

Sprout Social’s 2025 Social Media Dictionary: The Language That Defined Social Media

In 2025, social media didn’t just shape culture - it rewrote it. The words we typed, tagged, and memed became the new markers of belonging, influence, and identity. For its first-ever Social Media Dictionary, Sprout Social analysed a year of global conversations to decode the language of the internet.

This year’s data reveals where culture truly peaked: from toy obsessions and affectionate nicknames to AI-fuelled chaos. But one word ruled them all, Aura.

It’s a reminder that online language isn’t just noise, it’s where culture is created in real time. And if 2025 taught us anything, it’s that the power of social on real world influence is only increasing. For marketers, the opportunity is to listen more closely, move faster, and build brands that don’t just react to culture, but participate in creating it.

Word of the Year

AURA (31,966,771,612 impressions)

Aw·ruh (noun)

- 1 | Traditionally, aura refers to a distinctive atmosphere or quality that surrounds a person, place, or thing.
- 2 | In 2025, social media gave the word new life and meaning. Fueled by trends like aura-maxxing and aura-farming, it evolved into a measure of online status and was mentioned over 2.3 million times online.

How “Aura” took over the internet

According to Sprout Social, “aura” generated over 31 billion impressions on social media in 2025, a leap from an ordinary word to cultural dominance.

The tipping point came when Rayyan Arkan Dikha’s dance, during a traditional Pacu Jalur boat race, went viral. Dubbed as “aura farming” - showing off for status - the clip of him dancing exuberantly sparked millions of remixes and inspired a global meme.

But the trend didn’t stop there. After “aura-farming” peaked in July with over 400k mentions, aura surged again in October as a new phrase, “aura-maxxing”- enhancing someone’s vibe for social clout - gave the word new life.

Shortlist

Pookie (noun)

poo·key

Potential impressions: **26,665,767,536**

- 1 | A playful term of endearment popularised by TikTok couple Campbell and Jett Puckett, after Jett’s affectionate nickname for his wife went viral.
- 2 | Sprout data shows the trend carried dominance throughout 2025, being mentioned 4,436,428 times on social as an expression of affection. This underscores how sharing authentic moments can turn viral, shaping culture and language.

Labubu (noun)

luh·boo·boo

Potential impressions: **96,192,752,792**

- 1 | A furry gremlin character created by Hong Kong-born artist Kasing Lung and produced by Chinese toy company Pop Mart.
- 2 | Originally obscure, Labubus rose to global fame in 2025 thanks to viral “unboxing” videos, amounting to a total of 5,829,471 mentions online and reaching peak frenzy between May and July 2025.
- 3 | French maison Moynat partnered with Kasing Lung, the artist behind Labubu, on a limited-edition collection of handbags and accessories featuring hand-painted Labubu characters. One of Moynat’s social media posts - showcasing the whimsical designs - earned an estimated media value of over \$17k.

Skibidi (noun/slang)

skih·bih·dee

Potential impressions: **53,206,402,082**

- 1 | Used to describe content that is chaotic and random, Skibidi originated from a viral animated series featuring quirky characters - notably toilets with heads singing and dancing.
- 2 | Skibidi quickly became popular online slang, amounting to 1,145,748 mentions in 2025, proof that even niche trends can explode thanks to algorithmic amplification and the fast-moving nature of social sharing.

6-7 (phrase)

siks·seh·vn

Potential impressions: **381,236,495,513**

- 1 | An internet catchphrase that originated from Skrilla’s song ‘Doot Doot’ and quickly became an inside joke among younger audiences. With no set meaning, it is sometimes adopted to mean “okay”.
- 2 | Sprout data shows it was mentioned 3,874,360 times online, spreading across social media as a playful symbol of “brainrot” humour, the nonsensical digital culture that dominated 2025.

What were the top marketing words of 2025?

In 2025, brands refined their digital marketing playbook to focus on strategies that drove discovery, deepened connections, and tapped into highly-engaged communities. As the line between search and social continues to blur, relevance now depends on how well brands show up where audiences are most engaged.

GEO (term)

JEE-oh

Potential impressions:

116,322,415,594

- 1 | The process of structuring and optimising digital content to ensure it is easily discovered, interpreted, and cited by AI-driven platforms that generate search responses.

What does this mean for 2026?

GEO and social are no longer separate channels, they influence each other - and increasingly work together. Smart brands are treating social content as search content.

Micro-virality (noun)

mai-krow-vahy-ral-i-tee

Potential impressions:

34,796,910

- 1 | A subscription-based publishing platform where writers, brands and marketers alike reach highly engaged, niche communities through long-form storytelling and expert insights.
- 2 | With 182,092 mentions in 2025, Substack lets readers dive into thoughtful, in-depth writing.

What does this mean for 2026?

Substack isn't replacing social, it complements it. Brands build audiences on social and use owned spaces, like Substack, for deeper connection and community.

Substack (noun)

sub-stak

Potential impressions:

117,521,351,333

- 1 | The targeted spread of content within small, focused communities or niche audiences, creating short-lived engagement peaks that build authentic connections and trust.
- 2 | Marketers tapped into micro-communities - through Subreddits, micro-influencers, and other niche online spaces - to build trust, relevance, and more authentic connections.

What does this mean for 2026?

Brands should engage micro-communities across platforms including Facebook, Reddit, and X by meeting them where they are, and showing up on their terms.

What's Next: 2026 Word Predictions.

Get ready for a fresh wave of words and phrases set to dominate the digital conversation in 2026. From AI skepticism to exclusive online communities, these phrases capture the evolving pulse of internet culture.

Group 7 (noun)

groop-seh-vn

Potential impressions:

37,021,053

- 1 | A TikTok trend started by musician Sophia James, who posted seven videos of her song "So Unfair," assigning viewers to groups 1-7. When Group 7 went viral, users proudly claimed membership in this "elite" digital club—highlighting the growing appeal of niche, exclusive, and personalized online communities, a trend set to expand in 2026.
- 2 | This trend captivated users, brands and influencers. Naomi Osaka's TikTok post about Group 7 secured 158,000 views online and over \$18k estimated media value.

Clanker (noun/slang)

klangk-er

Potential impressions:

76,177,002,689

- 1 | The word is used to convey frustration or skepticism about AI's growing role in everyday life, especially among Gen Z and Gen Alpha.
- 2 | Sprout data shows the word has so far amounted to 604,200 mentions, reflecting a rejection of how the technology can feel "soulless" or "inauthentic."

AI Slop (noun/slang)

ay-eye-slop

Potential impressions:

204,746,016,622

- 1 | A term used to label low-quality or mass-produced online content generated by AI, often seen as spammy or lacking human creativity.
- 2 | As AI-generated content becomes more accessible, we expect to see growing interest in human-made creativity. So far, Sprout data shows the term has been mentioned 1,644,806 times online.

Methodology

- Social data via Sprout Social from 1st January – 1st November 2025.
- Data filtered by English-language public posts across X, TikTok, Instagram, and Reddit.
- "Word of the Year" selected using a mix of social data and cultural impact to ensure relevance beyond raw numbers.

For questions, please contact:
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