

The German Anglicism of the Year is the suffix *-gate*.

1. *-gate* (Winner)
2. *Fake-*
3. *Whistleblower* (Winner of the popular vote)
4. *Selfie*
5. *Hashtag*

-gate. The suffix *-gate* first entered the German language in 1972 as part of the loanword *Watergate*. But while in English *-gate* quickly became a popular choice when it came to naming scandals (some early examples are *Volgagate* (1973), *Wine-gate* (1973) and *Dallasgate* (1975)), it took fifteen years before the first genuinely German “gate” was coined: *Waterkantgate*, a blend of *Watergate* and the Northern German dialect word *Waterkant* (“coast”). The productivity of the suffix in coining new German words remained sluggish, with a few scattered examples throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, picking up speed from the mid-2000s onwards. One example for a genuinely German “gate” is the 2010 *Schrippengate* surrounding the then Federal President Christian Wulff’s shunning of Berlin-made bread rolls (called *Schrippen* in the local dialect) in favor of bread rolls shipped from his former home town Hannover. Another is *Dirndlgate*, referring either to Bavarian First Lady Marga Beckstein’s 2008 refusal to wear a dirndl to the Oktoberfest, or to Liberal Party front runner Rainer Brüderle’s 2013 comment to a female journalist that she “really could fill a dirndl”. In 2013, the German press reported an average of one “gate” per month, ranging from the frivolous, like *Mopsgate* (a minor commotion surrounding the theft of a statue of a pug dog commemorating late German comedian Loriot) to the serious, like *Handy-Gate* (a major diplomatic scandal surrounding the surveillance of Chancellor Merkel’s mobile phone by the NSA).

The increasing number of English loan suffixes in German represent an interesting trend. Loanwords are never really borrowed from from one language into another. Instead, they are actively recreated to fit the communicative needs of the borrowing speech community. This often results in divergent meanings, as in the case of the 2011 winner *Shitstorm*, which in English refers to any unpleasant situation, but in German refers to a public outcry directed against individuals or organizations via social networks in order to get them to apologize for and rectify real or perceived wrongs. It also requires an adaptation to the grammar of the borrowing language, as in the case of the 2010 winner *leaken* (“to leak secret documents”), which is inflected according to German rules to yield forms like *Ich leake*, *du leakst*, etc. The suffix *-gate* (and other affixes, like the runner-up *Fake-*) take this tendency one step further in contemporary German: They become productive parts of the language system, available for coining an infinite number of genuinely German words.

Fake- While semantically and etymologically related to the previously borrowd noun/adjective *Fake*, the bound form *Fake-* has developed into an element contributing a far more abstract meaning element of 'counterfeit, forged, spurious' to German nouns. Although similar to the English adjective in words like *fake profile* (German: *Fake-Profil*) or *fake fan* (*Fake-Fan*), German *Fake-* behaves more like an affix. How truly German *Fake-* has become is demonstrated by words like *Fake-Preußentum* ('fake prussianism') and *Fake-Leberwurst*.

Whistleblower. First nominated in 2010 (and, like this year, finishing third), *Whistleblower* received renewed momentum in 2013 in the wake of Edward Snowden's disclosure of NSA documents and Chelsea Manning's conviction of espionage charges. The ensuing debates about these issues and the protection of whistleblowers have also contributed to the word's spread in the German language. Not surprisingly, *Whistleblower* was the winner of the 2013 popular vote.

Selfie. The mass phenomenon of posting self portraits to social networks is not exactly a recent arrival even in privacy-obsessed Germany, but its lexical manifestation is undoubtedly tied to 2013. A typical Australian English shortening of *self portrait*, *Selfie* won the hearts of online communities around the globe. It was named 2013 Word of the Year in Britain and the Netherlands, and was shortlisted by the American Dialect Society. *Selfie* lost to *Whistleblower* in a photo finish in the popular vote.

Hashtag. Originally only referring to tags used on Twitter, often in a rather technical sense, hashtags have not only spread to other networks, but have also become synonymous with online activism. One of the most prominent instances of such activism in Germany in 2013 was the award-winning *#aufschrei* ("outcry"), which both documented and protested against everyday sexism. *Hashtag* has also started to sneak into spoken language as a means to add (ironical) meta comments to statements.

About the Anglicism of the Year

Speech communities have borrowed words from each other at all times and in all places. As a global lingua franca, English plays an important role as a donor language not just for German, but for all major languages. The Anglicism of the Year is our way of honouring the positive contributions that English makes to the development of the German lexicon. Previous Anglicisms of the Year were *leaken* ("to leak confidential information") in 2010, *Shitstorm* ("public outcry communicated via social media") in 2011, and *Crowdfunding* in 2012.

Jury (Contact)

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