

LANGUAGE CORNER: Ask George! December 2009.

BigBrotherEnglish vs EuroEnglish ?

1. Opening Act. **TechSpeak** comes from across the Pond. *Unfriend* is the first Internet-inspired word to receive the WOTY title, says NOAD, the New Oxford American Dictionary. WOTY ? That's simple: It means "Word of The Year". As a verb, it means, 'to remove someone as a *friend* on a social networking site such as Facebook'. "*Unfriend* has both currency and potential longevity," said the dictionary. The other 2009 WOTY items are: *hashtag*, *intexticated*, *netbook*, *paywall*, and *sexting*.

2. Corruption acceptable... **BuroEnglish**, or **EuroEnglish** for short, comes from Continent. It has nothing to do with Gordon B's Afganistan dishonesty. But it is as damaging. I have been formally informed of the following: The European Commission has just stated that English will be the official language of the European Union... Britain conceded that English spelling needed improvement, and has accepted a three-year phase-in plan to make it **Euro-English**. First, s will replace c. Certainly, this will make the sivil servants jump with joy. The hard c will be dropped in favour of k. This should klear up konfusion, and keyboards kan have one letter less. Publik enthusiasm will grow in the sekond year when ph will be replaced with f, making fotograf 20% shorter. In the 3rd year, publik akseptanse of all this kan be expekted to make more komplikated changes possible. Al will enkourage the removal of double letters—they always ben a deterrent to akurate speling. Al wil agre that the horibl mes of silent e in languag is disgrasful: it goes away. **If al zis has mad you proEurop, pleas pas it on to oza pepl.**

3. A Word of Wisdom to Wind Up With. Last month I'd quoted William Blake's *Proverb of Hell*: **Drive your cart and your plough over the bones of the dead!** The Question now is: Are **TechSpeak** & **BuroSpeak** mangling & maiming English beyond any hope of repair? If so, Despair! George Orwell, too, with **NewSpeak** in his arms needs a revolving device for repetitive turning in his grave. (George ORWELL. 1946. *Politics & The English Language*: <http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/orwell46.htm>)

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