

The trending trends and the biggest stories - 2019 in review



It is the end of another year, and another decade. Let's take a look back over the year that was. What were the top trends and how do they reflect the wider social changes and attitudes?

Meme of the year

The latest craze filtering through Gen Z's social media accounts is the 'OK, Boomer' phrase, popularised by the short-video app *Tik Tok*, a favourite for teens and young adults. The term is used to describe Gen Z's (born 1995-2010) response to the unwanted or perceived-to-be outdated advice of Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964).

The sentiment of 'OK, Boomer'; that the older generations are out of touch, wouldn't

understand and have had their time is not supported by the evidence. The warmth across the generations is the most evident feature in generational analysis. Boomers are more active in the workplace and are staying more actively involved with their children than any previous generation.

Nonetheless, the epithet 'OK, Boomer' has gone mainstream.

Listen to Mark McCrindle weigh in on the [ABC](#).

Colour of the Year

In this digital era where almost everything we touch and see has to do with technology, screens and social network, it's easy to feel, ironically, disconnected. In reaction to the rising presence of digital technology, the *Pantone Colour Institute* announced the colour of 2019, *Living Coral* (16-1546), is supposed to evoke feelings of sociableness and spirit. The playful, effervescent colour represents the fusion of modern life, transcending across all ages and genders. It features across social media, fashion, cosmetics, tech products and interior and digital design.

Word of the Year

The *Oxford Word of the Year* reflects the year's 'ethos, mood or preoccupations' and has the potential for lasting cultural significance. This year's is 'climate emergency'.

It means 'a situation in which urgent action is required to reduce or halt climate change and avoid potentially irreversible environmental damage resulting from it.' From relative obscurity to one of the most prominently debated terms and the most written about in 2019, it easily surpasses all other types of emergency. The UN Secretary-General has labelled it 'the defining issue of our time'.

Australia's *Macquarie Dictionary's Committee's Choice and People's Choice* Word of the Year is 'robodebt', as voted by the Australian public. It beat out 'eco-anxiety', 'anecdata', and 'whataboutism' (don't ask).

The official term is 'Online Compliance Intervention' but critics dubbed it 'Robodebt'. The automated debt recovery system sent letters en mass to welfare recipients notifying them of money they owed, due to overpayments.

The *Macquarie Dictionary's Committee's Choice* Word of the Year is 'cancel culture'. It's an

attitude in society which calls for a withdrawal of support for a public figure. Such as cancelling a show or banning them from a physical or digital platform, after they have said or done something socially unacceptable.

The U.S.' *Dictionary.com* Word of the Year for 2019 is 'existential'. With all the headline grabbing events happening around the world from climate change and Brexit to general elections, 'existential' captures a sense of grappling with our existence and what it means. In an era given to hyperbole, where even modest achievements may earn the brand G.O.A.T. (greatest of all time), every crisis it now seems is an existential one.

Most viewed YouTube videos

YouTube is the second most used search engine after Google, and number 1 search engine for Gen Z (because why read when you can watch?). Users watch 4 billion hours of video each month and upload 72 hours' worth per minute.

The most viewed videos are dominated by music videos. In 2019, music videos were the most popular type in the medium's history. In fact, 9 in 10 of the most viewed are music videos and 1 in 3 are in a foreign language.

The most viewed YouTube video of all time as of the end of 2019 is Luis Fonsi's *Despacito ft. Daddy Yankee*. The Spanish hit first made its appearance on the video sharing platform in January 2017, collecting a billion views in 97 days, and currently stands at 6.5 billion views.

Most disliked YouTube video

Each year YouTube made a video celebrating the videos, people, music and moments that defined 2018 called *YouTube Rewind*. Ironically it attracted the most number of dislikes ever in the history of the channel, topping 17 million. Compared to just 2.7 million likes. The top comment, with 163K likes reads, 'who's coming to this video to check the dislikes?'

YouTube tried again this year. But the video was trolled, and again attracted a slew of dislikes - over 7 million in just 5 days, with every 1 in 9 views disliking the video. One user summed up the sentiment with 'YouTube is like that one teacher who tries to act cool but fails miserably', with 413K likes.

