



**USITT RP-xx – 20xx**

**Recommended Practice for the Use OF INCLUSIVE  
Terminology in Entertainment Technology, Design, and  
Management Fields.**

**Approved by the USITT RP Committee on [date].**

**Information about approval and publishing might go on the cover page.**

Front Matter / Copyright / Etc.

Disclaimer.

List of the people in the WG at the time of publication.

# CONTENT WARNING

The content of this document necessarily addresses challenging topics. It deals with race, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical ability, age, religion, violence, body image, and other means by which individuals and groups are shamed, othered, or discriminated against. Offensive terms have been included as a means of informing the well-intentioned reader of terms that should be eliminated from our collective vocabulary. This document is structured to minimize the prominence of offensive terms; however, readers should exercise their own discretion before proceeding.

## **1. Introduction**

This document identifies entertainment industry terminology that is linguistically rooted in or suggestive of oppression and/or exclusion and offers recommendations for more inclusive and accurate alternative terminology. The terms included in this document were collected by USITT and also gathered using the survey at this link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7FFJQWR>.

The guidance offered in this document reflects the consensus of the Working Group at the time of publication. Because perspectives shift over time, the content of this document will periodically be re-evaluated. A survey, located at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7FFJQWR>, will remain open so the document can continue to be updated to reflect contemporary perspectives.

## **2. Project History**

The entertainment industry has been on the path towards more inclusive terminology for years prior to the development of this document. Several individuals and groups worked in their respective areas of expertise with varying degrees of success. This information started to find its way into our industry's consciousness through published articles, book revisions, social media, and other means. This group offers its thanks to those whose work we are building upon.

Amid the social justice movements that came to prominence in the summer of 2020, it became imperative that USITT make a consolidated effort to update our vocabulary. Entertainment industry manufacturers began inquiring with USITT's Engineering Commission to see if any work was being done to standardize and disseminate recommendations for the use of inclusive terminology in our industry. Articles on and around this topic were appearing in many industry periodicals.

Desiring to build upon the momentum of that cultural moment, the Engineering Commission inquired during the annual USITT Board and Commissioners Retreat about the possibility of USITT consolidating various groups' inclusive terminology efforts into a single, comprehensive document. This idea was favorably received, and it was eventually determined that the Engineering Commission's familiarity with standards development made it an ideal host for the soon-to-be Terminology Working Group (TWG).

The TWG slowly gained momentum over the following nine months. Many of the individuals whose work we were building upon were invited to the group. Volunteers were solicited from the USITT Board of Directors and commissions. Others volunteered, or were nominated, as awareness of the project spread. By May of 2021, the Entertainment Services and Technology Association (ESTA) joined the TWG, contributing considerable expertise and infrastructure to the endeavor.

Special acknowledgement should be given to the diverse group of people that came together to build this project from an idea to a state where it could be shared widely and be welcoming of broader participation. They are: Adam Mendelson, TWG Chairperson; Justin Bennett, Engineering Commissioner; Kathryn Davis, Vice-Commissioner for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion for the Engineering Commission; Ashley Bellet, USITT Vice-President of Commissions; Brian Smallwood; Erin Grabe, ESTA Executive Director; Jane Parson, ESTA; Jonathan Allender-Zivic; Josh Loar; Juan Juarez; Kristen P Ahern; Ksenia Lappo; Lara Berich; and Maya Nigrosh.

In the spirit of inclusion, this inaugural group developed a survey to enable anyone with Internet access the opportunity to contribute to the work of the group by sharing terms and alternatives that should be addressed, or by volunteering to participate more actively in the work of the group. This survey was released to the public in June of 2021, and remains accessible to support future revisions of this document at the following link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7FFJQWR>.

This document was first published on [date]. We extend our thanks to all that have supported or made contributions to the development of this document, as well as those who will continue its development in the future.

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## 1 - Scope and Rationale

This document is not an admonishment, but a guide. Biased language permeates our culture. The roots of these words can run so deep that we are not always aware of their negative connotations. On a technical level, precise terms are more widely understood than colloquialisms. Inclusive language promotes more accurate communication and comprehension. This is vital to success in every aspect of the entertainment community. When we use bias-free language, we also advocate for diversity. Developing an inclusive vocabulary conveys a sense of respect that encourages participation and collaboration, which comprise the very backbone of our industry. If everyone feels welcome, we create opportunities to hear unique perspectives and open new possibilities for innovation. The more people we include, the more inspiration we find.

This document identifies problematic terminology used in the entertainment industry, and provides suggested alternatives. Problematic terms and phrases fall into a variety of categories, and are not merely limited to those that obviously come from bigoted or offensive origins. Words with questionable connotations, and even those that can be misconstrued or misheard also have no place in our industry.

This document will act as a guide for a more inclusive, comfortable iteration of the live entertainment industry. As language evolves, so will this document.

This document is limited to terminology used in the English language and used by English speakers. While there are certainly cross-overs, this document will only cover language in the live entertainment industry and does not explicitly cover terms from film and television.

## 2 - Definitions

**shall:** This key word indicates an absolute requirement of this document. See also “must.”

**should:** This key word indicates a strong recommendation of this document. There may exist valid reasons in specific circumstances to ignore particular recommendations, but the full implications must be understood and carefully considered before choosing such a course.

**may:** This key word indicates an optional suggestion of this document. Certain circumstances may affect how reasonable the suggestion is.

**must:** This key word indicates an absolute requirement of this document. See also “shall.”

**OBsolete:** This key word, when found in the “Suggested Terms” section of this document, indicates that the terms to be replaced are no longer needed in our industry and do not have easily articulated alternatives.

**other/othering:** Treats a person or group of people as fundamentally different from oneself or from the established norm.

**source:** Data sent along an electrical connection is said to originate from a *source*.

**sink:** A *sink* is the intended target of data sent along an electrical connection from a *source*.

## 3 - Purpose of Document

This document is intended to promote a shared awareness and understanding of the harmful nature of certain terminology used in the entertainment industry, as well as to offer recommendations of less harmful terms to use in their stead. Its goal is to eliminate the use of harmful terminology and to promote the use of inclusive language. It is not attempting to impose specific replacement terminology. The alternatives recommended here are just that: recommendations. As such, some terms will have multiple possible alternatives. These recommendations reflect this industry’s current wisdom about reasonable alternatives but are by no means the only possible alternatives.

