ (noun) the start of a period of time or the beginning of something new
Example: The fall of the Berlin Wall marked the dawn of a new era in European history.
4. meteoric /,mi:tj'ɔ:r.ɪk/ (adjective) used to describe something that develops very fast and attracts a lot of attention
Example: His early career had been meteoric.
5. variant /'ver.i.ənt/ (noun) something that is slightly different from other similar things
Example: Scientists are seeing a growing list of genes in which genetic variants contribute to multiple diseases.



The fast pace at which the Internet has entered and transformed our lives has had an impact on the words and language we use. It is 20 years since the website Dictionary.com was created, and it has looked back at the past two decades to see how the world wide web has created additional definitions to many commonly used words.

Dictionary.com boss Liz McMillan says it's interesting to see, "just how much the rise of technology has shaped our word use over time". She said: "To **commemorate** the 20th birthday of Dictionary.com, we look back at 20 words that have expanded in meaning over the last 20 years." The website has been documenting new **lexical** uses since, "the **dawn** of the Internet era".

Perhaps one of the most easily recognizable changes is to the word "friend". For centuries, this word has been a noun. However, with the **meteoric rise** of Facebook, this very common word is now also a verb, as in, "Can you friend me?" A **variant** of this word is "befriend," which means to become friends with someone (usually in the real and not cyber world).

The word "tablet" used to commonly refer to a flat piece of stone, clay, or wood that is used to write on. Now it's more likely to mean a touchscreen device that is Internet-enabled. Other words that have new definitions include "cloud," "wireless," "viral," "tweet" and "troll". There's no knowing which new words will have new meanings in the next two decades.

DISCUSSION

1. What three English words do you really like (and why)?
2. What three English words do you really dislike (and why)?
3. How has the Internet changed the words in your language?
4. How has the Internet changed your life?
5. What would life be like without the Internet?