

CREDIT CRUNCH is the Word of the Year, but it's not all doom and gloom...

The word that's on everyone's lips at the moment has been chosen by *Countdown's* Susie Dent to sum up 2008. But CREDIT CRUNCH joins a host of other new or newly revived words – some serious, and some rather more light-hearted - in her latest book, ***Words of the Year***, publishing on October 2nd by Oxford University Press.

'The world's financial markets have been one of the biggest generators of vocabulary in the past year,' says Susie Dent. 'Specialized vocabulary is now firmly on the British public's radar. As fears of a recession escalate, it may be productivity of the linguistic kind that is the safest bet. 'Credit crunch' is an example of an established term – it was already in currency back in the 1960s – being resurrected as circumstances change.'

In addition to the now familiar financial terms such as NINJA LOANS, STAGFLATION, FUNTS or JINGLE MAIL, *Words of the Year* also looks at expressions from other areas of our lives – including online social networking, ethical living, and the world of styling - that have been 'bubbling under' in 2008.

It was a year when the traditional Olympic torch-bearers had to become FLAME ATTENDANTS, when RUN-OFF - first recorded in the *Oxford English Dictionary* from 1873 - became synonymous with events in Zimbabwe, when Google® increased its linguistic dominance thanks to our quest for GOOGLEABILITY, and the newer MOOFER and SCUPPIE came to reflect our modern working lives.

'Our language is becoming more expressive than ever,' says Susie Dent. 'You may hate MOMNESIA, NOMOPHOBIA, RICKROLLING and PODSLURPING: but few of us could deny that, when we heard them for the first time, we weren't just that little bit curious.'

10 OF THE BOOMING WORDS OF YEAR 2008 TO MAKE YOU SMILE IN THE WORLD OF BUST:

1. **NOMOPHOBIA** - A fear of being out of mobile phone contact. The word is a contraction of 'no mobile phone phobia'.
2. **BOYTOX** – Botox cosmetic treatment for men (MANSCAPING is another entry in *Words of the Year*: the all-over removal of a man's body hair as part of a grooming routine)
3. **UNDO-PLASTY** – Surgery to rectify bad cosmetic surgery (it joins another growing trend, that of UMBILICOPLASTY – a surgical procedure which transforms the belly button – e.g. which turns an 'innie' into an 'outie')
4. **NONEBRITY** – A person who acquires and maintains celebrity status while having done little to deserve it.
5. **GOOGLEGÄNGER** - A person who shares your name and who comes up as a 'hit' when you search for yourself in a search engine.
6. **GLAMPING** – Camping in luxury (blend of 'glamorous' and 'camping')

7. **RICKROLLING** – An Internet ‘meme’ whereby a web user is unexpectedly taken to a video of the 1980s pop song ‘Never Gonna Give You Up’ by Rick Astley

8. **PURRCAST** - a downloadable broadcast of a cat purring (blend of ‘purr’ and ‘podcast’).

9. **SLEEVEFACING** A novel way of creating online identity - posting a personal photo on *Facebook* with your face obscured by an album cover. *‘In 2008 social networking sites have enabled people to express themselves in ever more creative ways. The creation of an online identity has been one of the most prominent themes of the 21st century to date,’* says Susie Dent. *‘With SLEEVEFACING, users are striving for individuality in their own personal space in order to stand out from the crowd. It’s produced some wonderful (and some curious results).’*

10. **MOMNESIA** – a pattern of mental confusion and forgetfulness that characterizes a mother’s first year after giving birth.

And, for those **DOOMERS** among you who would like to keep up to speed with financial jargon, here are a few of the entries in *Words of the Year* which have been on our radar in 2008.

YOUR GUIDE TO SOME OF THE ENTRIES IN THE 2008 BANK OF CREDIT CRUNCH WORDS OF THE YEAR:

NINJA LOAN – a loan or mortgage made to someone who has ‘No Income, No Job, No Assets’

JINGLE MAIL – the practice of sending back one’s house keys to the mortgage company because of negative equity, or the inability to keep up with payments

IPOD – acronym for ‘insecure, pressured, overtaxed, and debt-ridden’

HOMEDEBTOR– homeowner with a very large mortgage, particularly one that they are unlikely to ever pay off

SPEED MENTORING – a style of career- or life-coaching modelled on speed dating, in which each participant has a few minutes to seek advice on career-related questions

FUNT – someone who is Financially UNTouchable

Plus...

EXPLODING ARM – variable rate mortgage with rates that soon rise beyond a borrower’s ability to pay

GOING UNDERWATER – falling into negative equity

STAGFLATION – stagnant growth and rising inflation

‘**CRIPES**’, as Boris Johnson would say...

Words of the Year is a fascinating collection of new and newly resurrected words that have defined the year in 2008. It is published by Oxford University Press on 2 October 2008.

For more information or to interview Susie Dent, please call Juliet Evans on 01865 353911 or email juliet.evans@oup.com

Notes to editors:

Glossary of terms in the press release:

credit crunch	A severe drop in the amount of funds available to borrowers following a collapse in credit supply from asset-backed lenders. The term is also used to mean a period characterized by such a credit shortage.
flame attendant	The name given by the Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games to security guards from China's People's Armed Police, who accompanied the runners carrying the traditional Olympic torch during its journey around the world.
run-off	A second ballot, following a previously indecisive election.
googleability	The ease with which a name or subject can be found by the Google® search engine.
moofer	An acronym for a mobile out-of-office worker.
scuppie	An acronym for a 'socially conscious upwardly-mobile person/urban professional'.
podslurping	The theft of corporate data by installing special software on an iPod or similar device and then connecting that device to a computer or network.
doomer	An abbreviation of 'doom-and-gloomer'.
cripes	A (dated) expression of surprise or dismay. In 2008 'cripes' became the trademark of the Conservative MP Boris Johnson's successful bid for the mayorship of London.