From the beginning, it was important that this document be a published recommended practice, rather than a wiki or other more agile web format so that a stable version of the text would be available to cite, incorporate by reference, or annex into other publications. Hopefully, entertainment industry organizations will adopt it into their policy and procedure manuals, publishers will reference it in their style guides, and authors will seek permission to annex it into their books. At the very least, it should provide guidance about words to avoid for members of our industry to use when developing their own policies, trainings, curricula, and so forth.

It is assumed that readers of this document are working to be more inclusive but may not have the expertise to recognize problematic terms. Hopefully, this document provides an accessible and user-friendly means to develop a common understanding of terms to avoid and ways to communicate more inclusively.

## **4 - General Considerations**

Using inclusive language—in both our speech and writing—during the process of creating live entertainment can positively impact those who witness, read, and participate in those processes<sup>1</sup>. Such language:

1. avoids false assumptions and permits more precise wording,
2. conveys respect to those who listen or read,
3. maintains neutrality, avoiding unpleasant emotions or connotations brought on by more divisive language (e.g., the term ‘elderly’ may have different connotations based on the age of an employee),
4. removes colloquialisms that are exclusive or usually not well understood by all (e.g., drink the Kool-Aid), and
5. enables all to feel included in the topic discussed.

To that end, this document will strive to identify and suggest replacements for terms that fall into the following broad categories

### **4.1 - Gender**

Gender biases are often unconsciously supported through using learned colloquialisms and normalized terminology, and inclusive language will help address these biases. Therefore, theatre terminology shall use gender-neutral language in order to avoid discrimination on the basis of biological sex or gender identity and to avoid perpetuating gender binary, gender stereotypes, or gendered anatomy assumptions. Position titles shall de-emphasize gender roles which might suggest that a position is more suited to a particular gender.

### **4.2 - Race and Ethnicity**

The language used in theatre terminology shall not discriminate against people on the basis of their race and/or ethnicity. This includes offensive or demeaning language that excludes or makes assumptions about any particular race, ethnicity, or country of origin. Race and ethnicity are topics that may come up as part of a production's subject matter; in these instances, special care must be taken to make sure that associated cultures are well researched to avoid misrepresentation. Regardless of intent, some terms that originated without racial implications may now be misconstrued.

### **4.3 - Ability**

The language used in theatre terminology shall not discriminate against people on the basis of their disability status. Disabilities can be physical or cognitive and may be visible or invisible. Using people-first language when identifying people with disabilities may be used to avoid language that condescends, victimizes, or dehumanizes people with disabilities.

### **4.4 - Age**

The language used in theatre terminology shall not discriminate against people on the basis of age. Terms implying a value judgment, positive or negative, shall be avoided.

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<sup>1</sup> Liberally quoted from NIST.IR.8366 - Guidance for NIST Staff on Using Inclusive Language in Documentary Standards  
Revised 10/22/21

**4.5 - Religion, Spirituality, Creed**

The language used in theatre terminology shall not discriminate against people on the basis of their religion, spirituality, or creed.

**4.6 - Sexual Orientation and Marital Status**

The language used in theatre terminology shall not discriminate against people on the basis of their sexual orientation and/or marital status.

**4.7 - Violence**

The language used in theatre terminology shall be free from association with violence, violent acts, or threats.

**4.8 - Body- Neutrality**

The language used in theatre terminology shall be free from association with body-shaming. Terms implying a value judgment, positive or negative, shall be avoided. Figurative language shall be avoided.



**5 - Terms and Alternatives-**

Words have power. What follows in [5.1 List of Terminology](#) is an alphabetical list of problematic terms and phrases, along with suggested replacements, a brief rationale that explains the origin of the problematic term, and an enumeration of the departments in which they may be encountered.

**5.1 - List of Terminology**

Suggested Term(s)	Problematic Term	Commonly associated with:	Rationale
<b>durable / useable / safe</b>	<i>actor proof</i>	Industry-Wide	This term is infantilizing and disrespectful. Reframe the discussion to emphasize the quality of the object (safe) rather than the user/performer.
<b>temporary loop</b>	<i>asshole</i>	Industry-Wide	This term is used to signify a tightly formed loop in cable, which is then interwoven to secure the loop. Riggers who need to pull a dead end cable up will ask their support crew to "make an asshole".
<b>OBSOLETE</b>	<i>basket case</i>	Industry-Wide	This saying for a person who has difficulty coping was first used during World War I to describe a person who had lost all four limbs.
<b>batten end caps</b>	<i>batten condom</i>	Industry-Wide	These are the yellow soft vinyl end caps found on the ends of battens. See also “truss condom”.
<b>gloves</b>	<i>bitch mittens</i>	Industry-Wide	Use of this phrase carries an implication that those of certain genders are weak and inferior in some way. It glorifies not using safety equipment and implies that the wearer is too sensitive to work without gloves, as though that were a bad thing.
<b>obstructed / partially obstructed view</b>	<i>blind seat</i>	Industry-Wide	Equating a partially obstructed view with blindness is inaccurate and minimizes the experiences of those with visual impairments.
<b>OBSOLETE</b>	<i>boy</i>	Industry-Wide	Historically, white people would describe Black men as "boys" to indicate that they were not on equal playing fields. The U.S. Supreme Court even declared that the word is "not benign" and considers its use in certain contexts to be racist.
<b>OBSOLETE</b>	<i>bubble butt</i>	Costumes: Technology/Fitt	Avoid discussing the performer's bodily attributes for a more welcoming and inclusive environment.

