About a dictionary that isn't one

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This paper is about the Urban Dictionary (UD), sometimes classed as an online slang dictionary, and generally acknowledged to be a bottom-up attempt at meaning-making. I argue that it is so unorthodox as far as dictionaries go that it is best seen as something else, not necessarily inferior to, but certainly not on a par with, a dictionary.

This claim is guaranteed to incur the anger of those who think that meaning-making (whose exact nature is not satisfactorily clarified in work praising or criticizing UD) should be some kind of democratic, bottom-up, user-generated (user-controlled, or otherwise user-involvement) as opposed to professional activity. It goes without saying that anyone with a mindset like that will be all the more convinced if they have no familiarity with dictionaries, never mind their principles.

The paper (i) argues, briefly, why it is impossible and also probably unnecessary to classify UD as a *slang* dictionary;[1] (ii) illustrates, very briefly, the joys of UD for the user at large and its potential use to the professional; (iii) argues that the standard slogans of collaborative meaning-making mean little, if anything, and are probably just exercises in lip service to some imagined democratic lexicography of doubtful desirability. *Professional* (as opposed to user-generated) should not be a taboo word in this enterprise. UD convincingly shows that the products of this kind of *pluralistic* authorship, while they may make fun reading, be insightful, and even prove valuable sources of information to the expert, are not worthy of the dictionary name. UD may surely be commended as a joyful toy for

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[1] Wikipedia, the primary source for the average person wanting to find about UD outside of its own site, explicitly categorizes UD as a slang dictionary.

the average native speaker and a useful one for the language expert, even if does not have its niche under the *dictionary* label.[2]

1 Slang? Dictionary?

UD, an online dictionary (OD) at www.urbandictionary.com with almost seven million entries is widely hailed as a new kind of dictionary — together with a good many similar ones in cyberspace — which can be updated every day, has no size limits and, more importantly by wide consensus, is *user-driven.* The era of the trusted paper dictionary, along with what goes by the name *treebook,* is supposedly over; the old reference works may still be valuable, but for tracking the dynamic changes that languages continually undergo, they are too slow. Not only that: the entry criteria of these "venerable tomes" are often too strict, and even dictionaries of slang sometimes require a word to be in use for a decade or so before it is included (Giles 2008). Cyberspace, which, in addition, offers most of this free of charge, now plugs this gap, and UD is seen as pioneering this trend.

I look at a small portion of that gap, noting that there is no consensus on what exactly the good news is that UD brings: the more sanguine critics of traditional lexicography *politicize* the issue claiming that it is not democratic enough, and bottom-up ventures such as UD take back language from "people wield[ing] language in service of classification systems and power relations" (Kirchner 2009:1). The more moderate appraisers are content to note the technological aspect that the online mode offers.

I also look at how the gap is claimed to be stopped by UD, and what it actually delivers to achieve these aims. Fortunately, to be clear about what that gap is and how cyberspace in general, and UD in particular, stops it, the notion of slang need not be clearly defined. UD is doubtless a repository of slang *too,* or at least slang and unconventional language[3] (with a lot of conventional material, not at all clearly delimited).

Urban is a good term that leaves open the issue of the type of UD: slang dictionary or not? Several sources, journalistic and more academic,

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[2] To avoid cluttering the exposition, the more bulky examples from UD will be placed in a separate *Illustrative Materials* section at the end.

[3] Originally published in 1937, Partridge's title of his slang dictionary (a more recent edition being, eg Paul Beale and Eric Partridge, New York: Macmillan, 1984) is probably a good attempt at a concise wording: *A dictionary of slang and unconventional English.* (True, its subtitle *colloquialisms and catch-phrases, solecisms and catachreses, nicknames, and vulgarisms* is nowhere so economical.)

agree that it is one. It can, of course, always be argued to be one exactly because of the notoriously undefinable nature of slang, in the first place.

UD itself has 35 entries for slang. To wit, these 35 entries are not (although they are called that in many sources, they probably do not pretend to be),[4] *definitions*—but whatever their wording and clumsy style, they still suggest how diverse these absolutely lay notions[5] for slang may be.

Thorne (2007: v) mentions several "definitions" of slang from UD. He writes:

> ❝ Ask users of slang for a definition and they might come up with: 'jargon, used playfully to prevent outsiders from intercepting the actual meaning'; 'the ever-evolving bastardisation of the written and spoken language as a result of social and cultural idolization [sic] of uneducated, unintelligable [sic] celebrities' and 'cool words, words that match the style.

Also, he provides a really minimalist "definition" coming from a teenager he interviewed: 'our language'.

Whichever end of the spectrum one goes to, it is possible to have a definition of slang that UD nicely covers. The closer to the informal end of the scale, the looser the "definition" one opts for, the easier the match becomes. The term apparently sticks: UD is widely acclaimed to be a *slang* dictionary even if its title does not say so.

Lew's (2011) discussion of UD in his analysis of English ODs does not mention slang. It does offer a slang example from UD, **bootyism,** and quotes its No 6 "definition" (which has 8 up and 5 down thumbs)[6] but it

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[4] In the case of such a hugely collaborative project it is impossible to tell whether the no doubt heterogeneous contributors know, to begin with, how (*explanatory*) definition should be different from "meaning-making" (a favourite expression of the writings promoting UD as democratic).

[5] No 29 is as follows: "stupid abbreviations which sound like they've got nothing to do with the word. the most annoying is the sort spoken by teenage, black chavs speak so fast you can't understand a word (you're probably not supposed to) and they might as well be MCing. *babe, you betta hav me sum booty on ya or u ain't cummin' 2 town wit me. translation = sweet girlfriend, you had better have brought some money with you, otherwise you can't come to town with me.*" (Incidentally, there is not one single real abbreviation in this pet hate of the contributor's, if we don't want to label *u* and *2* as abbreviations.

[6] The up and down thumbs are supposed to have an important function; more about these later.

seems to consider UD as a general (as opposed to special-purpose, such as slang) dictionary, along with Wiktionary and Wordnik.

2 Online dictionaries

There is no doubt that when it comes to speed of updating, ODs are usually far superior to any other medium. Generally, online works (and any electronic product) also provide faster and easier access/lookup[7] than the static print medium. If you want to hunt for newly minted words, slang or otherwise, colloquialisms or any item that you suspect will not yet be in paper dictionaries, they are just the repository to turn to. The question is whether ODs in general have features that seriously detract from their merits; also, in the particular case of user-controlled ones like UD, whether the drawbacks far outweigh the advantages. This cannot be hoped to be answered for the whole gamut of English ODs, collaborative/user-driven or otherwise, but UD will be scrutinized.

