

New Scrabble Word List in 2012

Dictionary committee seeks player input on entries

Feb. 18, 2009 - [PRLog](#) -- New Scrabble Word List in 2012

A new Scrabble word list to update the current dictionary is expected to be published by 2012, according to the dictionary subcommittee of the World English-language Scrabble Players Association (Wespa).

After Scrabble copyright holder Mattel signed a contract over five years ago with Harper Collins to produce a new word list when Chambers had published Scrabble dictionaries since the 1980s, "Mattel has recognised that Wespa has the right to own the official word list for players and to be able to approach any publisher to publish a related wordlist book," says committee chairman Darryl Francis (UK).

Wespa has considered both royalty-based and fixed-fee based arrangement as payments by Collins for "the privilege" of publishing the association's official word list update, opting for a fixed fee.

Francis estimates that several hundred hours' work will be required by at least two dictionary committee members to deliver an updated word list in 2011 for adoption the next year, five years after the last publication was accepted by Wespa.

The current Collins Scrabble Tournament and Club Word List is the authority for tens of thousands of competitive players in 40-45 countries who compete in hundreds of competitions annually.

Others on the dictionary committee are Dylan Early (South Africa), Jeff Grant (New Zealand), Barry Harridge (Australia) and Allan Simmons (UK).

The current Collins is not based on a single dictionary but incorporates Collins 2005 edition, Chambers 1998 edition and the current North American word list. The American word list is itself based on several dictionaries.

Francis underscores, "No decisions have been made by the dictionary committee on new words. There are various options—or combinations of options—that could be taken."

The committee may consider "words from a small range of other mainstream English-language dictionaries, such as The Shorter Oxford, or to solicit suggestions for new words from Scrabble associations around the globe, "reflecting local varieties of English.

"All such words would be rigorously reviewed by the committee and would need to be confirmed in a major English-language dictionary before being added to the new word list," said Francis.

"As part of its initial project work, the committee will be publishing communications on various Scrabble e-mail lists, inviting respondents to comment on options for selecting new words, seeking suggestions for alternative approaches. The committee wants to identify different views which individuals and Scrabble organisations may have.

"Obviously, there are a range of different views, some quite strongly held. The committee will be soliciting these views, weighing them, making recommendations to the Wespa management committee, modifying them where appropriate and then implementing them.

"It's inevitable that, whatever decisions are finally made, they won't satisfy everyone but the committee has

an interest in a way forward backed by most tournament players."

Some players have carped that dictionary-committee members are not lexicographers and shouldn't be selecting words for updating a word list.

"Lexicography," points out Francis, "is the craft of compiling, writing and editing dictionaries, with the associated activities of identifying new words, their meanings, changed meanings of existing words, determining etymologies, writing definitions, providing usage information and so on. None of this is what the committee will be doing.

"It'll only be doing similar activities to those that we've done for over 20 years in the compilation of previous word lists based on Chambers and Collins, a lot of which is centred around ensuring compliancy with base rules for Scrabble and all pre-existing official word lists and determining correct inflections." Some deletions of words could take place as has been done in previous years.

Such deletions can take place because words are dropped from source dictionaries or through a revision of official word-list policy. However, "no decisions have been by the committee on deletions," says Francis.

The committee expects to start a communications process with national Scrabble associations during March-April so that players can make their views known though the panel "isn't proposing to seek votes or to be led by those who shout the loudest."

Twenty-one years ago, the Chambers Official Scrabble Words came off press with several updated editions. Two years ago the current Collins word list was endorsed by Wespa.

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Wespa is the regulatory body for Scrabble players in the English language with an estimated 25,000 competitive players in upwards of 40 countries. The association concentrates on youth, dictionary, rules, tournament format, communications matters.

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Source	World English-language Scrabble Players Assn.
City/Town	Manama
State/Province	none
Zip	none
Country	Bahrain
Industry	Games, Sports
Tags	Dictionary
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