



Dear Reader,

It's that time of year again when we present a roundup of pet peeves sent in by **EC Buzz** readers and tell them collectively to *buzz off*.

Wishing you a buzzword-free holiday season,



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## Readers' Pet Peeves

1. **At this point in time:** A classic example of a manipulative expression used to imply an intricate technical meaning for a simple concept, in this case "now". It was popularized by John Dean, legal advisor to U.S. president Richard Nixon, in his testimony during the Watergate proceedings in the 1970s. Enough said.
  2. **For lack of a better word:** As in "You've got a great idea, but it's – for lack of a better word – unrealistic." This expression is often used, for lack of a more subtle approach, as an attempt to blunt an unfavourable comment. Probably better to do some softening up before delivering the fatal blow.
  3. **On / off the table:** As in "The option to use the expression *off the table* is still on the table." Another metaphor that has lost its lustre after the first few thousand repetitions. At this point in time it's had its day.
  4. **If you will:** As in "This usage is absurd, or, if you will, fatuous." The speaker is notionally asking the listener for approval of the word "fatuous". Ever heard anyone pause for such approval before continuing?
  5. **Take it to the next level:** Consultants, marketers and team leaders have been taking us to the next level for so long that surely we've got there by now. If not, you probably can't get there from here. Let's take it off the table.
  6. **The fact / reality / truth is:** In point of fact, these throw-away expressions are thrown in far too often. The truth of the matter is, we're all really tired of hearing them.
  7. **All right:** Perfectly all right in the right place, but this phrase seems to be gaining popularity as a dismissive way to end a conversation by someone in authority, as if to imply "You've got your orders, now go and do them" or simply "I'm so important, I don't have to observe polite conventions." Just remember that being polite helps to grease the wheels.
  8. **Blogosphere:** As if the word *blog* itself is not ugly enough, *blogosphere* seems to give legitimacy to what is largely a random collection of superficial opinions and lifestyle trivia. Trouble is, it's succinct and convenient.
  9. **New media:** This term embraces the production or distribution of information via any form of digital technology, but it's often used by communications or marketing companies to imply they are bang up-to-date because they use the Internet. Given that the World Wide Web is already 18 years old, it's now old hat to regard this as a new medium.
  10. **Information superhighway:** And while we're talking about the medium that brings the message, the grandiose *information superhighway* is another term that's been driven into the ground. Too bad it's also in danger of getting clogged with blogs, spam and other such junk. Give them bandwidth, and they will use it.
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## Parting Words

"Ours is the age of substitutes: instead of language, we have jargon; instead of principles, slogans; and instead of genuine ideas, bright ideas."

– Eric Bentley, American writer and critic