The two most similar ones to UD, often mentioned together, are Wordnik and Wiktionary (the latter often claimed to be multilingual, but in reality an English dictionary). Wordnik, which combines user-generated, collaborative content with a professional "core", does not encourage unbounded, unedited, uncontrolled, unguided user participation.

Wiktionary, by contrast, has been found to contain items with radically different treatments, lack internal consistency, and contradict the Wiktionary guidelines (Fuertes-Olivera 2009 : 107–130). If these hold for Wiktionary, then they are even more relevant in the case of UD.

UD welcomes you with a much-praised lively but uncluttered interface which, however, boasts so many features that it ought to be obvious that it is much more than a dictionary. You will not be disappointed: the dictionary part is complemented by many other features that come with a typical dictionary site. That it is *much less* than one, will not, alas, become apparent for another few minutes, but then it does, with a vengeance, to anyone with a nodding acquaintance with dictionaries (general or slang, paper or otherwise).

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[7] There are exceptions. Lew argues that this technological potential is not always properly utilized, especially when the online work is retrospectively digitalized (2011 : 9). One example of a (traditional, ie professional) OD with paper-like access is American Heritage, with no search facility at all; worse still is Dorland's Medical Dictionary [. . .], where access is even slower and more cumbersome than in a printed book (2011 : 9).

3 UD classified as a dictionary

Setting aside for the moment the scepticism regarding UD as a *dictionary*, let us see how it would be treated within *that* category. The classification of Landau (2001 : 7–42) for traditional paper dictionaries[8] will be used as a starting point (a)–(j), and those offered by Lew (2011) for ODs will be added (k)–(m) in the following subsection.

UD, then, is (a) monolingual,[9] (b) world English, (c) native speaker, (d) alphabetical, (e) semasiological, (f) adults', (g) synchronic, (h) unabridged, (i) general-I,[10] (j) general-II.[11]

UD is a new and relatively untried lexicographic venture, itself in constant change (cf "A single description of UD is complicated by its transitory form and function…" (Damaso & Cotter 2007 : 20) for the recording and storing of a moving target (cf the many attempts at defining slang, and that "Slang lexicographers often comment on the difficulty of determining with any confidence which terms are slang" Coleman (2009 : 314).

4 Product to service

More than twenty years ago information experts prophesied a transition from the dictionary as a product to the dictionary as a service, which was to be understood to imply that rather than "multiple identical copies of a dictionary, sold to users, there would be a single version of a database, from which clients [. . .] obtained the information the required" (Adams 2007 : 9, quoting Dodd 1989 : 87). As Adams observes, this has proved to be an *underestimate* of the ambitions of users, who now not only deem paper to be less informative than an online database but indeed have a whole new notion of the dictionary. Although hardly as a consequence of this change of viewpoint, these new users are said to expect to "participate in the public construction of knowledge, contributing and editing Web content when-

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[8] Just the starting point, because Landau's framework is (understandably) both too restrictive and too detailed to be used in its entirety: eg his *scholarly* vs *commercial* is ill suited to UD (and not too relevant for the present discussion). Scholarly works are supposed to be funded by "government agencies or foundation grants in addition to university support supplemented by individual donations." These oppose commercial ones, supported by private investors (2001 : 23ff).

[9] This, understandably, is not specified anywhere in UD, but appears obvious from the varied backgrounds of the contributors.

[10] As opposed to special-field, ie one that singles out some subject area.

[11] As opposed to special-purpose, ie cataloguing some restricted aspects of language.

ever they feel competent to do so." Writing about user-involvement dictionaries in general, Lew puts this as follows: "In the democratic world of the internet, users can play lexicographer as well and create their own online dictionaries" (2011). In Coleman's (even more) tongue-in-cheek wording: "A wide range of online slang dictionaries testify to the perennial faith that anyone who uses slang is qualified to document it" (2009 : 335).

In the view of (Lew 2011), ODs can by and large be classified by the old (problematic and overlapping, but still workable) criteria, but new ones must also be added: three are presented here, which are not inherited from the *treebook.*

Online works are

(k) institutional vs collective[12] in terms of user involvement (collective involves collaborative efforts by a community of nonprofessionals); bottom-up and open point to a similar phenomenon. The "collective" may actually exclude the maintainers of a dictionary, or there may simply exist no such maintainers, or professional editors. "Some online dictionaries do not edit the material submitted by their users at all, which changes entirely the relationship between dictionary maker and dictionary user" (Coleman 2006 : 585).

(l) free vs paid (in terms of publisher revenue): pay-per-view modes or the subscription-based access are obvious types, but when a service is sold to schools or libraries, it is not the end user who bears the costs.

(m) offered as one single/standalone/individual[13] dictionary, or a set of dictionaries from a single landing page.[14]

Summing up the three terms above: UD is a totally free, collective, standalone dictionary.

5 Promotion for UD

5.1 Wikipedia

True to its editorial principles, Wikipedia is neutral and balanced but it projects a positive image of UD (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Urban_Dictionary).

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[12] Predictably, there are in-between cases: the institutional vs collective distinction is more or less blurred: cf the example of Wordnik above.

[13] I will not use *individual* because the term will be indispensable in another framework/ classification.

[14] Lew mentions two other arrangements: dictionary portals with merely hyperlinks to multiple dictionaries; and dictionary aggregators, which "excel at pasting together the content of various dictionaries and serving them on a single page (2011 : 2).

As of April 2009, an average of 2,000 definitions were submitted daily; the site receives about 15 million unique visitors per month. Its definitions[15] (to be referred to as *entries* when illustrating them in the present paper) are those of slang or ethnic culture words, phrases, and phenomena *not found in standard dictionaries*. Most words have multiple definitions, usage examples, and tags. Visitors to UD submit definitions were submitted daily; the site receives about 15 mn visitors per month. Its entries are those of slang or ethnic culture words, phrases, and phenomena not found in standard dictionaries. Most words have multiple definitions, usage examples, and tags. Visitors to UD submit definitions without registering but must provide valid email addresses. To be included, all new definitions must be approved by editors, who are volunteers (registered with the site) and follow a set of guidelines. Editors *vote in* or reject new items. There may be hundreds of obviously conflicting entries for one and same term/word. Definitions already in UD may be voted thumbs up/down (but not *out*) by any site visitor. Once in, a definition may be removed by the editors if it is against the Guidelines, but those that have proven popular by voting can't be deleted.