		ing/Design/Theory/History	
<b>be brave / don't be scared / take a chance</b>	<i>butch up</i>	Industry-Wide	Use of this phrase carries an implication that those with certain genitalia are superior or tougher in some way. This phrase reinforces the gender binary.
<b>right angle beam clamp</b>	<i>camel toe</i>	Lighting: Electrics/Design/Theory/History	The term "camel toe" is slang for the effect created by tightly fitting clothes around a person's groin, drawing attention to the shape of the external genitals. Term is not descriptive of the item and can be considered vulgar
<b>paper lantern</b>	<i>China ball / China lantern / Chinese lantern</i>	Industry-Wide	While evidence of paper lanterns in China goes back many centuries, such lanterns are not always produced in China today, thus rendering the replaced term a reference to a generalization. Naming them by their material is more descriptive and avoids this concern.
<b>wax pencil / porcelain marker</b>	<i>China marker</i>	Lighting: Electrics/Design/Theory/History	"China Markers" got their name from the ability to write smoothly on non-porous surfaces such as glass or porcelain. Utilizing the more application specific name helps remove any ethnic connotations of the writing device.
<b>gather</b>	<i>circle the wagons</i>	Industry-Wide	"Circle the wagons" translates to "the savages are coming and we are about to be attacked". Hollywood movies about settlers in North America moving west to invade and inhabit the traditional territories of Indigenous Peoples contributed greatly to the formation of this phrase.
<b>People of Color / BIPOC</b>	<i>colored</i>	Industry-Wide	"Colored" is an antiquated term used to support segregation in the Jim Crow South. "People of Color" is used to describe people who are not white. "BIPOC" is an acronym for Black, Indigenous and People of Color, used to acknowledge the historic oppression and systemic racial injustices Black and Indigenous people face.
<b>conical hat</b>	<i>coolie hat</i>	Costumes: Technology/Fitting/Design/Theory/History	"Coolie" is a derogatory slur first used in the 16th century by European traders and grew to refer to low-wage laborers of Asian descent; it is also associated with a history of enslavement. Its use reinforces negative stereotypes about the Asian and Pacific Islanders communities.
<b>glitter</b>	<i>costume herpes</i>	Costumes: Technology/Fitting/Design/Theory/History	Equating glitter with "herpes" simultaneously stigmatizes and makes light of a real infection that negatively impacts people's lives. See also "stage herpes."

<b>OBSOLETE</b>	<i>crazy</i>	Industry-Wide	Use of the word "crazy," even in positive and quantitative senses, stigmatizes mental health issues.
<b>crotch strap</b>	<i>dancer diaper</i>	Costumes: Technology/Fitting/Design/Theory/History	Fittings are sensitive places and associating the performer with an infant can build unnecessary distrust and disrespect between the production staff and performer. Use the more accurate term crotch strap for clarity and respect when speaking to the performer.
<b>diagonal cutters</b>	<i>dikes</i>	Lighting: Electrics/Design/Theory/History	The term is a homophone of the word "dyke", which is a slang term that originated as a homophobic and misogynistic slur for lesbians and masculine, butch, or androgynous girls or women. As such, the former could easily be misheard as the latter.
<b>Drafts-person</b>	<i>draftsman</i>	Scenery: Construction/Drafting/Painting/Props/Design/History	Replacing the gendered suffix "-man" with "-person" promotes inclusion and equity among all genders.
<b>OBSOLETE</b>	<i>drink the kool-aid</i>	Industry-Wide	In 1978, members of the Peoples Temple led by Jim Jones committed mass suicide / mass murder by drinking a flavored drink laced with cyanide and various prescription drugs. Thus, today people use the phrase "to drink the Kool-Aid" to refer to someone with unwavering and unconditional loyalty.
<b>pantomime</b>	<i>dumb show</i>	Industry-Wide	This term has British origins, wherein "dumb" meant non-speaking. In the United States, "dumb" has a further colloquial use that implies inferior intelligence. This term may be interpreted as equating a lack of intelligence with non-speaking people.
<b>seam covering</b>	<i>dutchmanning</i>	Scenery: Construction/Drafting/Painting/Props/Design/History	The "dutch" phrase was used as a slur for people of Dutch descent labeling them as lazy or incompetent
<b>OBSOLETE</b>	<i>eenie meenie miney mo</i>	Industry-Wide	Today, the second line of this children's rhyme is "catch a tiger by the toe," but the original version included a ghastly racial slur.
<b>ice wool</b>	<i>Eskimo cloth</i>	Costumes: Technology/Fitting/Design/Theory/History	The term “Eskimo” was made up by colonizers to describe the many indigenous Inuit groups of modern-day Alaska, Canada, Greenland, and Russia. The Inuit Circumpolar Council agreed to replace the term “Eskimo” with “Inuit” in 1980.
<b>folk or cultural styles</b>	<i>ethnic clothing</i>	Costumes: Technology/Fitting/Design/Theory/History	The term "ethnic" collectively others all non-European-based cultures. It is best to be as accurate as possible when referring to culturally-specific clothing.

<p><b>body / character padding</b></p>	<p><i>fat padding</i></p>	<p>Costumes: Technology/Fitting/Design/Theory/History</p>	<p>The goal of padding is to alter the appearance of the performer's body to suit the character, not exclusively to make it appear that they are heavier than they are. Emphasizing “fat padding” also brings into question why an actor of appropriate size was not cast in the first place. Using the term character padding is more universal to the function of the padding applied.</p>
<p><b>darted and non darted slopers</b></p>	<p><i>female and male slopers</i></p>	<p>Industry-Wide</p>	<p>Define the slopers by the features of the garment rather than by the gender binary understanding of who is meant to wear those garments for a more inclusive environment.</p>
<p><b>socket / receptacle / connector</b></p>	<p><i>female connector</i></p>	<p>Lighting: Electrics/Design/Theory/History</p>	<p>Use of the word “female” as a descriptor for a physical hardware component sexualizes cable connectors. When “female” and “male” are the only options, this use also implies a gender binary. Cables and connectors do not have gender, gender is not tied to genitalia, and the human gender gamut spans from agender to more than just “male” and “female.”(NOTE: When the direction of data flow is also important, "socket" can be used in conjunction with either source [Definitions] or sink [Definitions] to disambiguate).</p>
<p><b>socket / receptacle / connector</b></p>	<p><i>female connector</i></p>	<p>Sound: Technology/Design/Theory/History</p>	<p>Use of the word “female” as a descriptor for a physical hardware component sexualizes cable connectors. When “female” and “male” are the only options, this use also implies a gender binary. Cables and connectors do not have gender, gender is not tied to genitalia, and the human gender gamut spans from agender to more than just “male” and “female.”(NOTE: When the direction of data flow is also important, socket can be used in conjunction with either source [Definitions] or sink [Definitions] to disambiguate).</p>
<p><b>pink or beige</b></p>	<p><i>flesh (indicating beige or pink color)</i></p>	<p>Costumes: Technology/Fitting/Design/Theory/History</p>	<p>“Flesh” tone originally meant beige or pink tones that only suited white skin tones and excluded brown, black, and other skin tones. Using specific colors to describe a person’s skin tone is the clearest way to identify appropriate products to use.</p>
<p><b>Flyperson</b></p>	<p><i>flyman</i></p>	<p>Industry-Wide</p>	<p>Replacing the suffix, "-man" with "-person" removes the unnecessary and inaccurate reference to a single binary gender and adds specificity to the term.</p>
<p><b>Foreperson</b></p>	<p><i>foreman</i></p>	<p>Industry-Wide</p>	<p>Replacing the suffix, "-man" with "-person" removes the unnecessary and inaccurate reference to a single binary gender and adds specificity to the term.</p>