Most liked Instagram post

More than 1 in 3 Australians use Instagram or 9 million active users. Where the people are,

brands follow, creating a space for many young people to carve a career out of Instagram. This reflects a wider social trend where number of likes equals the level of influence and therefore the opportunity to monetise posts, tantamount to a 'like economy'.

A photo of an egg posted solely to set the world record for the most Instagram posts and beat what was the current record held by Kylie Jenner of 18 million likes, has been very well publicised this year.



Posted on January 4th 2019, the photo garnered around 54 million likes making it the most liked post of all time. The account itself, *world_record_egg*, has over 7.6 million followers and is now dedicated to posts of eggs in various designs and expressions.

Milestones of the year

- Wellness, or wellbeing, a theme permeating the consumer landscape and across industries, in health, education, tourism and the workplace. Global Wellness Institute estimate the wellness economy to over \$4.2 trillion.
- The Australian Government introduces Myhealth, an optional online record system of Australian's key health information accessible to doctors, hospitals and health care providers.
- The Liberal Party, lead by Prime Minister Scott Morrison, wins the Australian general election, surprising everyone from the public, analysts and pollsters to even those within the Party. Popularising the phrase 'How good is Australia!'
- Instagram hides the number of likes to relieve peer pressure on users, encourage higher engagement on the platform, while putting the pressure back on brands.
- The Duchess of Sussex, Megan Markle, gives birth to a baby boy, Archie Harrison Mountbatten-Windsor. Before the birth of Harry and Meghan's baby in May 2019, Archie was already a popular name, ranked 29th. It has now moved up eight places to 21.

- We celebrated the 30th Anniversary of the Fall of the Berlin Wall, which fell in November 1989.
- We also celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Moon landing, achieved on 20th July, 1969.
- Brexit continues to monopolise the European airwaves, claiming its second Prime Minister, Theresa May. The UK Conservative Party, led by Boris Johnson wins the general election shortly after.

Australia's most searched terms of 2019

The most searched terms on Google reveal what we care about most. It seems only sports is separating fire and politics. Cameron Boyce, 20, a young Disney actor who passed away this year rounds out the top 5.

1. Fires near me
2. Rugby World Cup
3. Cricket World Cup
4. Election results Australia 2019
5. Cameron Boyce

Most downloaded apps of the year

Social media apps are the most popular apps in the world, with Facebook dominating the downloads. The new kid on the block this year is the viral social video app, TikTok.

1. Facebook Messenger
2. Facebook
3. WhatsApp
4. TikTok
5. Instagram

Trending #s of the year on Instagram

Hashtags group messages and content into categories. They play a vital role in extending audience reach which helps grow an account's following. These are the most used hashtags on Instagram.

1. #love
2. #Instagood
3. #photooftheday
4. #fashion
5. #beautiful

Who we tweeted most about this year

Twitter makes a surprising comeback this year in part boosted by the Trump-effect, and being the platform of choice for real-time updates as the news cycle increases its velocity.

- Evidently, President Donald Trump, who's own tweeting is legendary, is the most tweeted about politician of 2019. President Trump's use of twitter to communicate directly with the public and bypass the traditional media is unlike any other politician, setting a new president for what can be done with a smart phone and 150 characters.
- Neymar, the 27-year-old Brazilian soccer sensation is the most tweeted about sports person, he is currently on a five-year contract with Paris Saint-Germain until June 2022, worth \$350 million.
- The Korean boy band, *BTS*, the year's most tweeted about musicians, becoming a viral phenomenon and amassing 23 million followers on Twitter.
- *The Avengers: Endgame* the most tweeted about movie, shattering records on its opening weekend, taking US\$357,115,007 at the box office. It has now surpassed Avatar to hold the top box office record, grossing US\$2.8 billion.

Time person of the year

Greta Thunberg. The 16-year-old Swedish teenager has been named *Time Person of the Year* as well as one of the world's 100 most influential people. Greta, who has been open about her Asperger's syndrome diagnosis, triggered a mass movement of climate protests all over the world, when she organised a school strike for the climate outside the Swedish Parliament. The movement had since been named *Fridays for Future*. She's given a TED talk, *The disarming case to act right now on climate change*, spoken at climate rallies, and most famously delivered her 'How dare you' speech at the United Nations in September 2019.

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