These Guidelines must be appraised if one is aware of the following:

- Guideline No2 warns not to reject racist and sexist (and presumably otherwise offensive) entries, but does not discourage racial and sexual slurs. (I have not yet found the person able to make sense of this distinction). Illustrative Materials (IMs) **A, B** and **C** (possibly **D**) will suffice to show whether UD observes this.

- No5 says not to reject non-slang words, in clear antagonism to one of the basic principles (and takes granted users' ability to demarcate slang from nonslang); also, it warns that "[s]wearing, misspelling, or presence of words in an ordinary dictionary are not reasons for rejection". Misspellings (and/or typos, often hard to distinguish in an unedited "publication") simply do not have to be separately illustrated because (as all discussions of UD recognize) it is awash with them; this can also be observed in the Illustrative Materials.

- No8 has this: "Reject nonsense. Be consistent on duplicates, reject nonsensical, circular, unspecific entries [...]",

and this advice is offered in the similar

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[15] Because of the confusion between definition and entry (clearly, the UD numbers given do not indicate *definitions* but *entries,* since one entry may contain several definitions), it is not obvious what is involved here: what is submitted, and what is it that gets voted down/up or deleted: whole entries or indeed just some of the definitions therein.

- No10: "Publish if the definition[16] appears to be plausible". **IM/C, IM/D, IM/E** and **IM/F, IM/G** (and some of **IM/H**) offer a taste of how badly indeed UD fares in this area. These are a long cry from the helpful, comprehensible, *explanatory* definitions that one expects of a dictionary.

There is no guideline against theft/plagiarism. One of the reasons behind the many conflicting definitions is that many of them come from different dictionaries (most of them online, some of the "traditional", serious, quality works), with no indication of the source. It is noteworthy that those definitions that are popular by voting simply cannot be removed. This way there could not possibly be a ruling against online theft: if theft is endorsed by popular vote, no steps can be taken to stop it.

UD has three entries for **garbivore** (it was Urban Word of the Day on 24 October 2012), of which the first runs like this:

> A fourth classification of animal in the food chain behind Carnivore, Herbivore and Omnivore that eats only garbage.
> *Every time I put my garbage outside in the garbage can, my dog knocks the can over to eat the garbage inside. I never see him eat anything but the garbage, he must be a Garbivore.*

Because of this carefully worded definition in standard English, you will suspect that it is not your average teenage contributor that has sent it in. The conclusion, however, may be too hasty: although this word/definition actually appears on many sites (Google returns 2,480 hits for it), there is no easy telling in the world of the Net which of those has priority, and which are the pirated ones.

Contrary to what even some of the more balanced descriptions suggest, the thumbs up/down system does not guarantee adequate definitions; neither, apparently, the observing of the Guidelines.

In **IM/A**, where the Thumb Ups dominate with just a small margin, this just suggests prejudice.

In **IM/B**, which is sexist/offensive enough (and has too few thumbs but the definition seems to be liked), **squirrel** is claimed to be a "code word", and **bent wrist syndrome** is used, which has little value because

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[16] This is the only place where *definition* is not a misnomer. It is the definition that has to be plausible. This means that it must be explanatory: one that is helpful to someone who really does not know the notion, the word's usage or does not have some other information associated with the entry word.

this expression is not featured even in UD. Even **bent wrist** is only present in UD with a single example, in a grammatically unreliable entry.

The blasphemous **IM/C**, whose 1. is intended to be humorous, appears to be greatly liked, and is supposed to have two meanings/definitions, which it clearly does not have.

IM/E is certain to baffle the reader, and surely is unhelpful. Why Latin America? Why the 5075 thumbs up?

One hastens to add, lest one seems stick-in-the mud red pen police,[17] that **Holy shit** (along with all sorts of taboo expressions as well as ethnic and racial slurs), ought to be included in most dictionaries, but with their appropriate labelling.

Wikipedia commends UD's bonus services such as the Forum feature, where "registered members can discuss enhancements or problems they experience with the site, and vote for changes to be made. Forums are places for lively discussion; recent subjects include:

> *Allow users to upload sounds and images* [. . .] *Get rid of stupid definitions from being first on lists* (sic) [. . .] and *Allow editors to delete more than 5 bad definitions per day.*

I am not sure about images and sounds (this latter is *not* a plea for pronunciation being included). The proposal, however, that something should be done about *stupid* and bad definitions (or entries? cf Notes 19–23) is good news if it is typical: users bemoan lack of quality control. This does not imply, of course, that they are dissatisfied with this kind of meaning-making; maybe they consider that popular approach desirable, just the means of democracy can and must be improved.

5.2 Online media: DIY spells RIP for OED?

5.2.1 The Guardian

Davis (2011)[18] classifies UD as an "open source dictionary of slang phrases and neologisms," and a "rambling free-for-all largely compiled by teenag-

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[17] Red Pen Police, with 879 thumbs up and 439 down, was Urban Word of the Day on 9 November 2012. It means 'people who preoccupy themselves with correcting the spelling and grammar of others — normally out of some self-esteem issue or desire to prove some value from their otherwise useless thirty-grand education. I do not know how a word with just one entry like this one receives Word of the Day status. I also have no idea what the problem of those 439 people might be with this item.

[18] Davis quotes this headline without giving the source.

ers making stuff up" — a remark not without irony. He argues that the internet is the future of lexicography — which people now contest. Traditional dictionaries struggle because of the technological challenge: the new OED has a projected publication date of 2037, the costs estimated at £34m. Davis quotes lexicographer Jonathon Green, who discusses and praises slang as "lively, exciting and very creative," projecting a linguist's attitude that is likely to shock many readers. More importantly, and more relevantly to my aim, not only does he explain why the OED must be more careful (with slang),

❝ The OED deals with hard evidence. With slang there's a strong element of ephemera [. . .] the OED has to present an awful lot of evidence to back up each entry.

he also makes no bones about why the UD is problematic:

❝ It's amateur hour. They set themselves up as an authority and I don't believe they are. There aren't 2,000 new slang words a day — they don't exist. It undermines the whole point of a dictionary.

The tenor of Davis's article "In praise of urban dictionaries" is neutral, and the text is informative enough; two major distinctions, those between urban and online, and online and open-source are not sufficiently clarified.

