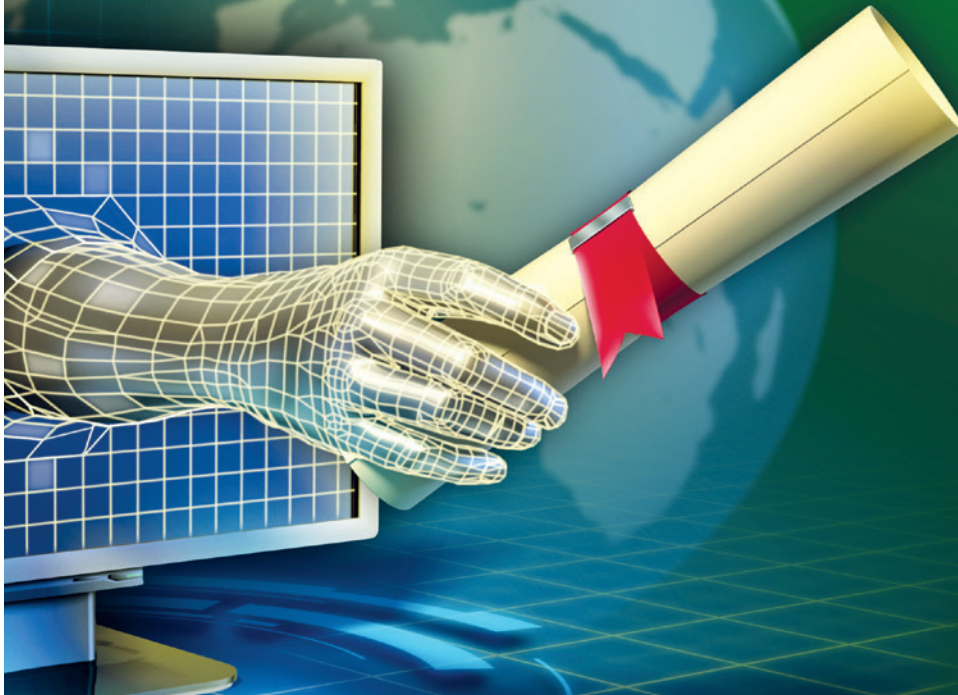


# OXFORD FORWARD

March 2017

## Language learning and technology



### Forward Foreword



“

Technology has shaped the way we obtain information, acquire knowledge and develop intellectually. Teaching and learning have evolved in the digital age. Learning other languages and understanding different cultures are also essential 21st century skills.

Use of technology provides opportunities for multiple intelligences and learning styles by enabling learning by ‘doing’ or ‘seeing’, and for multiple modes of communication and interaction. Research indicates that multimedia content, especially when it is interactive and controlled by the learner, can help the brain process and retain more information. Students exposed to digital instructional content are more likely to reflect on their learning and set their own goals.

Digital platforms and devices, such as smartphones and tablets, have not only enhanced language learning, but have also created new models of instruction inside and outside the classroom. In blended learning, the online component complements the in-class lesson. In contrast, a hybrid learning scenario replaces much of the traditional teacher-student time with online interaction. In the flipped classroom, another form of blended learning, students are exposed to new content outside of class, while teachers make better use of the class time for differentiated instruction, discussion and problem solving.

Whether you are looking into implementing any of these technology-based methodologies in your teaching, remember to stay true to your pedagogical beliefs. Help your students not only achieve their short-term goals, but maximize social interaction, increase engagement and curiosity, and plant the seeds of life-long learning.

Dr V. Gasper  
Editorial Manager, English Language  
Teaching Department

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# Lord Patten, Chancellor of the University of Oxford, visits the OUP Hong Kong office

Lord Patten, Chancellor of the University of Oxford, who was in the city for a short visit, came to the Oxford University Press (OUP) office to meet its staff. He talked about pertinent issues such as the university's mission, innovation, teaching and OUP's role. As the last governor of Hong Kong, he has always shown love for our city and people.

Asked to define the university's vision, Lord Patten confirmed it is to be the best not just in Britain, but the world. This year, he pointed out, Oxford actually achieved that by snatching the top spot in the *Times Higher Education* World University Rankings. He also reiterated that, as a global institution, all nations contribute to the quality of its teaching and research.