<p><b>pan bolt</b></p>	<p><i>fuck nut / fuck-you bolt / jesus bolt</i></p>	<p>Lighting: Electrics/Design/Theory/History</p>	<p>Though failing to tighten them, or watching them snap off, may make one quite angry, there are other ways to express that exasperation than in vulgarity or sexualization of a C-clamp bolt.</p>
<p><b>turnaround / socket-socket / plug-plug adapter.</b></p>	<p><i>gender bender</i></p>	<p>Industry-Wide</p>	<p>Use of the word “gender” as a descriptor for a physical hardware component sexualizes cable connectors. This use implies a gender binary and is disrespectful to those exploring their gender identity or who are otherwise gender non-conforming. [For more information see "plug" and "socket."]</p>
<p><b>ad hoc / improvise</b></p>	<p><i>ghetto rig</i></p>	<p>Industry-Wide</p>	<p>Suspected to derive from an Italian slang term for waste, the word "ghetto" calls back to forced resettlement of Jews and other marginalized communities in Nazi controlled Europe. It has also been used to label neighborhoods marginalized communities were forced to inhabit due to social and economic disadvantage. Classism and racism run rampant when you call a place, or a person, "ghetto."</p>
<p><b>public address mic / announce mic</b></p>	<p><i>god mic / voice of god (vog)</i></p>	<p>Industry-Wide</p>	<p>Use of this term for a microphone used for public address implies divinity and an imbalance of status between the user and the listeners, as well as belittling the spiritual beliefs of many people.</p>
<p><b>exemption / exception</b></p>	<p><i>grandfather clause, grandfathering</i></p>	<p>Industry-Wide</p>	<p>This term started in the wake of Reconstruction in the American South to allow potential white voters to circumvent the literacy tests, poll taxes, and other tactics intended to disenfranchise Southern Blacks.</p>
<p><b>toughen up</b></p>	<p><i>grow a set/pair/some balls</i></p>	<p>Industry-Wide</p>	<p>Use of this phrase carries an implication that those with certain genitalia are superior or tougher in some way. This phrase reinforces the gender binary.</p>
<p><b>Roma / Romani</b></p>	<p><i>gypsy</i></p>	<p>Costumes: Technology/Fitting/Design/Theory/History</p>	<p>The word "Gypsy" is a pejorative word for the Roma people and culture, it originated with the (false) idea that the Roma were descended from Egyptians. It is also sometimes used to refer to non-Roma people who are culturally nomadic. The word is associated with stereotypes of criminal activity and dishonesty, which is harmful to Roma and nomadic peoples.</p>
<p><b>traveling wagon</b></p>	<p><i>gypsy wagon</i></p>	<p>Scenery: Construction/Drafting/Painting/Props/Design/History</p>	<p>The word "Gypsy" is a pejorative word for the Roma people and culture, it originated with the (false) idea that the Roma were descended from Egyptians. It is also sometimes used to refer to non-Roma people who are culturally nomadic. The word is associated with the stereotype of criminal activity and dishonestly, which is harmful to Roma and nomadic peoples.</p>

<b>hang / install masking</b>	<i>hanging blacks (hanging curtains)</i>	Scenery: Construction/Drafting/Painting/Props/Design/History	The term “blacks” can be easily misinterpreted as referring to Black people or people of African descent, particularly in a way that uses an adjective as a noun, as opposed to focusing on the individual. Used in combination with “hanging” particularly evokes the harmful history of lynchings in the United States.
<b>hang / install masking</b>	<i>hanging blacks (hanging curtains)</i>	Theatre Architecture & Engineering	The term “blacks” can be easily misinterpreted as referring to Black people or people of African descent, particularly in a way that uses an adjective as a noun, as opposed to focusing on the individual. Used in combination with “hanging” particularly evokes the harmful history of lynchings in the United States.
<b>tech week</b>	<i>hell week</i>	Industry-Wide	This belittles the hard work done by production team during tech week as well as the spiritual beliefs of many people.
<b>upset</b>	<i>hose in a twist</i>	Industry-Wide	Use of this phrase carries an implication that the wearers of "hose" are somehow weak or emotional. Associating a specifically intimate piece of clothing with an emotional state also needlessly sexualizes it.
<b>upset</b>	<i>hysterical</i>	Industry-Wide	Historically, doctors used "hysteria" as a medical explanation for nearly every sick woman they encountered. The idea for such a diagnosis comes from Hippocrates' belief that a woman's hysteria is caused by a "wandering uterus" that is deprived of sexual pleasure.
<b>ad hoc / improvise</b>	<i>jerry or gerry rig</i>	Industry-Wide	This phrase of British origin dates back to 1869 and means to build unsubstantially and with poor material. "Gerry" was used as a derogatory term to refer to the Germans. During the World Wars, it was convenient to adopt "gerry rig" as an anti-German term referring to the Germans hastily creating ad hoc weapons. It was co-opted from the term "n****r rigged" widely in use in the US in the Victorian era through the 1970's.
<b>ad hoc / improvise</b>	<i>jury rig</i>	Industry-Wide	Although to "jury rig" is to make a temporary fix in a nautical rigging context, contemporary use is most likely related to a mishearing of the term "Gerry Rig" (see related explanation) and also has connotations of "rigged" juries, especially in cases of Black defendants and it is still used like that today and historically, and should be avoided accordingly.
<b>OBSOLETE</b>	<i>lame</i>	Industry-Wide	Historically, the word “lame” has been used to refer to either a body part that is impaired or disabled, or to a person who has a physical disability. It inherently associates people with disabilities with negative connotations.