However insightfully Green warns, the majority of users share the following view (one comment after Davis 2011):

❝ Who needs Encyclopedia Britannica or the OED when we have Wikipedia, Spellcheck,[19] and Urban Dictionary?

The question, because it confuses the dictionary and the encyclopedia and also, fails to see the distinction between online and open-source, is roughly a twin sister of "Who needs aspirin when we have smart phones?"

Incidentally, UD has a fair number of *encyclopedic* entries, which is all right as a feature of a dictionary, but then this facet ought to be emphasized. On the other hand, it also has individuals' names, which evidently goes against some of the (hard-to-interpret and impossible-to-follow) Guide-

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[19] If this indeed refers to a particular site/service, it may be any of the many (the first four are mentioned here): www.spellcheck.net; orangoo.com/spellcheck; www.jspell.com/public-spell-checker.html; spellcheckplus.com/.

lines. No1 allows "celebrity names", but bans friends' names. "Definitions of first names are acceptable. Names of bands and schools should be published only if they are popular." No4 has: "Publish place names, nicknames and area codes of geographic entities." **IM/G** in the Illustrative Materials displays the item **Budapest Cookie**, which, although having just one thumb down, has been sitting on UD for months (and somehow got voted in, in the first place). **Budapest** itself has 6 entries: #6 (with 45 thumbs ups, 180 down) is as follows, for the greater glory of democratic lexicography:

> To be budapest is to be extremely hungry, afterall [sic] Budapest is the calpital [sic] of Hungary!
> *I'm so f***ing hungy* [sic] *I'm Budapest!*

The rest of the entries—some of them really approximating a genuine encyclopedia entry — see in **IM/H**.

In the same Davis (2011), UD's founder Aaron Peckham reminisces about how it all began, making valuable comments on what he sees as the site's merits. I will comment on his claims one by one.

Peckham and friends talked about

> how different our language was, depending on what part of the country we were from, and how there wasn't a dictionary that captured those differences.

As the entire *word nerd* community and hopefully many outside of it know, there *were* such dictionaries, and they would not have been too hard to find out about. They treat the lexicon, pronunciation, even grammar. UD, allegedly conceived to stop that gap — initiated by someone with no knowledge of such work — offers none of those: a contributor's pronunciation, age and location would indeed be useful in an *otherwise genuine* dictionary. However fast moving slang is as a target, if it used a consistent system of date and region tags, UD could be a more reliable repository (or to less sympathetic observers: lumber room) for slang, or unconventional, or "vernacular" English, or for the lexicon of subculture(s), whatever the label.

Peckham also informs us that

> Most dictionaries are objective. The Urban Dictionary is completely subjective. It's not presented as fact, [but] as opinions. I think that can be a lot more valuable.

How the requirement of capturing dialectal differences may be met subjectively, as opinions, is not clear to me. Also, that

❟❟ There is little intellectual rigour about the Urban Dictionary; it is often coarse, profane and offensive, and it goes unchecked for accuracy, even spelling — which for a dictionary must be a first.

Intellectual rigour is quite unfairly contrasted to coarseness, profanity and offensiveness; these can all be handled, and often are, with huge amounts of intellectual rigour. On the other hand, accuracy is acknowledged to be vital *in a dictionary.* Maybe UD is just what a commenter thinks it is:

❟❟ Exactly because Wik and U Dic are nothing more than scribble pads for the general population of capricious speakers of amusing but stupid fashionable lingo who want to be cool.

Fortunately, this commenter belongs to *the people,* otherwise even quoting her/him might make one seem one retrograde purist.

5.2.2 New Scientist

Giles (2008) argues right in the title that "word nerd sites help the dictionary pros," and discusses two ODs, Grant Barrett's Double-Tongued Dictionary,[20] and UD, which are a "great resource for professional lexicographers." The former is a carefully researched work, double checked for every item and thus a lot more reliable. Of the latter, the above is an unexpected claim given that, as Giles says, at UD

❟❟ [a]nyone can submit a word [. . .], and as its editors do not verify new entries there's no way of knowing whether a term that appears in [it] is used by anyone other than the person who sent it in.

Giles says if you want to check up on claims about a new word, UD is a first point of call, and this seems to be true. It has one overwhelming strength: the sheer volume of material it contains (even if, we might add, the proportion of idiolectal one-offs, nonce-words, hapaxes etc is not

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[20] www.waywordradio.org/double-tongued-dictionary; part of *A Way with Words* as of 18 July 2012). The information in this paragraph is four years old: that's **ten minutes ago**, in UD lingo.

known). This sheer volume aspect would be rather dubious as *praise* in the case of a scholarly book, but if one wants a database or a corpus, it sounds promising — to that purpose UD is eminently suited.

UD and other similar ventures, then, provide up-to-the-minute updates and include words that traditional dictionaries miss. They do, however, not call into question the future of traditional dictionaries, Giles concludes: the basics of language move slowly.

> " New slang crops up daily but most of it quickly disappears. By waiting years or even decades before deciding whether to include a new word, dictionary editors are able to make a better judgement on how language is really changing.

Apparently, the value of amateur listings lies in the extra dimension they add to word hunting. "No savvy lexicographer" ignores UD, as Grant Barrett writes on his blog in 2006. A first port-of-call UD surely is — but certainly no one-stop.

5.2.3 Damaso & Cotter

Devoted solely to UD, Damaso & Cotter (2007)[21] contrasts traditional English lexicography, with editors having control over selection, meaning and illustration, with an emergent type of lexicography by the collaboration of contributing untrained end users to engage in the making of dictionaries. In UD, authoritative editors are replaced by "what can be seen as a large-scale usage panel."[22] UD is supposed to capture ephemeral spoken language and represent popular and divergent (as opposed to authorized and uniform) views of meaning. By starting UD, Peckham had the express aim of the typical radical, of "challenging the authority paradigm of lexicographic tradition."

And it does indeed. Spellings are variant and inconsistent, as are punctuation conventions. The definitions follow no (formatting or content-related) guidelines. The examples often do not use the headword.

As traditional dictionaries are often consulted as authorities on usage, on disputed points of spelling, meaning, etymology or pronuncia-

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[21] In 2007, UD still defines just more than 1mn words (Damaso & Cotter 2007 : 19), while on page 20 it is claimed that it has over 1mn definitions for over 400,000 unique headwords. I find the two claims hard to reconcile.

