

PUZZLE: DON'T CROSS AN ALPHA BITCH!

PUZZLE BY: Paul Melamud, with help from Nathan Fung

- 1) This puzzle is presented as 25 standard 5x5 alphablock puzzles, as featured in previous MIT Mystery Hunts, presented in a 5x5 “meta-alphablock”.
- 2) Solvers will quickly observe that there is an extra letter in each unit alphablock, though it won't yet be apparent why they are there.
- 3) The first “a-ha” on this puzzle is related to all of the “five-ness” in this puzzle – the Title, the Flavortext (which has elements that go along with the theme, described below), the unit alphablocks, and the meta-alphablock. Some of the entries should nag the solver – why so many repeated words, especially in the downward direction?
- 4) The meta-alphablock is an “alphablock of words” (as opposed to letters), solving across the same way. The theme is Webby Award speeches, which are known for being “short and sweet” – to the tune of five words each (with some rare convention-breakers + or -, none of which were used in this puzzle). With Google and the Webby Awards site, solvers should be able to compile the data shown in TABLE 1 below.
- 5) The second “a-ha” is for the solver to observe that an added letter occurs exactly once in each speech, once in each unit alphablock, and uniquely occupy one of the twenty-five unit alphablock spaces. This is reflected in both TABLE 1 (the invaded word from each speech is highlighted) and TABLE 2, with the invaded word highlighted and the added letter isolated with red ink.
- 6) One is next intended to consider the alphabetic index of the added letter (A = 1, B = 2, C = 3, ...), as helpfully reflected by the note in the bottom border of the puzzle. Index this value into the award winner name (as listed on the Webby Award site, excluding all punctuation and spaces) whose speech was thus invaded to yield a letter that is associated with that unique 5x5 unit alphablock position. This extraction step is also identified in TABLE 2, in each box with the added (red) letter.
- 7) Finally, organizing each unit alphablock location highlighted in TABLE 2 that was subject to such extraction into a single alphablock construct, and the final message unfolds as illustrated in the TABLE 3: **SOLUTION IS NATIONAL ACCLAIM**. “NATIONAL ACCLAIM” is the correct answer.

TABLE 1 – Webby Award Speeches Used for this Puzzle (spans 2 pages)

Note: The first two columns are for information only, and the shaded words are illustrative of the words shaded in Table 2 (the next step).

Year	Category / Subcategory	Winner	Speech Word 1	Word 2	Word 3	Word 4	Word 5
2015	Advertising & Media Auto & Auto Services	Y&R New York	Spoiler	alert	literature	still	matters
2015	Social Experimental & Innovation	Mall of America	Coffee	Coffee	Coffee	Cinnabon	Coffee
2015	Social Overall Social Presence	Mashable	Mashable	Inspire	Inform	Entertain	Thanks
2014	Web – Society Green	NOAA	Climate	education	investments	create	solutions
2014	Web - Society Blog – Political	The Atlantic	Covering	politics	since	James	Buchanan
2014	Mobile & Apps Entertainment (Tablet & All Other Devices)	A+E Networks	Here's	hoping	history	repeats	itself
2013	Web - Living Religion & Spirituality	Huffington Post Media Group	Salam	shalom	shanti	patchi	peace
2013	Social Overall Social Presence	NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory	Curiosity	kills	ignorance	encourage	science
2012	Web – Marketplace Pharmaceuticals	goodrx	Cheaper	drugs	equals	happier	people
2012	Web – Media Movie & Film	SnagFilms	Indie	movies	matter	watch	fearlessly

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Year	Category / Subcategory	Winner	Speech Word 1	Word 2	Word 3	Word 4	Word 5
2011	Mobile & Apps Lifestyle (Tablet & All Other Devices)	Deep Focus	Pollock	would've	loved	gestural	interfaces
2010	Web - Features Best Home/Welcome Page	LIFE.com	Photos	Photos	Photos	Photos	Thanks
2010	Web – Society School/University	Massachusetts Institute of Technology News Office	Institute	honored	Thanks	Folks	Peace
2009	Web – Entertainment NetArt	Miltos Manetas	Thanks	everyone	thanks	Jackson	Pollock
2009	Web – Entertainment Art	bluecadet interactive	Great	stories	deserve	great	design
2009	Web - Marketplace Corporate Communications	De-Construct	Ninety	years	still	peoples	favorite
2009	Online Film & Video Best Writing	Onion News Network	Happy	fortieth	birthday	Sesame	Street
2007	Web – Society Gonverment	RDVO, Inc.	Fewer	Boston	drivers	You're	welcome
2006	Web – Connections Celebrity/Fan	The Leaky Cauldron	Nitwit	Blubber	Oddment	Tweak	Rowling
2006	Web – Entertainment Sports	ESPN	Sports	pornography	sports	pornography	SPORTS
2005	Web – Media Blog	Boing Boing	Bigfoot	bukkake	copyfight	ukelele	boing
2005	Web – Society Activism	InSite Interactive	Better	world	citizens	better	world
2003	Web – Media NetArt	Listening Post	scriptedformula	vegans	political	fashionable	washingtontimes
2001	Web – Features Best Practices	Google	Google	gives	great	search	results
2001	Web – Media Radio	BBC World Service	Thanks	gracias	Spasibo	Shukran	Xiexie

