

'World searches' - most popular searches on Cambridge Dictionaries and the reasons behind them

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Cambridge Dictionaries Online has published a list of the top words and phrases that got the world searching in 2011, with some surprising insights into their popularity.

Words and [phrases](#) people search for are frequently affected by major global [events](#): searches for 'tsunami', 'meltdown', 'riot', 'looting', and 'turmoil' all increased dramatically around corresponding events last year, but the words people search for in response to current events are not always as predictable.

When the phone-hacking story erupted in mid-July 2011, there was only a moderate increase in searches for 'hack', but a far more conspicuous spike in searches for 'humble'. Rupert Murdoch used this when he had to face a Commons Select Committee on July 19th, saying: "this is the most humble day of my life".

The phrase 'eat your heart out', already a surprisingly popular search, had a huge increase on May 11th - can this all be due to an episode of Glee in which a character says the line "Eat your heart out, Kate Middleton"?

Dominic Glennon, Reference Systems Manager for Cambridge Dictionaries Online, said: "It may surprise many people, as it does us, that by far the most common search on Cambridge Dictionaries Online for the whole year is actually the word dictionary itself!"

The top ten searches in 2011 were:

1. *dictionary*
2. *bear*
3. *eat your heart out*
4. *lead*
5. *concern*
6. *lie*
7. *issue*
8. *despite*
9. *appreciate*
10. *schedule*

Paul Heacock, Publishing Manager for Cambridge Dictionaries Online, said: "We are delighted that Cambridge Dictionaries Online, a free global resource, is assisting learners in their understanding of the events and language used around them. Cambridge Dictionaries Online was set up in 1999 as a free ELT resource, for learners of English as a foreign language, but has quickly become widely used by both native and non-native English speakers and learners."

In 2011 Cambridge Dictionaries Online had 20 million unique visitors, making over 63 million visits and viewing almost 300 million pages.

More information: To view and search Cambridge Dictionaries Online (free of charge), go to: dictionary.cambridge.org

Provided by Cambridge University Press

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