<b>let's meet</b>	<i>let's pow wow</i>	Industry-Wide	“Pow wows” are social gatherings for ceremonial and celebratory purposes and are conducted under strict protocol. Using this phrase to refer to a quick business meeting denigrates the long, cultural significance of the “pow wow” for Indigenous Peoples.
<b>combination pliers / side-cutting pliers / wire gripping pliers</b>	<i>linesman's pliers</i>	Lighting: Electrics/Design/Theory/History	"Linesman" or "lineman" once referred to individuals who worked with power lines or other electrical wires. This task was simplified by a tool that integrated both wire-cutting teeth and flat-nosed pliers that were ideal for twisting cables. However, one does not need to be of any particular gender in order to be an electrician, or to use such tools. The word "Linesman's" needlessly perpetuates the myth that only men can participate in certain trades.
<b>OBSOLETE</b>	<i>long time no see</i>	Industry-Wide	Records show that the phrase "long time no see" was first uttered by a Native American. English assimilation of this phrase was a perpetuation of racist stereotypes about speakers of English as a non-primary language.
<b>OBSOLETE</b>	<i>low man on the totem pole</i>	Industry-Wide	“Totem poles” are very sacred items to the Indigenous People who carve and display them. Figures carved on totem poles represent familiar legends, clan lineages or notable events. In some Indigenous communities, being low on the totem pole is actually a higher honor than being on the top.
<b>inaugural</b>	<i>maiden (as an adjective, as in "voyage")</i>	Industry-Wide	"Maiden," as in "maiden voyage", holds connotations associated with the loss of virginity as some sort of first or initial act. Using "inaugural" focuses on the primacy of the event without sexualizing it.
<b>plug</b>	<i>male connector</i>	Lighting: Electrics/Design/Theory/History	Use of the word “male” as a descriptor for a physical hardware component sexualizes cable connectors. When “male” and “female” are the only options, this use also implies a gender binary. Cables and connectors do not have gender, gender is not tied to genitalia, and the human gender gamut spans from agender to more than just “male” and “female.”(NOTE: When the direction of data flow is also important, plug can be used in conjunction with either source [Definitions] or sink [Definitions] to disambiguate).

<b>plug</b>	<i>male connector</i>	Sound: Technology/Design/Theory/History	Use of the word “male” as a descriptor for a physical hardware component sexualizes cable connectors. When “male” and “female” are the only options, this use also implies a gender binary. Cables do not have gender, gender is not tied to genitalia, and the human gender gamut spans from agender to more than just “male” and “female.”(NOTE: When the direction of data flow is also important, plug can be used in conjunction with either source [Definitions] or sink [Definitions] to disambiguate).
<b>plug / socket / quick disconnect tube fittings</b>	<i>male/female fittings (hydraulic, pneumatic, etc.)</i>	Scenery: Construction/Drafting/Painting/Props/Design/History	Use of the word “male” as a descriptor for a physical hardware component sexualizes cable connectors. When “male” and “female” are the only options, this use also implies a gender binary. Cables and connectors do not have gender, gender is not tied to genitalia, and the human gender gamut spans from agender to more than just “male” and “female.”(NOTE: When the direction of data flow is also important, plug can be used in conjunction with either source [Definitions] or sink [Definitions] to disambiguate).
<b>ball / socket</b>	<i>male/female snaps</i>	Costumes: Technology/Fitting/Design/Theory/History	Gendering inanimate objects reinforces the gender binary in our language. In this case, it also sexualizes the objects by referencing a sex act as a way to describe the way the pieces fit together. Ball/Socket is more specific and clear while being less harmful.
<b>hook / loop</b>	<i>male/female velcro</i>	Costumes: Technology/Fitting/Design/Theory/History	Gendering inanimate objects reinforces the gender binary in our language. Hook and loop is also more clear and specific to the fasteners.
<b>work hours / person hours</b>	<i>man hours</i>	Industry-Wide	People of all genders, or the lack thereof, are capable of completing work. Using "man" in this phrase implies that labor is only performed by men.
<b>be brave / don't be scared / take a chance</b>	<i>man up</i>	Industry-Wide	Use of this phrase carries an implication that those with certain genitalia are superior or tougher in some way. This phrase reinforces the gender binary.
<b>labor</b>	<i>manpower</i>	Industry-Wide	People of all genders, or the lack thereof, are capable of completing work. Using "man" in this phrase implies that labor is only performed by men.