[22] Anyone familiar with a usage panel, eg in pronouncing dictionaries, knows why the hedge is needed.

tion (and perhaps most importantly, on questions on whether a particular word *exists or not* in the first place), similar reverence is claimed to be afforded to UD (Damaso & Cotter 2007 : 23). Other sources also mention that UD is often seen as an *arbiter* of meaning, among other things. Damaso & Cotter (2007 : 24) even claim that UD's authority "resides in the fact it *challenges* traditional dictionaries," and they make explicit mention of the fact that UD's definitions with the greatest number of Thumbs Up usually have several of the following traits: humour, language play, wisdom, polysemy [...].[23] Polysemy, singled out like this as a characteristic — probably positive — feature of entries, is at least odd: either the *definiendum* is polysemous, in which case there is not much the lexicographer can do (and in the proportion of polysemous items in UD must be roughly the same as in other similar dictionaries), or it is the words in the definitions that are polysemous, but then again the compiler can do little, unless one uses a controlled vocabulary (which UD clearly does not).

Also, it is openly acknowledged that UD entries (easily against the Guidelines, it seems to me) are often used [as][24] an instrument of competition or intimidation. "Battles erupt, manifested whenever a UD user fights another for meaning-making rights. This typically occurs when User A writes a definition; user B refutes or amends User A's definition with her own; and other users join in by ranking the existing ones (with Thumbs Up/Down) and posting their own definitions" (Damaso & Cotter 2007 : 24).[25] UD entries use bullying and name calling, or flaming, to use *onlinese.*[26] There are "trouble-seeking trolls," that is, "self-appointed online saboteurs" (Damaso & Cotter 2007 : 25).

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[23] This list goes on as follows: "...and linguistic competence for the desired voice of the entry" — a feature I simply could not interpret.

[24] The word *as* is actually missing from the text.

[25] Even more tellingly, Damaso & Cotter (2007:24) informs us of one UD definition which notes that it is "a quite convenient tactic often employed by debaters on the high school circuit to put a definition that they want on the site so that they may quote it in round."

[26] *Onlinese* I have made up for the purpose of this paper. Google returns not a single hit for it, indicating it is not on UD either. I post it on UD so I can soon check and report on how this *neologism* fares in cyberspace. For the format of my submission, see Illustrative Materials IM/I. UD promptly answered the following: *You sent this to Urban Dictionary, but it is* not yet published. *This is your last opportunity to check it out before it gets reviewed by editors.* There was no sign of my **onlinese** on UD within the first 24 hours.

These and many similar problems do not discourage users, or, more likely, they are not aware of them.

And the following entry has not even been added by a troll. This is a bona fide contribution, relatively popular, from someone not ignorant of German accent (devoicing and dental fricative substitution), so apparently has the right to meaning-making — but completely unfamiliar with dictionary-making. There is no POS label, **moof** is defined as "a German", suggesting a noun; it has **liederhosen** for **lederhosen**, which would indeed be 'song trousers' (one wonders why they would be called that).

> #13 out of 45 entries for **moof** (15 up, 40 down)
> A German with bad english attempting the word: move.
> *Moof your goddamn liederhosen (song trousers) off ze stuhl (chair)!*

I don't think it is hard to see the irony here. It is paradoxical that people should turn to UD if they *know it well,* ie if they know that it is exactly as described above (and earlier on in this paper): conflicting definitions; fights over "meaning-making rights"; made-up definitions; entries never removed even if they have a majority Thumbs Down vote; obvious fake entries/definitions; spellings that make words unrecognizable so their existence will be impossible to verify, etc. Not just these obstacles, however. You can't seriously go to UD to check whether a word *exists,* and the next moment post *your own* word. If the knowledge that you and *your peeps* use it (in such and such a way) is not enough to guarantee that it exists (and is used in such and such a way), then you do *not really trust* collaborative dictionaries because, by definition, those can only provide information from your *peeps* (peers, outside the UD circuit). You should not be thinking "I'll find out if it *is* in," but "I'll *send* it in, so it *will be* in."

Damaso & Cotter (2007 : 20) underline the following novelties of UD. It (i) "places an emphasis on democracy and equal access to meaning-making." They claim that "by relying on users of a language to select and define words for a dictionary, UD has (ii) equalized access to and formulation of the lexis." More importantly, they argue that UD (iii) authorizes usage (same as other general-purpose dictionaries), (iv) stores vocabulary, (v) improves communication, (vi) strengthens the language, and (vii) affords metalinguistic reflections on it.

While (iv) can hardly be denied (being so trivial), (v) is hard to take seriously, and (vi) does not seem to me to make much sense, the issues involved in (i), (ii), (iii) and (vii) — this latter one somewhat apart from the rest — are worth looking into. This will be topic of the next section.

6 Democratization?

The following statement, not by a 17-year-old contributor to UD but an expert, a (meta)lexicographer, is a wonderfully succinct illustration of how badly something may be amiss with the interpretation of the notion *democracy.* One wonders how any meaningful discussion of "bottom-up lexicography" is possible on such premises.

> **"** Wiktionary offers very simple grammatical data, comprehensible for most users in accordance with its *democratic* nature. (Fuertes-Olivera 2009 : 120)

By that logic, democratically conceived medical textbooks are supposed to contain just the outwardly visible parts of the human body; also, there should presumably be a kind of *democratic* maths book that only treats ordinary whole numbers and omits the zero.

It has often been suggested that UD is acclaimed as a *democratic* dictionary. Two authors whose views will be discussed in what follows (Kirchner 2009 and Smith 2011) even go beyond that claim when they stress that UD challenges dominant ideologies. I will mostly use Kirchner 2009, the more radical statement of this stance, and refer to Smith 2011 only once.

UD asks the reader/user to "redefine her/his world": this is imperative because, according to both Kirchner and Smith, there are people that *wield while others contest* definitions, in service of classification systems and power relations. Kirchner looks at (the degrees of) *user involvement* in her thorough study of ODs. User involvement can be of the *community-building* type, which enhances *user control* versus professional (lexicographic) control over content (meaning).

Where her line of argument goes wrong already at this point, is what I feel to be an inadequate separation of *content, meaning,* and *definition.*

Kirchner contends that "classificatory decisions range from the threshold question of which words or phrases should be included at all." Eg nonce-words are excluded, but this is problematic: when does a word cease being a nonce word? Also, are varying senses of a word different enough to merit separate headwords? She also mentions polysemy and homonymy (without exemplifying these, or indeed any other linguistic objects, in her study) as if they were also weapons brandished by those with dictionary-based power and linguistic *capital*).