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TABLE 2 – Speech Words Invaded by Extra Letters with Index Letter from Speech's Winner's Name (as given in Table 1)

SP	AS	M	IN	TE	A	DU	F	IC	E	LI	F	EST	E	NTS	S	TE	R	E	IN	M	U	FF	IO	NS
C	O	HA	A	CE 3=S	C	L	CE 3=N	E	S	CO	V	N	R	RE	CI	T	A	TA	S	C	AT	CH	K	AN
M	O	ER	E	G	IN	L	PI	TI	E	I	DI 4=A	RA	C	E	EN	N	I	T	E	T	O	N	E	S
CL	OV	IL	BL	EE	E	OF	CA	R	T	IN	TE	FO	ME	E	CR	A	M	BO	L	SO	HA	TE	R	S
C	I	F	F	R	PO	S	IT	R	ON	S	N	F	TU	M	J	E	NA	L	AN 1=M	B	LU	CT 3=A	AN	E
CU	A	P	IT	M	K	OP	I	LL 12=U	S	IG	NO	T	E	S	EN	AC 3=O	UR	C	ER	S	C	IE	C	CE
S	RI	R	A	E	S	R	I	LO	S	SH	QU	N	OR	CE	P	CO	PP	A	H	P	O	A	N	LY
H	E	D	E	Y	H	OV	U	E	G	H	T	R	L	R	RE	A	T	AG	TS	CI 3=N	T	P	EL	F
CH	N	OS	IC 3=A	R	D	H	L	N	M	E	AS 19=A	A	T	Y	H	A	T	I	I	PE	AR	S	SS	E
I	EA	L	E	S	M	I	A	G	S	MA	IS	T	AN	I	W	P	E	CH	E	FE	E	LE	L	E
G	R	N	C	IT 9=T	ST	VE	O	TO	ES	DE	H	N	O	D	G	H	L	O	T	D	L	AN 1=L	C	E
P	A	OT	K	E	P	N	R	I	VE	P	A	V	NK	S	P	A	C	R	S	TH	E	LO	C	K
IN	L	IT	A	S	HO	O	L	BO 2=I	NE	T	S	OT	RV	S	F	R	U	KS	AL	P	ER	A	IG	N
TH	H	E	O	S	E	U	OR	E	S	TH	O	A	K	E	J	ST	E	A	S	PO	A	S	K	S
PO	ST	LO	UT	K	WO	H	RY	D	D	GL 7=C	H	E	E	S	GE	O	OT	RK 18=I	ON	INT	E	FA	C	ES
H	A	P	E	R	FO	E	T	RAP	R	BI 9=S	V	I	R	NT	S	ES	U	A	E	S	O	R	IT	ME
N	ED 4=O	T	RT	IT	Y	RN	UB	O	TH	S	IR	E	HD	S	PE	RN	E	L	E	F	AV	C	L	ING
F	I	O	P	Y	BO	RT	A	BE	HY	DRI	DD	T	E	L	Y	W	A	R	PHY	W	EL	OR	T	S
S	P	W	T	S	PO	S	OG	R	S	SP	T	V	T	S	POD 4=N	O	O	M	ES	SP	O	W	EE	CE 3=C
N	I	NE	W	Y	B	LD 4=L	I	E	N	O	O	M	L	AY	T	O	P	GRA	K	R	T	R	O	T
BI	H	O	ORM	KS	B	I	CI	N	D	CO	IT	IT	E	O	U	E	ION	E	R	B	I	EX	I	MES
B	IPT	T	O	LE	W	A	R	A	KE	C	OL	S	IG	NS	BO 15=I	U	TT	C	AN	W	HIN	U	NC 3=I	D
SCR	O	F	E	R	VE	UK	AD 4=T	E	S	P	P	E	IB	CT 3=O	FA	K	K	R	H	WAS	O	R	L	E
G	ET	AG 7=L	N	ULA	G	O	V	A	S	G	A	YF	A	AL	S	E	AR	AB	LE	R	ES	I	NTI	G
T	G	EDF	G	OT	GR	G	K	L	S	SP	R	IZ	IC	HT	SH	SH	EL	E	LE	X	O	GTO	L	TS

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TABLE 3 – Final Extraction of Extra Letters' Values, Set in a 5x5 Block Based on Individual Alpha Block Locations

9=S	3=O	1=L	12=U	12=T
15=I	4=O	3=N	3=I	3=S
3=N	4=A	4=T	2=I	3=O
4=N	19=A	7=L	3=A	3=C
7=C	4=L	3=A	18=I	1=M