

France shuns use of Twitter "hashtag" (30th January, 2013)

French authorities have declared war on the English word "hashtag" in its continuing drive to keep its language as free as possible from English loan words. France's government has a special department that oversees the purity of its language and issues recommendations regarding outside influences. The General Commission for Terminology and Neologisms has decided that "hashtag" will no longer be used in government documents and public statements. Instead, it will use the new, French term "mot-dièse," which is translated as "sharp word". The Commission also encouraged users of social media, especially people on Twitter, to use the new word.

"Hashtag" is the latest English word to fall foul of the French authorities. Officials recently released a list of words and terms they want removed. These include "e-mail", "blog", "supermodel", "take-away", "chewing gum", "parking", "weekend" and "low-cost airline". Schoolteachers in France have been urged to discourage students from using them. Many Twitter users pointed out that "mot-dièse" refers to the wrong symbol as the word "dièse" denotes the sharp symbol from music, which looks similar to the hashtag symbol. One comment on the Huffington Post website suggested France needed to accept new words. It said: "Many languages use loan words and society hasn't fallen apart because of it."



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