<b>Lead Carpenter / Head Carpenter</b>	<i>master carpenter</i>	Scenery: Construction/Drafting/Painting/Props/Design/History	“Master” is doubly problematic in that it is a traditionally male-gendered term and in that it has racist connotations as it relates to slavery. A Head Carpenter can be of any gender, or the lack thereof.
<b>Head Electrician</b>	<i>master electrician</i>	Lighting: Electrics/Design/Theory/History	“Master” is doubly problematic in that it is a traditionally male-gendered term and in that it has racist connotations as it relates to slavery. A Head Electrician can be of any gender, or the lack thereof.
<b>combined / composite ground plan</b>	<i>master ground plan</i>	Industry-Wide	“Master” is doubly problematic in that it is a traditionally male-gendered term and in that it has racist connotations as it relates to slavery. A ground plan is genderless and there are better ways we can describe aggregating information or using a single base reference.
<b>combined / composite section</b>	<i>master section</i>	Industry-Wide	“Master” is doubly problematic in that it is a traditionally male-gendered term and in that it has racist connotations as it relates to slavery. Sections have no gender, and there are better ways we can describe aggregating information or using a single base reference.
<b>cardboard box</b>	<i>Mexican road case</i>	Lighting: Electrics/Design/Theory/History	The term unnecessarily perpetuates the idea that products or tools from Mexico are of lower quality than those originating elsewhere. Further, the term is simply not descriptive of the item in question. Using the more specific term eliminates confusion and removes ethnic connotations.
<b>OBSOLETE</b>	<i>Mexican step stool</i>	Industry-Wide	This phrase, referring to standing on a persons back while they are kneeling, belittles Mexican people and culture, implying that an entire country and culture is somehow prone to unsafe practices and hasty solutions, due to lack of resources.
<b>OBSOLETE</b>	<i>no can do</i>	Industry-Wide	This saying cropped up in the mid-1800s—a time when Westerners widely held a racist attitude toward the East—as a way to mock Chinese speakers of English as a new language.
<b>lost control</b>	<i>off the reservation</i>	Industry-Wide	As Indigenous Peoples were once restricted to reservations created for them by the government, people would historically use this phrase to refer to Indigenous Peoples who had strayed from their land, often with contempt for the indigenous people.

<b>Asian</b>	<i>oriental (referring to people or garments)</i>	Costumes: Technology/Fitting/Design/Theory/History	The word "oriental" originates from reference to the eastern side of the world in relation to Europe. Over time, its use was specifically directed at the East Asian and South East Asian regions, and at people of East Asian or South East Asian descent. In addition to generalizing people regardless of actual race/ethnic origin/geographic origin, the term is also pejorative in American English where it has historically been used to contribute to anti-Asian sentiment.
<b>overstaffing</b>	<i>overmanning</i>	Industry-Wide	Replacing the suffix, "-manning" with "-staffing" removes the unnecessary and inaccurate reference to a single binary gender and adds specificity to the term.
<b>upset</b>	<i>panties in a bunch</i>	Industry-Wide	Use of this phrase carries an implication that the wearers of "panties" are somehow weak or emotional. Associating a specifically intimate piece of clothing with an emotional state also needlessly sexualizes it.
<b>OBSOLETE</b>	<i>peanut gallery</i>	Industry-Wide	This was a slang term used in Vaudeville to refer to the worst seats in the house, where people of color were forced to sit. There was an assumption that people seated in these areas could become rowdy and throw their snack peanuts as an interruption.
<b>props (head / supervisor / manager / coordinator / designer)</b>	<i>props master / mistress</i>	Scenery: Construction/Drafting/Painting/Props/Design/History	“Master” is doubly problematic in that it is a traditionally male-gendered term and in that it has racist connotations as it relates to slavery. Someone in charge of Props can be of any gender, or the lack thereof.
<b>OBSOLETE</b>	<i>retarded</i>	Industry-Wide	The word “retarded”, while originating from the term “mental retardation” is no longer used. It inherently associates people with disabilities with negative connotations.
<b>standard</b>	<i>rule of thumb</i>	Industry-Wide	Historically debated English law from the 1600s that allowed men to assault their wives with a stick, just so long as it was no wider than his thumb in thickness. While the history of the term is unclear and may not be affiliated with violence, it is best to avoid potential references to domestic violence.
<b>stitcher / sewist / costume builder</b>	<i>sewer /seamstress/ seamster</i>	Costumes: Technology/Fitting/Design/Theory/History	Feminized labor history in garments and costumes has long been associated with lower pay. By removing the gendered language, we can elevate the status of the skilled labor performed by these technicians/artisans. A stitcher can have any gender identity.

<b>betrayed</b>	<i>sold down the river</i>	Industry-Wide	In the United States in the 1800s, slaves were sold in large marketplaces like the one in Louisville, KY, and shipped via the Missouri or Ohio rivers to southern plantations. Not only was this a cruel practice that separated people from their families, but the journey down the river was so dangerous as to be considered tantamount to a death sentence.
<b>inspiration</b>	<i>spirit animal</i>	Industry-Wide	The Anishinaabe (but not all Indigenous tribes) have “spirit/dream helpers” as part of a very sacred tradition, and our idea of “spirit animals” today are a degraded form of these traditions formed through pretty racist understandings of stereotypes of Indigenous Peoples.
<b>weight redistribution</b>	<i>squish (in corsetry)</i>	Costumes: Technology/Fitting/Design/Theory/History	Referring to the "squish" of a performer's body can come across as body shaming in the sensitive space of a fitting. Ultimately the goal of corsetry is creating a period appropriate silhouette through weight redistribution and the corset is just one component in creating the silhouette. Avoid discussing the performer's bodily attributes for a more welcoming and inclusive environment.
<b>glitter</b>	<i>stage herpes</i>	Scenery: Construction/Drafting/Painting/Props/Design/History	Equating glitter with “herpes” simultaneously stigmatizes and makes light of a real infection that negatively impacts people’s lives. See also "costume herpes."
<b>style subculture / style faction</b>	<i>style tribe</i>	Costumes: Technology/Fitting/Design/Theory/History	“Tribe” is a racially sensitive word originally applied to Native and Indigenous peoples by European colonizers. The word carries the weight of that history of considering Indigenous practices as lesser or more "primitive" than European culture. Today, the word “Tribe” has very specific legal meaning in the US and many countries to define the legal sovereign rights of Native Peoples. Finding a less charged word is important in inclusive and collaborative environments.
<b>OBSOLETE</b>	<i>thug</i>		Although this word originated in India and meant “ruffian” or “troublemaker,” it’s now used primarily in a negative context by White people to label younger Black people, particularly men, as violent, irrational, untrustworthy, or gang members. The label is often applied based on how the person dresses, looks, or speaks, rather than by their actions.
<b>OBSOLETE</b>	<i>top-heavy</i>	Costumes: Technology/Fitting/Design/Theory/History	Avoid discussing the performer's bodily attributes for a more welcoming and inclusive environment.

