

# Re: Merriam–Webster's Unabridged vs Oxford English Dictionary

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*Source:* <http://sci.tech–archive.net/Archive/sci.lang/2006–06/msg01163.html>

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Harlan Messinger wrote:

2. W3 underwent last major update in 1961

Doesn't that contradict your assertion that W3 is one of two comprehensive dictionaries worth buying? This might have been true in the 1960s, but the absence of 45 years worth of developments in the English language ought to erase the distinction that this dictionary once had.

I agree, 45 years is a lot of time for a language. However, considering W3's enormous amount of entries it can be outdated in quite small percentage of its content. Also, there is "Addenda Section" (according to this article: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Webster%27s\\_Third\\_New\\_International\\_Dictionary](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Webster%27s_Third_New_International_Dictionary), "2.3 Revisions and updates"), which is updated regularly. Last update was in 2002.

[...] is online  
(or CD–ROM) edition of W3/OED is more updated than paper edition or is it just an electronic snapshot of paper content?

You can easily answer this for yourself by looking up words that wouldn't be in the paper editions. Look up "World Wide Web" in the 1961 W3 and then look it up in the on–line Merriam Webster Unabridged—or even in the free version at [www.m–w.com](http://www.m–w.com). For the OED, repeat this exercise for "Google", which was added to the on–line version last week.

Yes, [www.m–w.com](http://www.m–w.com) succeeded to provide definition for "World

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Wide Web" and other modern words. I couldn't find free online access for OED, though (besides trial version, which requires registration).