Which is correct between "documentor" and "documenter"?

fairycat   2006-06-27 00:30:35 UTC

I need to name a software that I'm developing which is implemented for auto-documenting certain issue. Which one should I use? Thanks.

Stephen Calder   2006-06-27 00:50:23 UTC

> *Post by fairycat*
> I need to name a software that I'm developing which is implemented for
> auto-documenting certain issue. Which one should I use? Thanks.

There is no hard and fast rule for adding an agent suffix that tells unequivocally whether it should be -er or -or. So you are free to choose either; my suggestion would be "documentor" on the grounds that English loves analogy and example and we already have "mentor".

--
Stephen
Lennox Head, Australia

Don Phillipson   2006-06-27 01:08:49 UTC

> *Post by Stephen Calder*
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> unequivocally whether it should be -er or -or. So you are free to choose
> either; my suggestion would be "documentor" on the grounds that English
> loves analogy and example and we already have "mentor".

This stretches the point, because the common noun mentor comes from the Greek name Mentor (3,000 years old, i.e. hugely antedating all debates about correct suffixes in English.)

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Don Phillipson
Carlsbad Springs
(Ottawa, Canada)

Stephen Calder   2006-06-27 01:38:50 UTC

> *Post by Don Phillipson*
> > *Post by Stephen Calder*
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> > unequivocally whether it should be -er or -or. So you are free to choose
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> This stretches the point, because the common
> noun mentor comes from the Greek name Mentor
> (3,000 years old, i.e. hugely antedating all debates
> about correct suffixes in English.)

I take your point. Nevertheless, I still say the form most likely to be chosen by the people is "documentor" because they already know "mentor" and consider it an agent noun, even if there is no corresponding verb "to ment". Such things don't matter to the most common choice made. Familiarity does.

--
Stephen
Lennox Head, Australia

Andrew Usher	2006-06-27 02:20:58 UTC

> *Post by Stephen Calder*
>> *Post by fairycat*
>> I need to name a software that I'm developing which is implemented for
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>
> There is no hard and fast rule for adding an agent suffix that tells
> unequivocally whether it should be -er or -or. So you are free to choose
> either; my suggestion would be "documentor" on the grounds that English
> loves analogy and example and we already have "mentor".

No! No! No! The analogy to 'mentor' is pointless, since that's from a
Greek proper name that has nothing to do with agentive suffixes.

It should be 'documentator' or 'documenter', not the ugly hybrid
'documentor'.

Andrew Usher

Jeffrey Turner	2006-06-27 01:17:02 UTC

> *Post by fairycat*
> I need to name a software that I'm developing which is implemented for
> auto-documenting certain issue. Which one should I use? Thanks.

I'd <ugh> go with "documentor" if I had to choose one.

--Jeff

--
We can have democracy or we can have
great wealth concentrated in the hands
of the few. We cannot have both.
--Justice Louis Brandeis

tinwhistler	2006-06-27 02:22:01 UTC

> *Post by Jeffrey Turner*
>> *Post by fairycat*
>> I need to name a software that I'm developing which is implemented for
>> auto-documenting certain issue. Which one should I use? Thanks.
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So does the OED (no listing of "documenter" as a variation).

Andrew Usher	2006-06-27 02:25:09 UTC

> *Post by tinwhistler*
>> *Post by Jeffrey Turner*
>>> *Post by fairycat*
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> So does the OED (no listing of "documenter" as a variation).

The online dictionaries I check list only 'documenter'. Besides,
'documentor' violates standard Latin patterns for -or.

Andrew Usher

tinwhistler	2006-06-27 03:04:52 UTC

> *Post by Andrew Usher*
> The online dictionaries I check list only 'documenter'. Besides,

The three dictionaries at OneLook, including M-W, only have the -er suffix, so we have a battle going on among the dics. As for standard Latin patterns, the OED has this:

[long excerpt]
-or
a termination of words, and form of various suffixes, of Latin origin. Latin long Z in early OF. was represented by a close sound between (Z) and (G), written variously o and u, as in L. honZrem, OF. onor, onur. In AngloFr. the sound sank into (G) and came c1300 to be written ou (onour). In continental Fr., on the other hand, the sound passed at length into eu = ö (oneur, honneur). The earliest adopted words in ME. had o or u (onor, onur), but the regular representation after 1300 was that of AngloFr. ou (onour, honour). In many instances this is still retained; but, at the Renascence, many of the -our words, which in other respects were like their L. originals, were conformed to the L. in -or; and nearly all words taken then or later directly from L. were spelt -or, though, even in these words, there was at first a considerable vacillation between -or and -our. In Great Britain the traditional -our is still written in many of the words in which it was retained in the 16th c., though not a few of these, as ancestor, author, error, horror, prior, senator, tailor, are now spelt with -or, which spelling is extended in American usage to all the -our words. This termination appears in the following suffixes:

1. -or (formerly often -our), representing ultimately L. -or, -Zrem, in nouns of condition from intr. vbs. in -Ure, less usually from other vbs., as error, horror, liquor, pallor, stupor, tenor, terror, torpor, tremor, etc. Such of these as existed in ME. were formerly spelt with -our, e.g. errour, horrour, licour, tenour. In other words of the same class, as ardour, favour, fervour, humour, labour, rigour, valour, vigour, as also in some words not directly connected with extant L. verbs, as colour, honour, odour, -our is generally retained in British usage, but American usage spells these also with -or: ardor, favor, labor, color, honor, etc.

