

THE ECONOMIST

Readers should prepare themselves: they will probably experience **brain rot** more often, thanks to our **word of the year**. Our pick's rise was **spurred** by **OpenAI**'s release of Sora, a generative artificial-intelligence (AI) platform that can create videos based on a prompt. Suddenly social-media feeds were filled with such clips. A term that started circulating in the early years of generative AI is now everywhere: "slop".

The word, of course, is far from new: the **OED**'s first **citation** is from the 15th century. Its meaning has evolved from mud and slush, through a weak liquid used as a poorly nourishing food, to any kind of food scraps, to nonsense or rubbish.

THE GUARDIAN

Facebook and Instagram began **shutting down** half a million accounts of users under 16 years old on Thursday as the **deadline** for Australia's social media **ban** **looms**.

The under-16s social media ban is due to **take effect** from 10 December, but Meta alerted users last month that it would begin shutting down accounts from 4 December. [...] The platforms will face potential **fin**es of \$49.5m for failing to **take reasonable steps** to keep under 16s from **holding accounts**

NBC News

Trump vows to 'permanently pause' migration from 'third world countries'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mjbTgV0mu2Q>



NEWS IN BRIEF 6

22 November-6 December 2025 (British English)
November 22-December 6, 2025 (American English)

The Economist /ɪˈkɒnəˌmɪst/ (see NIB4). This article in the box appeared in the Culture section. Many of them have distinctive names: **Bagehot** /ˈbædʒət/ (a column on British politics), **Lexington** /ˈleksɪŋtən/ (on American politics), **Charlemagne** /ˈʃɑːləmeɪn/ (on Europe politics), **Banyan** /ˈbænjən/ (on Asian politics), **Baobab** /ˈbeɪəʊˌbæb/ (on Africa), **Pomegranate** /ˈpɒmɪɡrænət/ (on the Middle East), **Schumpeter** (on economics), **Buttonwood** (on the financial market)...

brain rot /ˈbreɪn ˈrɒt/: « pourriture cérébrale ». Defined as “the supposed deterioration of a person’s mental or intellectual state, especially viewed as the result of overconsumption of material (now particularly online content) [...]”. Named Oxford University Press “word of the year” for 2024.

word(s) of the year. Abbreviated “WOTY”. Refers to the most important word(s) or expression(s) in the public sphere during a specific year.

[it] was spurred by: [cela] a été motivé par. Spur: éperon, incitation, impulsion

OpenAI. An American artificial intelligence (AI) organisation headquartered in San Francisco, California. It was founded in December 2015.

OED /ˌəʊiːˈdiː/ = Oxford English Dictionary

a citation /saɪˈteɪʃən/ = a reference (to a source)

≠ **a quotation** /kwəʊˈteɪʃən/ = a word or passage taken from a book, speech, etc., and repeated.

The Guardian /ˈgɑːrdiən/ = a British daily, often described as a left-wing newspaper

to shut down: fermer ≠ a federal shutdown (see NIB5)

a deadline /ˈdedlaɪn/: une date limite

a ban /ˈbæn/: une interdiction, une prohibition, une exclusion, une radiation (nom). Interdire, prohiber, exclure, radier (verbe).

to loom /ˈluːm/: se profiler, apparaître, être imminent, menacer

to take effect: entrer en vigueur

a fine /ˈfaɪn/: une amende

to take (reasonable) steps: prendre des mesures (raisonnables)

to hold an account /əˈkaʊnt/: posséder un compte

0:02 – **a (renewed) focus** /ˈfəʊkəs/ **on**: une attention (renouvelée) portée à

0:04 – **an ambush** /ˈæmbʊʃ/: une embuscade, un guet-apens (also: to ambush)

0:05 – **DC** /ˌdiːˈsiː/ = District of Columbia. E.g. Washington, DC

0:12 – **Third world countries**: pays du tiers-monde. Offensive. “Developing countries” is preferred.

