

LSSU Unleashes 43rd Annual List Of Banish Words Into A Post-Truth World

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SAULT STE. MARIE, Mich. – The wordsmiths at Lake Superior State University eschewed “fake news” and released LSSU’s 43rd annual List of Words Banished from the Queen’s English for Mis-use, Over-use and General Uselessness.

“We’ve drilled down and unpacked tons of pre-owned words and phrases deemed impactful by hundreds of nominators during 2017,” said an LSSU spokesperson. “Let that sink in.”

LSSU’s word banishment tradition is now in its fifth decade, and was started by the late W. T. Rabe, a public relations director at Lake Superior State University.

Rabe and fellow LSSU faculty and staff came up with the first list of words and phrases that people love to hate at a New Year’s Eve party in 1975, publishing it on Jan. 1, 1976. Though he and his friends created the first list from their own pet peeves about language, Rabe said he knew from the volume of mail he received in the following weeks that the group would have no shortage of words and phrases from which to choose for 1977. Since then, the list has consisted entirely of nominations received from around the world throughout the year.

Through the years, LSSU has received tens of thousands of nominations for the list, which now includes almost 900 entries. This year’s list is culled from nominations received mostly through a university web site at Issu.edu/banished and a word banishment page on Facebook. Word-watchers target pet peeves from everyday speech, as well as from the news, fields of education, technology, advertising, politics and more. An editor makes a final cut in late December.

And now, the 2018 list:

- **Unpack** – Misused word for analyze, consider, assess. Concepts or positions are not packed, so they don’t need to be unpacked.
- **Tons** – Refers to an exaggerated quantity, as in tons of sunshine or tons of work. ‘Lots’ would surely suffice.
- **Dish** – As in to dish out the latest rumor on someone. Let’s go back to ‘talks about’ and leave dishes in the cupboard.
- **Pre-owned** – What is so disgraceful about owning a used car now and then?
- **Onboarding/Offboarding** – Creature from the HR Lagoon. We used to have hiring, training and orientation. Now we need to have an “onboarding” process. Firings, quitting, and retirements are streamlined into “offboarding.”
- **Nothingburger** – Says nothing that ‘nothing’ doesn’t already. I’ll take a quarter-pound of something in mine.
- **Let that sink in** – One could say shocking, profound, or important. Let that sink in.
- **Let me ask you this** – Wholly unnecessary statement. Just ask the question already.
- **Impactful** – A frivolous word groping for something ‘effective’ or ‘influential.’
- **Covfefe** – An impulsive typo, born into a 140-character universe, somehow missed by the autocorrect feature.
- **Drill Down** – Instead of expanding on a statement, we “drill down on it.”
- **Fake News** – Once upon a time stories could be empirically disproved. Now ‘fake news’ is any story you disagree with.
- **Hot Water Heater** – Hot water does not need to be heated. ‘Water heater’ or ‘hot water maker’ will keep us out of hot water.
- **Gig Economy** – Gigs are for musicians and stand-up comedians. Now expanded to imply a sense of freedom and a lifestyle that rejects tradition in a changing economic culture. Runs a risk of sharecropping.