On the Press's role in fulfilling the university's mission, Lord Patten firmly believes that OUP is an important and central part of the university. He emphasized that the Press has managed to combine first-class academic publishing with entrepreneurial success, generating significant revenue for scholarships and more research facilities, and at the same time confirming the university's international standing as the best university publisher.

His opinion of the way we can judge content and its quality is straightforward: by the amount it is used in schools and by individual consumers. 'OUP's content is used by millions and millions of children, by thousands and thousands

of schools'. He asserted that the Press publishes the best English-Chinese dictionary by far, and provides many wonderful publications to draw children into the world of reading. 'What is even more important, this is done with huge professionalism,' Lord Patten stressed.

The conversation moved from content to innovation as this seems to be the buzzword nowadays. 'People talk about innovation as though it means forgetting books,' the Chancellor said, 'and I have never believed that'. According to him, OUP demonstrates a publisher can be 'at the forefront of what is happening digitally *and* be enormously successful as a book publisher'. Judging by his grandchildren's experience, he believes 'children want to have both. They want

to have access to things digitally as well as have a book in their hands'. He thinks OUP bridges that remarkably well with a wide range of products, including encyclopaedias and dictionaries, to help language learning.

Asked to comment on the teacher training that OUP provides, Lord Patten became very animated.

He feels strongly about teaching as his grandparents were both head teachers. Endorsing it as a great and

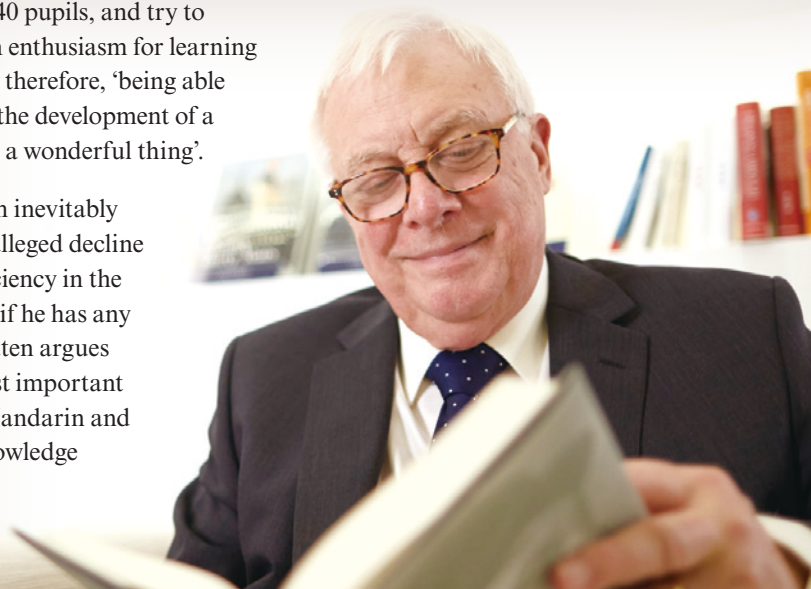
important profession, he admitted it is hard and demanding to stand in front of a class of 30–40 pupils, and try to infuse them with enthusiasm for learning every single day; therefore, 'being able to contribute to the development of a teacher's skills is a wonderful thing'.

The conversation inevitably touched on the alleged decline in English proficiency in the territory. Asked if he has any advice, Lord Patten argues that the two most important languages are Mandarin and English, and knowledge



of both is the best passport to greater opportunities both in education and beyond. He thinks that linguistic skills are vital, and emphasized that OUP has developed language learning products better than anybody else in the world. 'The Press has managed to introduce language teaching which is accessible, but doesn't pretend that there isn't a certain amount of rigour in learning a language.'

He sometimes tells his daughters, who are good linguists, they have 'a better ear' than him, but they always remind him that learning a language is tough. It involves 'discipline, hard work, concentration, and not just listening to a waiter in a restaurant and being able to repeat what they have said'. Therefore, Lord Patten reiterated, introducing young people to languages in a way which involves the usual academic discipline, but does not deter them, is crucial.



# Jasper Tsang: Catching the Secret of English Learning

The students' workshop 'Catching the Secret of English Learning' was held on 7 October 2016 at Diocesan Boys' School. The workshop called on The Hon Jasper Tsang Yok-sing, former president of the Legislative Council, to share his experience and insights into learning English with over 800 secondary students and teachers.

