

## An evil storm is forecast

## June 13 2006

Wicked, Evil, Foul, Bad -- all words meaning essentially the same thing, yet we don't talk about "evil weather," "foul witches" or the "forces of bad."

Helping people understand such subtle differences in usage is the goal of Brigham Young University linguistics professor Mark Davies and his Web site that has attracted a following of thousands of regular users from 83 nations.

Davies' Web site can determine exactly how often any word appears in English usage, along with words that most often accompany it and many other factors. For example, if you want to know which word most commonly is associated with "slippery" Davies can tell you in less than a second: it's "slope."

## His Web site --

<u>view.byu.edu</u> -- is used by thousands of people, many of them teaching or learning English. Other users include a sitcom writer looking for new puns and a Columbia University psychiatrist who is developing cognitive tests for Alzheimer's patients.

The "VIEW" in view.byu.edu stands for Variation In English Words and uses as its database the British National Corpus, a 100-million-word collection of samples of written and spoken language.

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