Smith (2011) also comes back to the issue of "word or not word." She presents the intriguing case of **meep**, which was banned from schools, so that its use entailed suspension. Surely a stupid move; but does it have

to do with (traditional) lexicography? Smith (2011 : 43) mentions a student who thought it unfair to "ban a word that's not even a real word," and another who opines that **meep** "doesn't mean anything in particular." Smith claims that dictionaries struggle to draw the line between acceptable words and those that "aren't even real words" (2011 : 45). But if lay people apparently do not consider **meep** as a real word with real meaning, and they feel they must turn to UD or some other authority to find out that it *is*, then they need the support of an authority. UD, of course, is hailed as an authority on (s)language.

However hard Kirchner and Smith try to reduce the notion *traditional* in dictionary making to a four-letter word, no self-respecting traditional dictionary today embraces prescriptivist language ideologies that license "some linguistic forms as meaningful while denouncing others as nonsense" (2011 : 47). Yes, **meep** *will* be included if its is justified. Until such time, democracy does not suffer: **meep** has already gone viral on the net, with 3,300,000 Google hits and numerous .mp3 and .jpg meeps.

Questions like "word or no word?", "include it or not?", "when is inclusion of an item warranted", "how is it to be defined in a semantically/ pragmatically adequate fashion?" are perfect genuine semantic and lexicographic problems,[27] but no-one in 2012 can seriously suggest that English dictionaries exclude anything said by speakers. To me, both Kirchner and Smith miss their targets. These issues cannot be solved by fighting the supposed *hegemony* of dictionary makers or theoreticians. It is also true that (some, not all) dictionaries do standardize (to some extent), but that mainly concerns spelling. No dictionary foists upon speakers grammatical forms (although schools may, and often do, and prescriptivists do promote elite preferences), if only because no-one is obliged to use one; talk about the "hegemonic potential of dictionary definitions" is surely far-fetched.

According to Smith

❝ the case of **meep** illustrat[es] the evolving processes that lie behind verbal signification and its presupposed boundary between language and non-language, between sense and nonsense.

[. . .] the internet has provided users with a new domain in which to challenge such language hierarchies. [. . .] young people are using the internet to

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[27] Bauer (2003 : 34ff), discussing productivity, shows that the notions of *existing/actual/ occurring/established word, new word, potential word, attested word, nonce-word* and *probable word* are all fraught with difficulty, partly because they mean radically different things from the point of view of the individual speaker, some idealized speaker, and the speech community.

seize the rights to lexicographic meaning-making and redefine the process of definition. (2011 : 44)

Kirchner sees technological advances as having cut both ways: they have added to the opportunities for lay people to engage in former professional-only practices, but at the same time they gave a boost to professional lexicography, actually *heightening* the barriers from ordinary users to input and influence the professionals' work.

This paranoid-sounding claim is bolstered up by quotes from Bakhtin and Vygotsky, who share the author's conviction that "words come not out of dictionaries but out of concrete dialogic situations."[28] But dictionaries represent

❝ social processes that attempt control over a constant flux and virtually endless variation of individualized meaning-senses, by crafting definitions of words and phrases, and embedding them in formats (traditionally, books) with some continuity."

This, in Kirchner's view, is the essence of top-down dictionary-making, a source of cultural capital, deployed in service of national governmental interests. The "exemplary dictionary is thus both by-product and tool of [. . .] education, literary production and governance [. . .] that maintain class domination. Dictionary creators [. . .] omit the vocabulary and usage of dominated groups" or label those entries as vulgar or popular.

No-one today, however, doubts that word senses/meanings come not from dictionaries but speech situations. And are the proponents of this view convinced that people learn their words and *their* senses from dictionaries?

The role of (language) education and the prescriptivism and elitism that it involves in maintaining the status quo cannot be denied. But there have always been better and worse ways of doing it. And if someone were really convinced that traditional dictionaries overwhelm us, and user-generated free dictionaries are the solution to shake off the tyranny of traditional lexicography, then they should seriously study the UD entries. All right, *Vive la révolution!*—but at least be willing to study the landscape left by the revolution.

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[28] No self-respecting expert has ever claimed that words come out of dictionaries. Denial of this does not support any argument whatsoever.

Kirchner classifies user participation setting up site rankings (of general reference works and dictionaries) as low, moderate, and high, depending on the opportunities they provide for *individual(ized)* identity building and *community* identity building, two very different notions both relevant for ODs. User involvement at one extreme, where the users are atomized/ isolated, may actually enhance *professional* control: the information that users provide will be channelled on to professionals, who use this according to *their* own criteria for content. A diabolical stratagem indeed. At the other extreme, user involvement is actual control: this requires users to be in touch, forming a *community* that sets criteria for content. Sites also differ in terms of how highly they value users' input of both types.

It also happens that otherwise traditional dictionaries such as Merriam-Webster's Open Dictionary Online not just teach kids to work with definitions but actually *socializes* school children *into writing* dictionary definitions as a fun activity — this aspect was involved in Damaso & Cotter's (vii) above.

High involvement and interactivity in themselves, alas, are no guarantees for real "meaning-making": Kirchner herself recognizes that UD's ongoing chat room does not discuss words and definitions, but "revels in competitive patter of seemingly light-hearted and gross insults" (2009 : 15). She says, nevertheless, that the possibility is there.

One often feels that the *anti-lexicography revolutionaries* really want to defeat their own misconceptions. Smith writes that the "online, democratic scriptorium where neologisms and slang are explicated, tried and rated" produces mostly entries that fade away but some "reveal themselves as *mots justes*, moving from Urban Dictionary to the OED" (2011 : 47) — an argument reminding one of Kirchner quoting Bakhtin and Vygotsky. In reality, the route of any word from UD to OED is clearly mistaken. As stressed by all authors discussing this topic, slang has been used for centuries *without user-created* definitions in dictionaries and *despite traditional* definitions in "top-down" paper dictionaries. Words proceed from speakers to speakers. Thus they do not proceed from one dictionary to another, but from *speakers* to dictionaries. As may be expected, UD includes (some of these) new words faster, and practically wholesale, because it can react promptly and because it does not seem to mind subjectivity, fictionality and outright errors.[29]

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[29] This is not criticism by this author, but an admission coming from all analysts who otherwise commend the UD and user-participation works.