Mr Tsang is well read in crime and detective novels. A great fan of Agatha Christie, he has read almost every story written by the famed crime novelist and has emulated her writing style of using simple English and constructing an interesting plot. Mr Tsang emphasized the importance of reading English books as the key to English language proficiency. He encouraged students, 'Read anything you find interesting and make reading a pleasure of yours.'

Mr Tsang recalled how his parents used to force him to read English books as a young child. As his language skills improved, he started enjoying reading about subjects he loved and developed a passion for English books. 'Anyone can go through this process. It applies to anything you learn,' said Mr Tsang.

Mr Tsang also launched the **Oxford English Writing Competition, *Whodunnit?*** Participants are required to complete a detective story started off by Mr Tsang. They are encouraged to give their imagination free reign to complete the story and use their English language skills to get their ideas across. As one of the judges of the competition, Mr Tsang offered some useful tips on writing a good detective story, which included working out the plot before you start writing and creating an element of surprise at the end of the story.

The workshop ended with a lively Q&A session, in which Mr Tsang addressed various questions about learning English from enthusiastic students.



## Technology-enhanced Writing Instruction: Flipping and Other Strategies

In view of the struggles many teachers face while teaching writing, as well as the ascendancy of flipped teaching in schools across Hong Kong, we held a teacher's workshop on 3 December 2016. Our esteemed guest speakers were once again Dr Paul Sze, Honorary Professional Consultant to the Faculty of Education at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and Ms Jenny Leung of Hong Kong Baptist University Affiliated School Wong Kam Fai Secondary and Primary School.

Addressing students' lack of interest in writing and their tendency to repeat mistakes, Dr Sze outlined several digital writing solutions which could stimulate students' interest and facilitate sharing of written work. By shortening the length of writing tasks, increasing the amount of time spent writing collaboratively, and enhancing students' sense of ownership towards their writing, Dr Sze hopes teachers will be able to motivate student writers to improve their language accuracy themselves.

With Dr Sze's help, Ms Jenny Leung pioneered another potential solution in her English class: flipped process writing. She found that a lower number of writing tasks per semester, enhanced pre-lesson digital tasks, extended collaborative planning and comprehensive peer evaluation greatly improved students' creativity, engagement and accuracy in written work.



# Integrating technology and language learning

*Oxford Forward* met with Dr Nigel John Huckstep, Associate Director of the Centre for Language Education at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST), to talk about the impact of technology, e-learning and language education.



## How has technology made an impact on language learning?

It's made an impact formally and informally. The informal way is probably the newest. There are now free online videos to teach you how to say basic things in different languages. Our students use apps for vocabulary checking all the time. Social media has 'translate' functions. This is something that simply wasn't possible 20 years ago.

E-learning is having an increasing impact on formal language learning too. When I was teaching at a Hong Kong secondary school 20 years ago, the government was putting a 'multimedia laboratory' in every secondary school. That was to get ready for what was *then* thought of as 'e-learning'; that was already thinking forward. At this university, a lot of our courses now have some element of e-learning or blended learning.

## Can you briefly explain the rationale and structure of the blended-learning writing course you helped develop at HKUST?

When the four-year degree was introduced in 2012, the government was anxious that universities should provide some more general education. So HKUST created the 'Common Core', which includes a Humanities course that is partly assessed by an essay assignment. Many of our students have never written a thousand-word essay in English before, so they need help. We looked into using technology to give students more individual attention in the classroom and help them write a Humanities essay in good academic English.

The first version of this blended learning course started in September 2015.

We put everything presentational online. The structure alternates between online and face-to-face, so the online sections lead into the classroom sections. We were able to reduce the class size to give more individual attention. The students are not just sitting and listening in the classroom; they're either writing, talking about writing or giving feedback.

## How did students respond to the course?

We've only had anecdotal feedback so far. Almost *no* students say this is a complete waste of time or they have no idea why they are doing this course. Overwhelmingly, they're saying they like it. They like the flexibility of the online component because it's optimized for use on mobile devices; they love the fact that they can look at the videos, lectures and quizzes while they're on the bus or MTR. They can go back and look at things again. They love the fact that they can track how they're doing and see their marks online. They're Hong Kong kids; they want to do well.

## 'Students love the fact that they can look at the videos, lectures and quizzes while they're on the bus or MTR'

The interesting thing is that a lot of the students are saying they love all the online parts but *also* want longer in class. They like more face-to-face interaction with their classmates, and with their instructor.