<b>OBSOLETE</b>	<i>trouser role / pants role</i>	Costumes: Technology/Fitting/Design/Theory/History	“Pants role” implies that only people of certain genders wear pants/trousers. This outdated term for gender inclusive casting reinforces gender binary and reduces the gender of a character to whether or not they wear trousers. Casting and dressing outside of the gender binary should be normalized by eliminating dated language like “pants role”.
<b>truss protector / truss sleeve</b>	<i>truss condom</i>	Lighting: Electrics/Design/Theory/History	“Condoms” can be an important part of consensual sexual activities. However, trusses and lighting fixtures are not at risk of contracting STDs and STIs or of birthing children. Introducing the word "condom" needlessly sexualizes an otherwise mundane process of affixing one thing to another.
<b>Wardrobe Head / Supervisor</b>	<i>wardrobe mistress / master</i>	Costumes: Technology/Fitting/Design/Theory/History	“Master” is doubly problematic in that it is a traditionally male-gendered term and in that it has racist connotations as it relates to slavery. A “Wardrobe Head” can be of any gender, or the lack thereof.
<b>winch</b>	<i>wench</i>	Scenery: Construction/Drafting/Painting/Props/Design/History	The correct spelling of the word for a machine that winds and unwinds rope or cable (often to move a load) is “winch.” Not to be mistaken with the word “wench,” which is an archaic and disrespectful term used to refer to a woman and, often, a sex worker. Using the correct spelling of the word “winch” avoids confusion and offense.
<b>whites and colors</b>	<i>whites and coloreds</i>	Costumes: Technology/Fitting/Design/Theory/History	“Coloreds” is an antiquated term used to support segregation in the Jim Crow south. “Colors” is the correct term that means a collection of pigments.
<b>A-shirt</b>	<i>wife beater shirt</i>	Costumes: Technology/Fitting/Design/Theory/History	Associating a garment with domestic violence can be triggering and disrespectful to the victims of these crimes. Using the traditional A-shirt is more descriptive and reduces the stigma associated with the garment.

## 6 - Terms Sorted by Discipline

This just lists each problematic term or phrase as a sort of index for someone wanting to browse terms in a specific discipline. Please see section 5.1 to view the rationales for these terms.

### 6.1 - Industry-Wide

Preferred Term	Problematic Term
<b>durable / useable / safe</b>	<i>actor proof</i>

<b>temporary loop</b>	<i>asshole</i>
<b><i>OBSOLETE</i></b>	<i>basket case</i>
<b>batten end caps</b>	<i>batten condom</i>
<b>gloves</b>	<i>bitch mittens</i>
<b>obstructed / partially obstructed view</b>	<i>blind seat</i>
<b><i>OBSOLETE</i></b>	<i>boy</i>
<b>be brave / don't be scared / take a chance</b>	<i>butch up</i>
<b>paper lantern</b>	<i>China ball / China lantern / chinese lantern</i>
<b>gather</b>	<i>circle the wagons</i>
<b>people of color / BIPOC</b>	<i>colored</i>
<b><i>OBSOLETE</i></b>	<i>crazy</i>
<b><i>OBSOLETE</i></b>	<i>drink the Kool-Aid</i>
<b>pantomime</b>	<i>dumb show</i>
<b><i>OBSOLETE</i></b>	<i>eenie meenie miney mo</i>
<b>flyperson</b>	<i>flyman</i>
<b>foreperson</b>	<i>foreman</i>
<b>turnaround / socket-socket / plug-plug adapter</b>	<i>gender bender</i>
<b>ad hoc / improvise</b>	<i>ghetto rig</i>
<b>public address mic / announce mic</b>	<i>god mic / voice of god (vog)</i>
<b>exemption / exception</b>	<i>grandfather clause, grandfathering</i>
<b>toughen up</b>	<i>grow a set / pair / some balls</i>
<b>tech week</b>	<i>hell week</i>
<b>upset</b>	<i>hose in a twist</i>
<b>upset</b>	<i>hysterical</i>
<b>ad hoc / improvise</b>	<i>jerry or gerry rig</i>

<b>ad hoc / improvise</b>	<i>jury rig</i>
<b><i>OBSOLETE</i></b>	<i>lame</i>
<b>let's meet</b>	<i>let's pow wow</i>
<b><i>OBSOLETE</i></b>	<i>long time no see</i>
<b><i>OBSOLETE</i></b>	<i>low man on the totem pole</i>
<b>inaugural</b>	<i>maiden (as an adjective, as in "voyage")</i>
<b>work hours /person hours</b>	<i>man hours</i>
<b>be brave / don't be scared / take a chance</b>	<i>man up</i>
<b>labor</b>	<i>manpower</i>
<b>combined / composite ground plan</b>	<i>master ground plan</i>
<b>combined / composite section</b>	<i>master section</i>
<b><i>OBSOLETE</i></b>	<i>Mexican step stool</i>
<b><i>OBSOLETE</i></b>	<i>no can do</i>
<b>lost control</b>	<i>off the reservation</i>
<b>overstaffing</b>	<i>overmanning</i>
<b>upset</b>	<i>panties in a bunch</i>
<b><i>OBSOLETE</i></b>	<i>peanut gallery</i>
<b><i>OBSOLETE</i></b>	<i>retarded</i>
<b>standard</b>	<i>rule of thumb</i>
<b>low wages / exploitative wages</b>	<i>slave wages</i>
<b>betrayed</b>	<i>sold down the river</i>
<b>inspiration</b>	<i>spirit animal</i>
<b><i>OBSOLETE</i></b>	<i>thug</i>

