

Crabby demystifies strange Internet terms (part 2)

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Crabby Office Lady

As you know, I really enjoy demystifying terms. A couple of weeks ago I introduced you to five of the more colorful Internet terms, and today I try for five more.

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A couple of weeks ago, I wrote a column about [five strange Internet terms](#). This week I feature five more that caught my fancy. This Web technology moves so quickly that by the time I publish this column, I'm sure many more terms will need demystifying. Who knows; there may be a third installation of this column ...

#1: e-nag

You know when you have something on your mind, something that is really needling you? Of course it's always better to get it off your chest and tell the one who caused all this heartache about what's really going on. That being said, if I've told you once, I've told you in many columns and in many different ways that e-mail is not the best place to have a heart-to-heart with someone. While you may think that you're choosing your words wisely, it's entirely possible that no matter how well-crafted you think your letter is, e-mail messages with lots of emotion are often misunderstood.

Now, the only thing worse than laying your burden down in e-mail is to do it again ... and again ... without giving the recipient time to respond. Maybe you're sorry you sent that first message and so you send a second one explaining yourself. And then maybe you need to backtrack one more time and tell your recipient that while you recognize that the first message was rather harsh, there were some valid points in there and didn't she think so too?

Okay. Now you're just being an e-nag. You are tormenting this person — even if she fully deserves it — without giving her time to respond. Anyone who heckles and badgers someone (or even a group of someones) through electronic avenues — be they e-mail messages, chat rooms, or instant messages — is being an e-nag. You don't want to be thought of that way do you? (And by the way: Count to 10 before you press the send button. Think about the repercussions of your actions. Once a message is sent ... it's sent.)

#2: e-gret

Love is never having to say you're sorry. Except when you must say you're sorry to salvage your relationship and make sure you don't end up eating ramen noodles from a cardboard cup seven days a week. If you are too afraid to admit that you're wrong in person, sometimes a letter will do nicely. However, if you're not the kind who can come up with a heartfelt, hand-written note, perhaps an e-gret is right for you.

My illustrious and erudite editor told me about e-grets — apologies made by e-mail — and although I've practiced it for a few years now, I never knew that what I was doing had bonafide definition. Now I have a new subject line: "Warning: sloppy e-gret inside."

But remember, don't be an e-nag about your e-gret; say it and let it be and see what happens. And if that doesn't work out, remember: Diamonds are a girl's best friend.

#3: splog

Making up words and phrases is fun, especially in the fairly new land of the Internet:

- Link rot (constantly changing URLs).
- Wiki (a Hawaiian term meaning "quick," that is a sort of e-meeting place for a bunch of people to contribute what they know about a certain project or theme).
- Emoticon (an expression formed with typed characters; used in place of real facial expressions, body language, and tone of voice when writing).
- Of course, we're all familiar with what a blog is (web log).

I suppose it's no surprise that "splog" has shown up. I hadn't heard it before but I'm pretty certain I've been accosted by a splog. It's short for "spam blog" and it's a term used for fake blogs, whose only purpose is to promote Web sites in order to help those sites get better search engine page rankings (which in turn means more money, what else?). Splogs skew your search results and often take you on long and torturous journeys through the Internet. They are deceptive cabbies who've taken you hostage through the canyons of Manhattan.

#4: smurf

No, not the small blue creatures who live in the woods and make me want to gouge my eyes out when I see them on TV. A smurf attack sends tons and tons of traffic (hits) to its victim (a Web site). Without getting into the particulars of spoofed ping messages (a fancy way of saying hits multiplying themselves over and over again), a smurf makes the victim computer or Web site unavailable to the people who really need it (customers, for example). It overloads the system so that it can't communicate, it's against the law, and it's just not a nice thing to do.

#5: walled garden

You know that feeling you get when you look out your kitchen window and see your kids playing happily within the confines of your backyard? It's a feeling of confidence, of security, or of knowing that unless an asteroid comes screaming out of the sky or the neighbor's vicious dog jumps the fence, they're safe and sound.

When we're talking about the Internet, a walled garden is similar to your enclosed backyard: It restricts where people can go, where they can browse to. For example, you, as a parent, may not want your kids to be able to access all the pornography those nasty pornographers want to send their way. So there are steps you can take and settings you can adjust so that your kids are shielded from this.

As well, your Internet service provider (ISP) can act as the parent and actually guide you to certain sites and content paid for by the ISP (sneaky, eh?). My daughter's elementary school uses a walled garden environment: Kids can only get to certain limited sites and a teacher has to have a password in order to go beyond that.

Conversely, a walled garden can also be content that is specifically for some users, not for the general Web audience.

And there you have it: Five more of the terms that just make me smile (and wonder ...).

"High thoughts must have high language." — Aristophanes

About the author

Annik Stahl, the Crabby Office Lady columnist, takes all of your complaints, compliments, and knee-jerk reactions to heart. Therefore, she graciously asks that you let her know whether this column was useful to you — or not — by entering your feedback using the **Did this article help you?** feedback tool below. And remember: If you don't vote, you can't complain.

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