## Do you feel the role of the teacher has been diminished by technology?

Technology has definitely *changed* the role of the teacher. Personally, I don't think

it's diminished it. A lot of people worry that e-learning will mean fewer jobs but, at the moment, I don't think that's a valid concern if you are committed to maintaining standards.

There are some things you *do* still need humans for; giving really detailed feedback, for example. Students get some online feedback in our course, but they also get a lot of personal, *human* feedback.

## Are secondary students being adequately prepared for the technology-rich environment of university?

The students who arrive here are very well prepared for this, because it's a big part of their life in ways *beyond* education. But I suspect that a lot of whatever is being acquired by the students is in a social way. It might be helpful if students can move towards using this technology to manage their learning more autonomously.

The students tend to find it bewildering that there's so much of university life that's *only* digital. Quite a lot of our courses ask students to record presentations (either individual or group) and create electronic artefacts. We could help them organize their learning.

We could perhaps use some of the e-learning practices to address the challenge of the school-university transition—especially important now our students arrive a little younger. We could provide help with scheduling and time-management, and offer direct access to an interactive FAQ site and course information all in the same place, with a Siri-like assistant. This could be a 'Your first year at university' app.

But in general, I think schools are doing a fantastic job, and students are doing a fantastic job outside of school.

### Many students aren't motivated to learn languages. How can we use e-learning to pique their interest?

In Hong Kong, that's a particularly important issue. Because the education system here is multilingual, students don't have a choice. If people struggle in certain areas, they tend not to persevere unless there's an important reason to do so. Jasper Tsang said in an interview that, when he was a teenager, you had to be able to read English if you bought a refrigerator or iron, because the instructions were in English.

People are not motivated perhaps because of the system in which they've encountered the language. We get quite a lot of direct entry students who struggle with English at first. There are still problems with motivation but, once they're here, they see they've *got* to have English, because we've got a lot of faculty and students whom they can't interact with otherwise.

MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) were a big fad around two years ago. I think that more language MOOCs could motivate people more. MOOCs give people the chance to dip in and out of language learning for free; if they don't finish them, it doesn't matter.

The old phrase 'you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink' is

true; in the end, the motivation will either be Jasper Tsang's iron or K-pop. Music is a powerful learning aid; I've got friends in Hong Kong for whom music was a way they learnt English.

### Do you feel e-learning is more effective than the traditional, face-to-face, classroom-based teaching?

I think it depends on what you want it to do. There will remain a role for language educators, in something like a 'classroom', for a very long time (though they may be very different to classrooms now).

Also, we're social beings. Our students quite like doing group work. I think the affective aspect of learning is still important, and I don't think computers can replace it. There's still a place for traditional teaching.

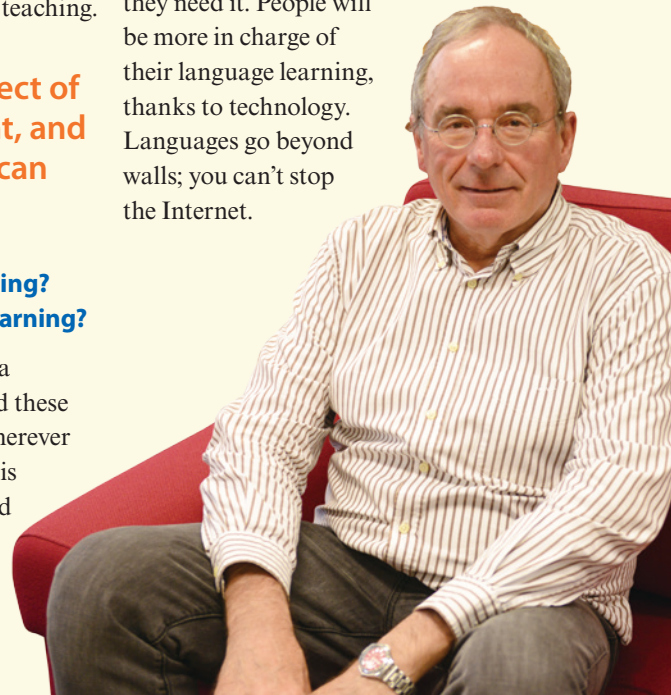
### 'I think the affective aspect of learning is still important, and I don't think computers can replace it'

### What are the trends of e-learning? How will it change language learning?

What's happening in education is a paradigm shift. In the past, we had these sheets of paper we took with us wherever we were. Now, students think this is completely insane. Why *ever* would you carry things round in a bag? Because it's in the cloud! And they *expect* it to be in the cloud.