**6.2 - Costumes: Technology / Fitting / Design / Theory / History**

<b>Preferred Term</b>	<b>Problematic Term</b>
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<b><i>OBSOLETE</i></b>	<i>bubble butt</i>
<b>conical hat</b>	<i>coolie hat</i>
<b>glitter</b>	<i>costume herpes</i>
<b>crotch strap</b>	<i>dancer diaper</i>
<b>ice wool</b>	<i>Eskimo cloth</i>
<b>folk / cultural styles</b>	<i>ethnic clothing</i>
<b>body / character padding</b>	<i>fat padding</i>
<b>darted and non darted slopers</b>	<i>female and male slopers</i>
<b>pink or beige</b>	<i>flesh (indicating beige or pink color)</i>
<b>Roma / Romani</b>	<i>gypsy</i>
<b>ball / socket</b>	<i>male / female snaps</i>
<b>hook / loop</b>	<i>male / female velcro</i>
<b>Asian</b>	<i>oriental (referring to people or garments)</i>
<b>stitcher / sewist / costume builder</b>	<i>sewer / seamstress / seamster</i>
<b>weight redistribution</b>	<i>squish (in corsetry)</i>
<b>style subculture / style faction</b>	<i>style tribe</i>
<b><i>OBSOLETE</i></b>	<i>top-heavy</i>
<b><i>OBSOLETE</i></b>	<i>trouser role? pants role?</i>
<b>wardrobe head / supervisor</b>	<i>wardrobe mistress / master</i>
<b>whites and colors</b>	<i>whites and coloreds</i>
<b>a-shirt</b>	<i>wife beater shirt</i>

6.3 - Digital Media: Technology/Design/Theory/History

<b>Preferred Term</b>	<b>Problematic Term</b>
<b>socket / receptacle / connector</b>	<i>female connector</i>
<b>plug</b>	<i>male connector</i>

**6.4 - Lighting: Electrics/Design/Theory/History**

<b>Preferred Term</b>	<b>Problematic Term</b>
<b>right angle beam clamp</b>	<i>camel toe</i>
<b>wax pencil / porcelain marker</b>	<i>China marker</i>
<b>diagonal cutters</b>	<i>dikes</i>
<b>socket / receptacle / connector</b>	<i>female connector</i>
<b>pan bolt</b>	<i>fuck nut / fuck-you bolt / jesus bolt</i>
<b>combination pliers / side-cutting pliers / wire gripping pliers</b>	<i>linesman's pliers</i>
<b>plug</b>	<i>male connector</i>
<b>head electrician</b>	<i>master electrician</i>
<b>cardboard box</b>	<i>mexican road case</i>
<b>truss protector / truss sleeve</b>	<i>truss condom</i>

**6.5 - Scenery: Construction/Drafting/Painting/Props/Design/History**

<b>Preferred Term</b>	<b>Problematic Term</b>
<b>Draftsperson</b>	<i>draftsman</i>
<b>seam covering</b>	<i>dutchmanning</i>
<b>traveling wagon</b>	<i>gypsy wagon</i>
<b>hang / install masking</b>	<i>hanging blacks (hanging curtains)</i>
<b>plug / socket / quick disconnect tube fittings</b>	<i>male/female fittings (hydraulic, pneumatic, etc.)</i>
<b>Lead Carpenter / Head Carpenter</b>	<i>master carpenter</i>



<b>Props Head / Supervisor / Manager</b>	<i>props master / mistress</i>
<b>glitter</b>	<i>stage herpes</i>
<b>winch</b>	<i>wench</i>

**6.6 - Sound: Technology / Design / Theory / History**

<b>Preferred Term</b>	<b>Problematic Term</b>
<b>socket / connector</b>	<i>female connector</i>
<b>plug</b>	<i>male connector</i>

**6.7 - Theatre Architecture & Engineering**

<b>Preferred Term</b>	<b>Problematic Term</b>
<b>hang / install masking</b>	<i>hanging blacks (hanging curtains)</i>

**6.8 - Software / Hardware / Engineering**

<b>Preferred Term</b>	<b>Problematic Term</b>
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**7 - Document Maintenance**

The content of this document will periodically be re-evaluated and revised, when necessary, to reflect contemporary perspectives. A survey, located at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7FFJQWR>, will remain open so readers can contribute to the document.

Questions about this document or the Terminology Working Group can be directed to [engineering@usitt.org](mailto:engineering@usitt.org).

## Appendices

### Appendix A: Helpful Terms

**Cisgender:** (often informally abbreviated “cis”); Having to do with, or being a person whose gender identity matches their sex assigned at birth.

**Gender binary:** The classification of gender into two distinct and opposite categories of male/masculine and female/feminine. This classification generally equates gender with sex assigned at birth and, as a binary system, does not account for categorizations outside of the two described.

**People-first language:** Language or terminology which discusses and focuses on an individual before any applicable disability. People-first language does not include catch-all phrases such as “the blind” or “the disabled” which generalize based on the disabilities in question instead of addressing the individuals.

### Appendix B: Titles of Certification and/or Expertise in a Trade

The following are examples of titles, recognized certifications, or academic degrees that indicate an objectively defined skill or training level in a trade. The examples are provided to help mitigate the lack of clarity that may come from titles for lead personnel in a department that may or may not exist for that trade in an official capacity as used in the entertainment industry. These examples also demonstrate titles that may involve terminology that is not recommended, but that cannot be changed by the entertainment industry alone. The list is not exhaustive.

- Apprentice - A tradesperson who is pursuing an apprenticeship or other form of study/training that can allow them to pursue licensure. This is a recognized title used by IATSE.
- ETCP Certified Entertainment Electrician - An electrical technician who has obtained credentials via the ETCP certification program. The title “master electrician” is not a level of certification that is formally recognized by ESTA in the United States.
- ETCP Certified Rigger - A rigging technician who has obtained credentials via the ETCP certification program. Use of the title “master rigger” may result in confusion with the title as it is used in the context of licensed construction professionals and those trained in crane operations.
- Journeyman - A tradesperson who has completed an apprenticeship, or attained a set amount of training or experience. This is a recognized title used by IATSE.
- Master’s Degree - An academic degree awarded upon completion of a course of study that generally requires previous study at the Bachelor’s level. In the United States, the degree itself may be referred to as a “Master of [field of study],” but the degree recipient generally is not referred to with the title master.
- Master Carpenter - The “master” certification level for carpentry is not used in the United States, but it can be attained in several other countries around the world. This title indicates training and skill beyond that of the journeyman level.
- Master Electrician - The “master” certification level for electrician is used in the United States and Canada to indicate a certain licensure level and expertise. This title indicates training and skill beyond that of the journeyman level.