

Words of Wisdom from The Words Workshop

The word most journalists would like to dump

'Diarrhoea' has emerged as the word in the English language which journalists would most like to get changed in a survey carried out by the Spelling Society in conjunction with HoldtheFrontPage.co.uk.

Last month, 414 HoldtheFrontPage.co.uk readers took part in an online spelling test organised by the Spelling Society pressure group. The results showed that, despite the requirements of their career, many journalists still struggle with relatively common words.



Among the key findings were:

- The word most journalists would like to see spelt differently is 'diarrhoea' .
- More than eight out of ten journalists would respect a person less if they misspelled a word in an email.
- More than 60% of journalists refuse to use simplified spelling even in text-messaging.

The survey asked respondents to spell ten everyday words ranging from 'embarrassed' to 'friend'. The results achieved by the journalists compared favourably with those achieved by the general public in an earlier identical survey carried out by the Society.

However not one of the words was spelt correctly by everyone taking part, with 25% misspelling 'embarrassed', for example.

Asked who was to blame for poor spelling, 79% of journalists said it was the fault of schools, 12% blamed the parents, while 3% blamed the government.

Ask Wordsworth ... How many words are there in the English language?



The fact is no one really knows, but according to the Oxford English Dictionary the number of words in use is around 171,000, with another 47,000 or so which have become obsolete. The average number of words used by individuals is of course much lower, with the average adult unlikely to use more than 20,000. Shakespeare's vocabulary has been estimated at 31,500.

Wordsworth's management speak NOT to avoid ...

As regular readers of Wordsworth, you will all know how much we hate complicated jargon and management speak. However, this month I decided to bring you some management speak that I DO like. This month's management speak we do like is the word '**Blamestorming**' - used to describe a meeting to discuss a failure and find a scapegoat!

Wordsworth's quote of the month ...

"If you want to know what a man's like, take a good look at how he treats his inferiors, not his equals."

J K Rowling

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