

19 FROM 19: COVID-19 BULLSHIT SPECIAL

Bandwidth hog: 1. Someone who is online persistently at home, thereby reducing the ability of neighbours to receive a decent connection. 2. During the 2020 coronavirus pandemic, internet use was up 35% in many areas, causing consistent dropouts for many.

Challenging times, These: 1. It's quite difficult at the moment. 2. Three words that convey just the right blend of bemusement and humility; rough translation: "*We don't have a clue what's going on and even less of an idea of what to do about it.*"

Covideoconference: 1. A zoom call to discuss the pandemic. 2. A call to discuss a specific topic or agenda that is totally hijacked by everyone talking about Covid-19, when they should actually be talking about something else.

Furlough: 1. Leave of absence. 2. Originally conceived in the military and the church, and subsequently appropriated by business in general; now converted into a verb, whose technical meaning is to grant leave of absence, as though any worker would like to be granted the opportunity not to earn any money for a few months, or possibly indefinitely.

New normal, The. 1. Things appear to have changed, and now they are like this. 2. Trite phrase to disguise the fact that the person uttering the phrase has no idea what is going on; the use of the word *normal* deliberately avoids the word *abnormal*, thus restoring some semblance of normality.

Peak graph: 1. Maximum volume of graphs that the media can show to describe the status of the pandemic. 2. A sudden interest in graphics to display a phenomenon that few understand, in an attempt to be more sciencey, as in "*I believe we have hit peak graph, Bernard.*"

Quarantine: 1. Period of isolation, usually forty days. 2. From the Italian *Quarantina*, originally a period of detention or isolation imposed upon ships, people, animals, or plants on arrival at a port or place, when suspected of carrying some infectious or contagious disease. (*see Self-isolation, Social distancing*)

Ramp up: 1. Push something up a ramp, probably a car. 2. Make bigger; exaggerate; overclaim; over hype. (*see Ladder it up, Ratchet*)

Roominating: 1. On a video call, ignoring the person you are talking to whilst investigating what's in the room behind them. 2. A phenomenon that existed before, but which was heightened significantly by incessant videoconferencing during the Covid-19 outbreak. (*see Zoomingo*)

Self-isolation: 1. To be on one's own with little or no outside contact. 2. During the 2020 coronavirus pandemic, this was government-imposed, not self-imposed; not to be confused with self-immolation, which is to set oneself on fire. (*see Quarantine, Social distancing*)

Self-mobsevation: 1. Only paying attention to what you look like on a video call. 2. Classic preserve of the digitally vain; pouting, preening, selfie-taking narcissism. (*see Webinarcissism*)

Slaptop: 1. To slam the lid of one's laptop down very fast when suddenly realizing that the camera from an apparently-finished videoconference is still recording. 2. Examples abound, including those on the toilet, who subsequently become a youtube hit in a way that they would probably not have planned. (*see Vidiot*)

Social distancing: 1. Deliberately avoiding someone by ignoring them socially; being close to someone, but no closer than two metres. 2. During the 2020 coronavirus pandemic, the meaning of this phrase strangely morphed from freezing someone out of one's social life to queuing politely for a can of soup outside a supermarket, but at a suitable distance. (*see Ghosting; Phubbing; Self-isolation*)

Unprecedented: 1. Never done or known before. 2. Done before, and indeed known before, but nevertheless catching someone on the hop – usually a company or government, who always knew that something was a possibility but didn't want to admit it; in most cases, actually precedent.

Vidiot: 1. Someone who has no clue about the functionality or etiquette of videoconferencing. 2. Offences are almost infinite, but include refusing to mute, interrupting constantly, logging on from the kitchen where the washing machine is on full blast, cooing over puppies, shouting at children or spouse, taking calls on various other devices and, occasionally, humiliating themselves by unintentionally filming something embarrassing, such as a naked part of their anatomy. (*see Slaptop*)

Webinarcissism: 1. Being more interested in how you look than anyone else on a videoconference call. 2. Effectively ignoring the other participants and anything they say, whilst confirming that you are the best-looking and hottest participant on the call. (*See Self-mobsevation*)

WFH: 1. Working from home. 2. Dossing around in pyjamas, eating large quantities of biscuits, and generally staring out of the window. (*see WFW*)

WFW: 1. Working from work. 2. Utterly nonsensical recent piece of twaddle, drawing an arbitrary distinction between work in the office and at one's dwelling; work, by any other name. (*see WFH*)

Zoomingo: 1. Turning a videoconference into lockdown bingo; a form of gamification. 2. Having distributed a card of risible household items in advance, mischievous participants tick off the items as fast as possible, whilst ignoring what anyone else says on the call; at some point the winner shouts "Zoomingo!" when they get the full set, and everyone else wonders what the fuck is going on. (*See Gamification, Roominating*)