7 The potential in UD

Word creation processes at work in the general lexicon would be an exciting area of study in UD (whether seen as a slang dictionary or not). The site, however, provides no linguistic statistics: most entries do not even have a part of speech label, as indeed, within one and the same entry, several POSs are often listed; it is thus impossible to find out the proportion eg of initialisms and abbreviations, blends and compounds, shortenings/ clippings and doublings that get included. One's impression eg is that deliberate coining is typical, if not predominant in slang innovation (primarily blendings and initialisms).

One wonders what percentage of these almost 7 million items are playful (meant-to-be-funny) blends such as **prolebrity** (professional athlete that achieves celebrity status); **Frankenstorm** (hurricane and winter storm hybrid, involving a "monster" combination of high winds, heavy rain, extreme tides and snow); **hornymoon** (when a couple haven't seen each other for a while, the next time they meet is going to be their hornymoon); and **garbivore** (a fourth classification of animal in the food chain behind Carnivore, Herbivore and Omnivore that eats only garbage). It is a shame that such blends (or any other linguistic object) cannot specifically be investigated.

If one knows how to separate the wheat from the chaff, UD is well suited for some kinds of academic searches. One such example will suffice. Kornexl (2006 : 253) argues that

" [i]f the productivity of *-ette* in PDE was restricted to this type of disparaging, non-PC nonce words, Burchfield [. . .] and Peters [. . .] would probably be right in predicting the imminent end of the suffix as a personal marker, but the latest additions to the OED suggest that this versatile element has found a new field of application: **modette**, **punkette** and **ladette** stand for an innovative type of "antagonistic terms", which flourishes in colloquial registers and slang.

In the footnote she mentions UD, a rich source for such formations (eg *chavette, chumpette, dudette, playerette, pimpette*), which advertises itself as the "democratic guide to street slang."

There has ever been a market for slang; neologisms have always been followed with interest; the mass market for "the language of marginal social groups" has grown. A popular dictionary such as UD, which may be enjoyed and used at several levels like a good work of art, is great fun for the majority of users, and if suitably employed, is a vast hunting ground

for the linguist, a truly undepletable (since constantly expanding) corpus and database, a "reliable barometer of social currents and a fascinating expression of contemporary anxieties and interests (Coleman 2009 : 335).

Or, in the *more democratic* wording of a comment on Davis' article in *The Guardian* (www.guardian.co.uk/books/2011/apr/21/in-praise-urban-dictionaries?commentpage=1).

⟐ [The] Urban Dictionary is great at what it does and the OED is great at what it does. Happily we live in a world where both co-exist.

Roger's *Profanisaurus,* a world play on Roget's *Thesaurus,* is another treasure trove for subculture, "the book marketed as the foulest-mouthed book ever to stalk the face of the earth" (cf en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roger's Profanisaurus). Read and enjoy UD as such; wield it as emancipatory weapon to combat lexicographic oppression by the powers that be; use it as a dictionary if you don't know better. UD is just word play on *dictionary.*

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Illustrative materials

IM/A

#12 out of 23 entries for **Negro** (64 up, 48 down)

Term used to describe a disadvantaged colored folk usually from the south who refuses [sic] to assimilate into society, finish school, goto [sic] college, and get a job without complaining.
That Negro Teraminisha has thirty three kids and no job and buys her drugs off her welfare money

IM/B

(It turns out that one of the meanings of **squirrel** is 'gay man').

#26 out of 131 definitions for **squirrel** (5 up, 2 down)

Code word for "gay" men. Squirrels like nuts, so do "gay" men. Squirrels have the bent wrist syndrome, so do some "gay" men.

IM/C

#1 out of 27 entries for **holy shit** (1137 up, 265 down)

1. God's poop
2. An expression yelled at something bad and/or surprising

1. If God ever took a dump, I guess it would be holy
2. Holy shit! Those drugs came out of nowhere, officer. You know more about them than me.

IM/D

#1 out of 1 entries for **bent wrist** (11 thumbs up)

code word for a male thats [sic] very very girly or gay
Wow their are so many bent wrist males in here

IM/E

#1 out of 264 entries for **gay** (5075 up, 1007 down)
A type of squirrel that lives in Latin America.
Look at that gay scampering across the way!

IM/F: pie

Some of the 158 "entries" for pie:[30]
#158 (12 down)
a piece of crap food thats so dry, it tastes like youre [sic] eating dirt.
mom:hey honey, would you like son [sic] *pie?*
son:no thanks, that stuff tastes like sh1t![31]
#25 (13 up, 6 down)
a slang term for vagina
#20 (124 up, 98 down)
The food behind the stars
#3 (760 up, 354 down)
A food given to us mortal beings by the Gods themselves. Usually consists of a circular pastry filled with anything from chocolate to blackbirds. Could be compared to a quiche with a pastry lid but quiches are for posh French people whereas pies are universally accepted by anyone. Can also be used as a weapon when thrown. Associated with fat people.
I like pie and I cannot deny!
Give me that pie you fat fucker!
You fucking clown if you throw that pie at me I will shove those oversized boots up ur fucking ass!
Oi you fatty, cut down on the pies!
#2 (78 up, 29 down)
1. The holiest of all substances known to man.
2. The ruler and savior of all things mortal, immortal, living, dead, or inanimate.
3. Often comes after "lol".
4. Everybody's favorite word to hear and/or say.
5. Better than Cake
Examples:
1. Oh Great pie, I ask that you watch over our peaceful village.
2. YOU WILL OBEY THE PIE!
3. lol pie.

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[30] UD, as of 02/11/2012. The data may change fast: by 16/11/2012 there were 159 entries; there were no thumb-ups nor thumb-downs for the then last four of them; and #156 was this: **When u scared or soft.** *Fool pie dat nigga slaped him and he aint do nothing*.

[31] The number *1* for *i*, probably deliberately.

4. Girl one: Guys are such jerks!
Girl two: I hear you. . . we should swear off men forever.
Guy: hm. . . Pie.
Girl one & Girl two: LET'S HAVE SEX RIGHT NOW!
5. Pie > Cake

IM/G

#1 out of 1 entry for **Budapest Cookie** (1 thumb down)

The Budapest Cookie, sometimes known as the Buda and often mispronounced as Huda, is a cookie that tends to make mountains out of molehills. Occasionally this mountain is doubled, becoming a mountain range.
Oh no, those oreos are turning into a Budapest Cookie. Watch out, I hear it's deadly.