In the 90s, I went to a course about 'Informatics' (the very early stages of e-learning). One of the speakers said 'in the future, all phone calls will be free'. There was a roar of laughter. They showed us third language instruction provided on landline video. That *is* still done, but it's possible to do it on a much wider scale now. So I think trying to predict the future is difficult.

But I think 'lifelong learning' is still going to be there. The democratization of language education isn't going to go into reverse. Language education will have to change quite a lot, because of democratization and the people consuming education. They may start to learn languages in lumps, as and when they need it. People will be more in charge of their language learning, thanks to technology. Languages go beyond walls; you can't stop the Internet.



## The 2016 Hong Kong Learning & Teaching Expo

The 2016 Hong Kong Learning & Teaching Expo, held 8–10 December, was the biggest so far. 11,000 teachers and education professionals crowded into the HK Convention & Exhibition Centre.

The expo's slogan was 'Tomorrow's Learning Today'; the education technologies of the future were on full display in the booths. Hardware and software education solutions made up a significant portion of the exhibitors, indicating that interest in e-learning has not abated.

The ICT focus remained strong in the seminars and keynote talks. On the Main Stage, there were over 20 speakers, from Hong Kong and overseas, discussing a range of 21st century educational issues.

The widely lauded Finnish approach to education—with its philosophy that 'less is more'—was also well represented. There

were keynote talks by the Finnish National Board of Education and Teacher Education Head of Department at the University of Helsinki. This year also introduced a dedicated 'Finland Pavilion', further demonstrating there is growing demand in Hong Kong for unconventional education policies.

The popularity of the flipped classroom also speaks to this—as evidenced by talks such as 'Starting Education Reform in a Flipped Classroom' by a teacher from the True Light Middle School of Hong Kong.

The 2016 Learning & Teaching Expo did indeed showcase 'Tomorrow's Learning'; we can't wait to see what next year's event will offer.



## Technology words in life

Many of the Word of the Day and Word of the Year entries on OxfordDictionaries.com are related to technology. See if you can find them in the word search below. Use the clues to help you.



C	A	N	X	W	U	I	S	T	B		A	I
R	C	O	N	T	A	C	T	L	E	S	S	
O	O	M	Y	S	L	A	C	K	T	I	V	I
W	N	O	A	D		B	L	O	C	K	E	R
D	T	P	W	I	F	I	S	E	C	O	N	D
	A	H	I	O	O	M		R	N		S	T
F	C	O	K	E	A	T	F	W	E	A	F	T
U	T	B	I	N	G	E		W	A	T	C	H
N	L	I	L	E		R	N	G		L		C
D	H	A	C	K	T	I	V	I	S	M	G	N

### Clues

### Words

1 This is the software you should use if you don't want to see advertisements when you surf the Internet.

a \_ b \_ \_ c \_ \_ r  
(n.)

2 Relating to technologies that let you pay for things by wirelessly touching your card or phone on an electronic reader; your Octopus card uses this type of technology, too!

c \_ \_ \_ \_ a \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ s  
(adj.)

3 Accessing computer files and networks without permission, for social or political reasons.

h \_ \_ k \_ \_ v \_ \_ s \_  
(n.)

4 To fund a new project by getting many people (usually online) to donate a small amount of money each.

\_ \_ r \_ w d f \_ \_ d  
(v.)

5 Any user website that is edited collaboratively as a team effort, instead of by one user.

\_ i \_ i  
(n.)

6 To watch many TV programme episodes at once (usually online or through DVDs).

b \_ \_ \_ e \_ \_ \_ t \_ \_  
(v.)

7 This word is a combination of 'no', 'mobile' and 'phobia'; it describes the fear of being without your mobile phone.

\_ o m \_ \_ h \_ \_ i \_  
(n.)

# CYWOTTA?

## (Can You Work Out These Texting Acronyms?)

When we text in English, we often use abbreviations for common words and phrases. Can you guess what these texting acronyms stand for? Write the full forms using the clues to help you.

