The Web's The Word, But Webster Won't Like It

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Language is always changing but online it arguably changes at a more rapid pace. Not that long a go words like "blog" and "vlog" did not exist and now they are a common part of the Internet language.

Tom Pitoniak, an associate editor at Merriam-Webster has to decide between legitimate words that evolve online and should be in the dictionary versus words that will have a short shelf life.

He told Business Week, "You have to make careful judgments and make sure that the word sticks around. You do degrade the quality of the dictionary when you include words just because they sound trendy."

The flip side of that is you don't want to ignore words that are commonly used. Finding the balance between what should be in the dictionary and what should be omitted is the tricky part when it come to Internet language or language in general.

Erin Jansen, Founder of the online dictionary NetLingo, said, "People are writing more than ever and they like to use terms because it makes them feel like they are in the know. It gives them a sense of empowerment that they are contributing to this new language."

So what if all popular Internet words were included in the dictionary?" I would think the old 19th-century dictionary makers might be shifting a little in their graves, if not outright rolling over," says Pitoniak.