IM/H: Budapest

6 entries (#6 see in the body of the paper)

#1 (114 up, 26 down)

capital of Hungary

anything about Budapest. . .
your impression, experience, and so on

#2 (44 up, 10 down)

Budapest is the capital of Hungary. Danube river flow [sic] through and separates the city to Buda side(western) [sic] and Pest side.
Regarded as one of the most beautiful cities in Europe, its extensive World Heritage Site includes the banks of the Danube, the Buda Castle Quarter, Andrássy Avenue, Heroes' Square and the Millennium Underground Railway. Marvellous scenery from the hills of Buda.
Dohány Street Synagogue is located in Erzsébetváros, the 7th district of Budapest. It is the largest synagogue in Eurasia and the second largest in the world.
Lots of spas and bath [sic]. For example Széchenyi, which is the biggest bath complex of Europe. Don't miss bathing.
Only the 1/3 of hungarians [sic] speak any foreign language.
Avoid tourist specificated hyenas [sic]. It can be hard to find marijuana cause it is stricly [sic] illegal (but they won't send you to prison for a joint.) You can drink hungarian [sic] fruit spirit=pálinka.
Not a costly place at all.

I met a wonderful women [sic] in Budapest's night, but I can't recall her name, because I was drunk.
1/7 of hungarians [sic] live in and around Budapest.
People of Budapest always complaining [sic].

#3 (12 up, 7 down)

Capital of porn.

John: Did you know, that Sabrina Sweet is hungarian? [sic]
Mike: Man, I told ya Budapest is the capital of porn!

#4 (8 up, 13 down)

A term for some dank marijuana.

You got any budapest?
Hell yea nigga I got that thrax!
#5 (33 up, 88 down)

One who would taunt, or otherwise annoy Buddha.

That tourist, taking yet another photo of that Buddha statue is a Budapest.

IM/I

SUBMISSION UNDER REVIEW

Your entry is under review by editors.

onlinese

The language/style typically used in online communication (mobile phones, chatrooms, FB, Twitter), as opposed to offline communication. Online lingo.

UD entries often employ bullying and namecalling, or flaming, to use onlinese.

by José Pepe on Nov 17, 2012
tags: language, slang, internet, lingo, style

IM/J: red stater

This word, with its four entries, is a good example of how UD can and cannot be used. It is a useful tool if one uses it as it were a corpus: the words appear in their natural habitats. As a dictionary, it is next to useless, as this entry illustrates.

The entries are a typical flame war, from #1 to #4. The spelling is adequate, almost perfect.

#1 and # 2 are nothing but prejudice, #2 probably even worse.

#3 is not at all informative, and does not even pretend to be a dictionary entry. Told in 2nd person singular, it is a denial of the accusations in #1 and #2, a fight between users, and as such should go to the Forums. Finally, #launches a counterattack.

(Atkins and Rundell 2008 calls attention to the entry **red stater** in UD).

#1 (80 up, 44 down)

A citizen of any state whose electoral votes went to a republican in tbe [sic] last election. So-called because of network news' electoral maps. Interestingly, the populations in red states have lower than average IQs, lower than average earnings, underfunded public schools, higher rates of poverty, homelessness, disease and crime; and every "red state" in the country recieves [sic] more federal funding than it pays (read:welfare).

Red staters are easy to spot. They drive 30 miles to Wal Mart to save .08 on a jar of mustard. That is, when they're not burning a cross on their neighbor's yard because he didn't go to church this week; or beating up n*ggers, gays or jews. They believe they're God's chosen even though they're lucky if they make more than $6.00/hour working the drive through at Hardee's.

#2 (38 up, 18 down)

A deeply Christian white person, married young and then divorced. Has a lower than average level of knowledge and intelligence, prone to primitive suspicions regarding supported scientific theories such as greenhouse gases and evolution. Has had a poor education, and is less likely to hold a high school, college, or graduate degree than their blue state peer. Income is proportionate to their educational level. Prone to archaic displays of tribalism,

manifested by chewing tobacco, driving a pickup truck, and owning a shirt with a confederate flag.

Always votes republican, for reasons unknown to them, but rationalized post hoc as having something to do with a mixture of self reliance, not giving tax money to black people, being able to shoot guns and discriminate against gays, and preventing the abortion they wish their ex-wife would have had. None of the ideals about being self reliant or keeping their hard earned money (it is, due to low education levels most form skilled and unskilled labor pools) prevents them from using and abusing liberal government programs like Social Security, Welfare, and Medicare should the situation present itself.

"I'm a proud red stater, voted for Bush twice cause he's gonna keep me safe. Course America got problems. After I got laid off after I hurt my back cause the doctors said my spine can't take all that weight, we've had to cut down. But at least we're mostly a Christian nation of god fearing folks."

#3 (35 up, 59 down)

Boy, you people sure have inaccurate and ill-intentioned opinions about the residents of the Red States don't you? Just so you know, the overwhelming majority of Christians don't go around committing such hate crimes as you are implying that they do.

You people in the Blue States are just resentful and enraged that George W. Bush and the Republicans won the election, and you people always will be until another Democrat finally makes his/her way into office.

You think the Red Staters are uneducated, ignorant rednecks and bigots? Why don't you educate yourselves a little (or even A LOT) before you go out making a bunch of accusations about us, hypocrites.

#4 (36 up, 76 down)

A real man or woman; a true American patriot. Contrary to popular liberal belief, Red Staters (aka Republicans) are actually more open-minded and tolerant of things than they are given credit for. To begin, the overwhelming majority of them are NOT racist. There are tons of Democrats who are racist, however. (Keep this in mind, it was Democrats in the past who promoted mistreatment of black people, and wanted to keep slavery alive. There are many white democrats today who still despise blacks. Yes, it is TRUE.)

Next, we believe in women's rights. We believe that women have every right to leave the home, get a college degree, become successful and get a job, etc. To say otherwise about our stand on women's rights is BULLSHIT. Also, Red Staters (or Republicans) do NOT go around committing hate crimes on racial minorities, homos, lesbians, or non-Christians. (Just so you know, I have fellow devoutly-Republican friends who are ATHEISTS!!! AND, I don't criticize them for it, either.) You people fail to realize that there are millions of Republicans who are actually racial minorities. These include asians, Native Americans, Hispanics, subcontinient [sic] Asian Indians, and even a few black people.

IM/K

#1 out of the 35 "entries" for **slang** (4876 up, 1581 down)
"the only reason Urbandictionary.com exists"

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