

# # Selfie, Steampunk, Catfish: See This Year's New Dictionary Words

- [Katy Steinmetz](#) @katysteinmetz | May 19, 2014 | Time.com



This picture displays "nautical steampunk fashion." Renee Keith / Getty Images / Vetta

**Merriam-Webster has revealed 150 new words that will be added to its collegiate dictionary this year, ranging from 'hashtag' and 'catfish' to 'dubstep' and 'crowdfunding,' most of which speak to some intersection of pop culture, technology and the Internet**

Today Merriam-Webster, America's best known keeper of words, announced new entries for their collegiate dictionary in 2014. Among them are telling specimens like *selfie*, *hashtag* and *steampunk*, reflecting lasting cultural obsessions that have become widespread enough to earn a place in the big red book.

Many of the 150 new words do indeed speak to some intersection of pop culture and technology, like *Auto-Tune* and *paywall*. But others, like *freegan* and *turducken*, remind us how many modern Americans are bravely pursuing alternative eating habits, refusing to forego dumpsters as a regular food source or to consume merely one kind of poultry at a time. And though MW does

not say as much, others remind us of what lasting influence Kate Middleton has in our society (See: *baby bump*, *fangirl*).

Here is a selection of the new words, with their definitions and the earliest year Merriam-Webster editors could find them being used:

**Auto-Tune** (v., 2003): to adjust or alter (a recording of a voice) with Auto-Tune software or other audio-editing software esp. to correct sung notes that are out of tune

**baby bump** (n., 2003): the enlarged abdomen of a pregnant woman

**big data** (n., 1980): an accumulation of data that is too large and complex for processing by traditional database management tools

**brilliant** (adj., new sense): *British*: very good, excellent

**cap-and-trade** (adj., 1995): relating to or being a system that caps the amount of carbon emissions a given company may produce but allows it to buy rights to produce additional emissions from a company that does not use the equivalent amount of its own allowance

**catfish** (n., new sense): a person who sets up a false personal profile on a social networking site for fraudulent or deceptive purposes

**crowdfunding** (n., 2006): the practice of soliciting financial contributions from a large number of people esp. from the online community

**digital divide** (n., 1996): the economic, educational, and social inequalities between those who have computers and online access and those who do not

**dubstep** (n., 2002): a type of electronic dance music having prominent bass lines and syncopated drum patterns

**e-waste** (n., 2004): waste consisting of discarded electronic products (as computers, televisions, and cell phones)

**fangirl** (n., 1934): a girl or woman who is an extremely or overly enthusiastic fan of someone or something

**fracking** (n., 1953): the injection of fluid into shale beds at high pressure in order to free up petroleum resources (such as oil or natural gas)

**freegan** (n., 2006): an activist who scavenges for free food (as in waste receptacles at stores and restaurants) as a means of reducing consumption of resources

**gamification** (n., 2010): the process of adding game or gamelike elements to something (as a task) so as to encourage participation

**hashtag** (n., 2008): a word or phrase preceded by the symbol # that clarifies or categorizes the accompanying text (such as a tweet)

**hot spot** (n., new sense): a place where a wireless Internet connection is available

**insource** (v., 1983): to procure (as some goods or services needed by a business or organization) under contract with a domestic or in-house supplier

**motion capture** (n., 1992): a technology for digitally recording specific movements of a person (as an actor) and translating them into computer-animated images

**paywall** (n., 2004): a system that prevents Internet users from accessing certain Web content without a paid subscription

**pepita** (n., 1942): the edible seed of a pumpkin or squash often dried or toasted

**pho** (n., 1935): a soup made of beef or chicken broth and rice noodles

**poutine** (n., 1982): *chiefly Canada*: a dish of French fries covered with brown gravy and cheese curds

**selfie** (n., 2002): an image of oneself taken by oneself using a digital camera esp. for posting on social networks.

**social networking** (n., 1998): the creation and maintenance of personal and business relationships esp. online

**spoiler alert** (n., 1994): a reviewer's warning that a plot spoiler is about to be revealed

**steampunk** (n., 1987): science fiction dealing with 19th-century societies dominated by historical or imagined steam-powered technology

**turducken** (n., 1982): a boneless chicken stuffed into a boneless duck stuffed into a boneless turkey

**tweep** (n., 2008): a person who uses the Twitter online message service to send and receive tweets

**unfriend** (v., 2003): to remove (someone) from a list of designated friends on a person's social networking Web site

**Yooper** (n., 1977): a native or resident of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan — used as a nickname