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DAVID CRYSTAL
David Crystal
MASTERING advanced eng
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Lexis Podcast

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Show notes for Episode 78

Welcome to episode 78 of Lexis in which Raj & Dan talk to John Kelly, former head of content at Dictionary.com, previous contributor to Merriam-Webster and Oxford Dictionaries, emoji lexicographer for Emojipedia, and school teacher. We discuss:

- How WOTY decisions were made at [Dictionary.com](https://www.dictionary.com)
- Whether we should celebrate WOTY for getting us talking about words, or be cynical about it as a marketing exercise
- What makes a WOTY stick around
- What qualities a good WOTY should have
- The sketchier WOTYs that we've seen
- 2025's crop of WOTY nominations - what we've seen so far and what might be to come
- WOTY as a barometer of the times
- 'Fascism' as John's WOTY/etymology of the year and why an old word is pertinent again.

John's blog is here: <https://mashedradish.com/>

'Fascism' is here;

<https://mashedradish.com/2025/11/04/fascism-etymology-of-the-year-2025/>

He is also on Bluesky here: <https://bsky.app/profile/mashedradish.bsky.social>

Some of the WOTY choices we discuss are covered in the articles and posts below:

https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/2025/12/rage-bait-2025-oxford-word-internet-language-defense/685143/?gift=h5ssLVeyARshEXLqfVq5YwEAIKAoVnByCEZqdOsZdV8&utm_source=copy-link&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=share

<https://theconversation.com/2025s-words-of-the-year-reflect-a-year-of-digital-disillusionment-270769>

<https://time.com/7334730/word-of-the-year-2025-cambridge-collins-dictionary-oxford-merriam/>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/12/04/learning/what-teenagers-are-saying-about-6-7-and-the-era-of-brain-rot.html>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cewjxqvqzgyo>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/z9xbh4j>

<https://theweek.com/politics/kavanaugh-stop-racial-profiling>

<https://www.bylinesupplement.com/p/brain-rot-what-the-oxford-word-of>

<https://www.bylinesupplement.com/p/the-words-that-define-our-enshittified>

<https://bsky.app/profile/hooved-mammal.bsky.social/post/3m7ntojukdc2y>

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<https://freemusicarchive.org/music/serge-quadrado/urban/cool-guys>