Acronyms	Clues	Full forms
1 YOLO	Use this to encourage people to do daring things now, because life is short.	Y__ O__ L__ O__
2 FOMO	Use this if you're worried that you're missing out on something exciting or interesting happening elsewhere.	F__ O__ M_____ O__
3 BRB	Use this if you're in the middle of a text conversation but need to leave or pay attention to something else for a moment.	B_ R_____ B_____
4 LOL	Use this to express that you find something funny.	L_____ O__ L_____
5 ROFL	Use this to express you find something even funnier than the acronym above.	R_____ O__ (the) F_____ L_____
6 GTG	Use this when you need to end a text conversation by leaving.	G__ T_ G__
7 AFAIK	Use this to start your response if someone asks you a question you're not quite sure about.	A_ F__ A_ I K_____
8 ETA	Use this to tell a waiting friend when you think you should arrive.	E_____ T_____ (of) A_____
9 OT	Use this if you're having to spend longer at work than you originally planned. 😊	O_____ t_____
10 TY	Use this to show appreciation if someone does something nice for you!	T_____ Y_____

# Watch this space

Things to look out for in the coming months

## Events

### Oxford Junior Secondary English Seminar

Come and experience a new **e**ra of learning

Discover how to enhance your English lessons with powerful e-learning tools and resources.

**Date & Time** 25 March 2017, Saturday  
9.30 a.m.–12 noon

**Venue** 8/F, Chieng Han Chow Memorial Building,  
Pui Ching Primary School  
80 Waterloo Road, Kowloon City, Kowloon

#### Presenters



**Ms Siwing Ng**

True Light Middle School of  
Hong Kong



**Ms Jenny Leung**

HKBUAS Wong Kam Fai Secondary and Primary School

**Teachers** from Lee Kau Yan Memorial School

Scan this  
QR code



Download the  
**inTouch** app



Register for  
this seminar  
via the app

### Oxford Junior Secondary English Writing Competition

*Whodunnit? Award Presentation Ceremony cum English Writing Seminar*

Over 1,500 Junior Secondary students have entered. What will it take to shine above the competition?

**Creative Writing, Storytelling and the Multilingual Writer in Hong Kong** *Speech (by Dr Page Richards)*

#### The Judges' Panel



**Mr Jasper Tsang**

Politician, former Legislative Councillor

**Dr Margaret Ng Ngoi-ye**

Politician, barrister, writer and columnist



**Dr Page Richards**

Associate Professor, School of English, HKU

**Mr Perry Lam**

Columnist for SCMP, Ming Pao and  
Yazhou Zhoukan



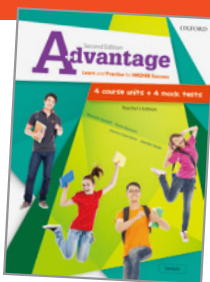
**Date & Time** 8 April 2017, Saturday (morning)

**Venue** St Paul's College, 69 Bonham Road

## New for 2017

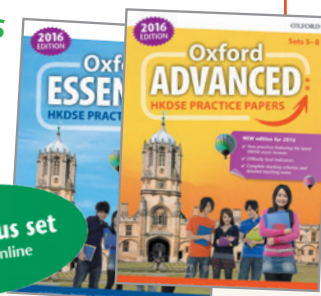
### Advantage (Second Edition)

Specially designed to give Secondary 4 students a head start on exam skills, the second edition now includes 4 HKDSE mock tests, each thematically linked to a course unit, brand new content and skills builders.



### Oxford Essential & Oxford Advanced HKDSE Practice Papers

A new set of 2017 HKDSE mock tests can be downloaded from our website.



2017 bonus set  
available online

### In the next issue of *Oxford Forward*

- Reflections on the 2017 HKDSE English Language Exam
- More news, interviews and students' activities

Look out for the next issue of *Oxford Forward* in May 2017

### Students' pages (Answers)

#### Technology words in life

1 ad blocker 2 contactless 3 hacktivism 4 crowd fund 5 wiki 6 binge watch  
7 nomophobia

#### CYWOTTA? (Can You Work Out These Texting Acronyms?)

1 You Only Live Once 2 Fear of Missing Out 3 Be Right Back 4 Laughing Out Loud  
5 Rolling On the Floor Laughing 6 Got To Go 7 As Far as I Know  
8 Estimated Time of Arrival 9 Overtime 10 Thank You