0:24 – **Western civilisation** /ˌsɪvɪlaɪˈzeɪʃən/: la civilisation occidentale

0:27 – **a green card (holder)**: (un titulaire d’) une carte verte

0:56 – **to be targeted**: être ciblé

1:17 – **19 countries where foreign nationals face restricted entry** = Afghanistan, Burundi, Chad, Republic of the Congo, Cuba, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Haiti, Iran, Laos, Libya, Myanmar, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Togo, Turkmenistan, Venezuela, Yemen. (Source: The White House)

2:29 – **asylum** /əˈsaɪləm/: asile

Who should control British newspapers?

Thursday, 27 November 2025, *The Economist*

What a £500m merger says about Britain's media

Lord Rothermere, owner of the *Daily Mail* and other titles, is already a viscount. Yet on November 22nd, with his announcement of a £500m (\$660m) deal to add the troubled *Telegraph* newspaper to his media empire, he cast himself as a white knight. If approved, the takeover will end an extraordinary period of limbo for the 170-year-old paper, which has lacked a permanent owner since its parent company fell into receivership in 2023. It also raises a bigger question: who should own Britain's press, if the choice is between foreign states and domestic moguls?

The *Telegraph* has framed its own fate as a matter of national sovereignty. The newsroom revolted when RedBird IMI—a joint venture between an American private-equity firm and International Media Investments, which has ties to the UAE's main ruling family—took temporary ownership. One headline thundered that it would be “unforgivable to allow Abu Dhabi to nationalise” the paper. The next year the Conservative government passed a law barring foreign governments from owning British newspapers, in effect forcing RedBird IMI to sell its stake.

A sale to the Daily Mail and General Trust (DMGT), Lord Rothermere's publisher, would probably resolve such concerns (while letting the Emiratis, still big investors in British high streets and football clubs, save face). But it also creates a different worry. Around three-quarters of national-newspaper circulation in Britain is already controlled by the DMGT or Rupert Murdoch's News UK. Allies of the Labour government fret openly about right-wing dominance and how Lord Rothermere, who also owns the *i* newspaper and the *Metro*, would wield even greater sway over Britain's press. Some are now asking Lisa Nandy, the culture secretary, to intervene. She has the power to ask two regulators, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) and Ofcom, to scrutinise the deal for its effects on, respectively, economic concentration and media plurality.

Yet the media landscape has already shifted. “The newspaper sector is a shadow of what it used to be,” says Becket McGrath, a competition lawyer at Euclid Law. According to Ofcom, 71% of Britons now get their news online, compared with only 22% in print. In the digital world, a combined *Daily Mail* and *Telegraph* would have less than a quarter of the BBC's reach, based on minutes spent online. All news sources are dwarfed by social-media platforms. In recent years the coverage of the *Telegraph* (nickname: the “Torygraph”) has converged with the *Daily Mail's*. The acquisition of the *i*, a politically neutral title, by DMGT has shown that it can preserve editorial independence. How regulators interpret all this remains to be seen.

a merger /'mɜːrˈdʒɜː/: une fusion

he cast himself as a white knight /'naɪt/: il s'est présenté comme un chevalier/un héros

limbo /'lɪmbəʊ/: les limbes (religion), le flou (figurative). **To be in limbo**: être dans l'incertitude

the newsroom /'njuːzruːm/: la salle de rédaction

a joint venture: une entreprise commune, une coentreprise

UAE = United Arab Emirates /juː'naɪtɪd 'ærəb 'emɪrɪts/: les Emirats arabes unis (EAU)

thundered. To thunder: tonner, tonitruer (for a person). Thunder: le tonnerre. Fracas (figurative)

to fret (about): se tracasser, se faire du souci, s'inquiéter (à propos de)

to wield /'wiːld/: exercer (autorité, pouvoir), manier, brandir (un outil, un instrument, une arme)

to scrutinise (UK), to scrutinize (US) /'skruːtɪnaɪz/: scruter, examiner minutieusement

dwarfed /'dwɔːft/: nain/naine (person with dwarfism), gnome (folklore). Eclipser, faire paraître petit

coverage /'kʌvərɪdʒ/: couverture, reportage (media). Garantie, protection (insurance)

the “Torygraph” = a pun (a play on words) on the name *The Daily Telegraph* implying it supports the Conservative (“Tory”) viewpoint.