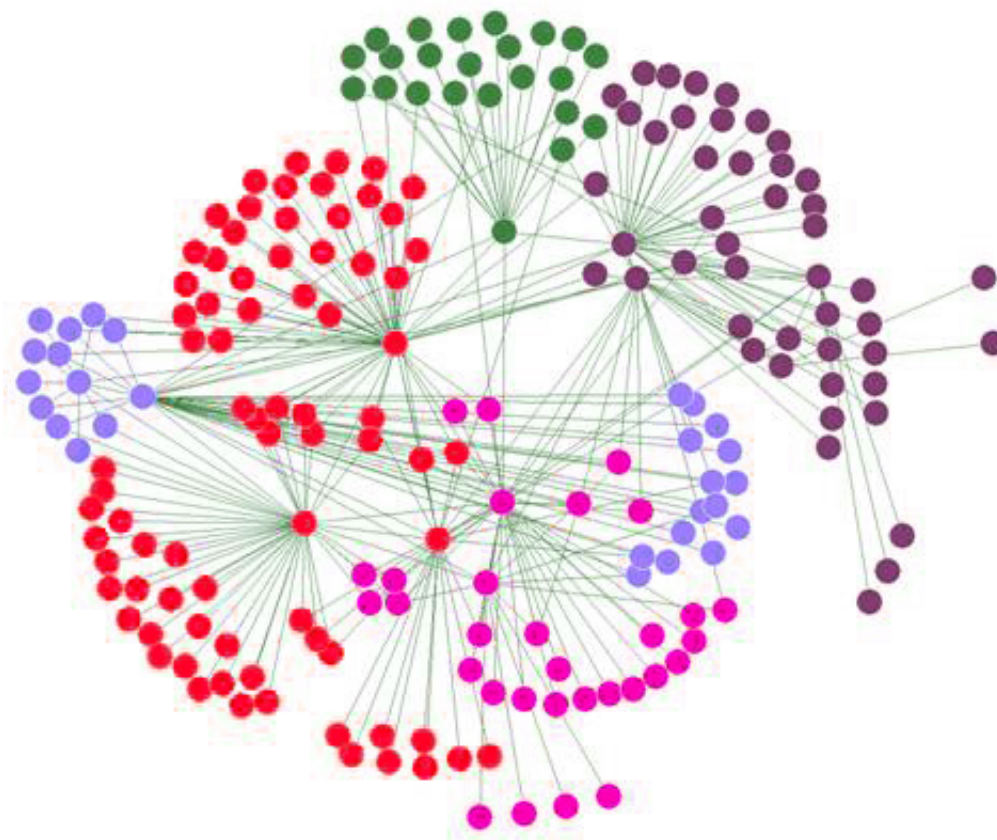


# Awesome still massively popular but say goodbye to tar-rah matey

March 13 2017

---



Social network diagram. Credit: Daniel Tenerife/Wikipedia

The need to communicate with a wider-world coupled with a move away from the cosy, close-knit communities of the 90s has dramatically changed the way British people speak over the last two decades, new research has revealed.

The study, by Lancaster University and Cambridge University Press, looks at the most characteristic words of informal chit-chat in today's Britain.

And not surprisingly the internet age has had a massive influence on the words we use.

While in the 1990s we were captivated by 'cassettes', today 'email', 'Internet', 'Facebook', 'Google', 'YouTube', 'website', 'Twitter', 'texted' and 'ipad' all top the bill.

'Twenty-four' reflects the open-all-hours community in which we now live - far away from a world where the 'cobbler' and 'playschool' were high in our vocabulary.

'Permed' and 'comb' head well and truly for the verbal dustbin and it's goodbye to 'tar rah', according to the study.

'Awesome', which replaced 'marvellous' in an earlier study, is still popular and now joins 'massively' in the top 15.

The word croquet has taken a hit along with expressions such as 'mucking', 'whatsername', 'golly' and 'matey'.

'Boxer', 'crossword' and 'draught' were all in the 1990s' top 15.

Newcomer 'Yoga' eases itself comfortably into the current top 15.

An earlier study by the same team compared existing data from the 1990s to two million words of then newly collected data from the year 2012. Now the team have collected more data and compared the same 1990s collection to a bigger collection comprising 5 million words spanning 2012-2015. At the end of this year they will publicly release 11

million words spanning 2012-2016.

Researcher and language expert Robbie Love, from the ESRC Centre for Corpus Approaches to Social Science (CASS) at Lancaster University, has compiled the top 15 most popular words from the 1990s which have since declined the most drastically and the top 15 words—not around in the in the 1990s—which are hugely popular today.

"These findings suggest the things that are most important to British society are indeed reflected in the amount we talk about them. New technologies like Facebook have really captured our attention, to the extent that, if we're not using it, we're probably talking about it. "The new data has shed light on some older words which, similar to "marvellous" and "marmalade" in the previous study, appear to have fallen out of fashion in the intervening years.

"The study provides a sense of the way society has expanded since the early 1990s and the end of the offline era. Our priorities are moving away from what's happening on our doorsteps. We are not talking about these things as much so the older [words](#) have 'faded' out of every day conversation."

Provided by Lancaster University

Citation: Awesome still massively popular but say goodbye to tar-rah matey (2017, March 13) retrieved 10 April 2024 from

<https://phys.org/news/2017-03-awesome-massively-popular-goodbye-tar-rah.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--