2. -or (formerly often -our), repr. L. -or, -Zrem of agent-nouns, formed on stems identical with the ppl. or 'supine' stems of verbs. Of these there are three varieties: a. Those repr. L. agent-nouns other than those in -Qtor, -Utor, -itor, -Wtor; as actor, assessor, author, captor, censor, confessor, doctor, elector, extensor, factor, flexor, inventor, lictor, oppressor, pastor, possessor, professor, rector, sculptor, sponsor, successor, transgressor, tutor, victor. These are of different ages, going back to OF. words in -or, -ur, AF.

in -our = F. -eur, or L. in -or. So far as they existed in ME., they were then spelt -our, e.g. actour, assessour, authour, censour, confessour, dettour, doctour, etc.; they are now all conformed to the L. spelling in -or.

b. Agent-nouns in L. -Qtor, -Utor, -itor, -Wtor, in coming down in living use into OF., were regularly reduced from -QtZr-em, etc., through -edor to -eör, -eür, AF. -eour, which became in ME. -our, and in F. -eur, and thus fell together with those from simple -Zr-em in a. Such are barrator, cessor, (:-cessatZr-em), conqueror, donor, emperor (imperQtZr-em), governor, juror, lessor, solicitor, vendor, visitor (visitQtZr-em). To this group also belongs saviour (AF. sauveöur:-OF. salveör, salvedor, L. salvQtZr-em), which has preserved the vowel before -our. To these may be added agent-nouns formed in Fr. or AF. on the vb. stem, in imitation of those in -eör, -eur, -our, repr. L. -QtZrem, etc., as purveyor, surveyor, tailor, grantor, warrior (AF. werreyour, f. werreier to war). From want of evidence it is sometimes uncertain whether the agent-noun was already formed in late L. in -Qtor, -itor, or in Fr. after these suffixes had been reduced to -eör and -eur, AF. -our.

c. Agent-nouns in -Qtor, -Utor, -itor, -Wtor, -Gtor, adopted in later times in Fr., or in Eng., retain t, appearing in French as -ateur, -iteur, etc., and have now in Eng. the same written form as in L., e.g. administrator, agitator, creator, curator, dictator, equator, gladiator, imitator, legislator, navigator, spectator, translator, vindicator; orator, procurator, senator; auditor, creditor, editor, janitor, monitor, servitor; executor. These are of different ages: some from OF. or AF. (in which case they formerly had -our, as creatour, creditour, dictatour, oratour, servitour); some of later formation immediately from L., which have had the -or form from the first. The pronunciation varies greatly, the stress being sometimes as in the L. nominative (cre"ator, "creditor), sometimes on the second syllable before the stressed vowel of the AF. and L. accusative (on which a secondary stress fell originally in ME.), as in "auditor (%audi"tour, %audW"tZrem), "orator (%ora"tour, %ZrQ"tZrem), "senator (%sena"tour, %sUnQ"tZrem), "servitor ("servi"tour, %servW"tZrem), e"xecutor (e%xecu"tour, e%xecG"tZrem), sometimes corresponding with that of the Eng. vb., as ad"ministrator, "agitator, "imitator, "prosecutor, or otherwise shifted, as "procurator. In some cases two forms exist, as cu"rator after L. nom., "curator after %cura"tour, %cGrQ"tZrem.

d. -or is sometimes an alteration of another suffix, as of L. -Qrius, F. -ier, AF. -er, in bachelor, chancellor, heritor, or of Eng. -er:-OE. -ere, in sailor, bettor.

The frequent occurrence of ME. -our, mod. -or, in legal terms
denoting the person acting, as opposed to the person acted upon in -é,
-ee, e.g. lessor lessee, grantor grantee, mortgageor mortgagee, has
imparted a kind of technical or professional character to the ending,
and explains the differentation of sailor, one who sails
professionally, from sailer. In ME. there was a tendency to confuse the
endings -er and -our (helped prob. by the OF. declension nom.
-ère:-L. -Qtor, acc. -or, -ur, -eur, L. -QtZrem); thus butcher,
dicer, fletcher, jailer, jester, juggler, porter, etc. are found also
with the ending -our. On the other hand, in a large number of words,
the original -our, -or has, since the 15th c., been exchanged for the
-er of agent-nouns of English derivation; such are barber, broker,
chanter, diviner, labourer, pleader, preacher, robber, rimer or rhymer,
in all which the earlier -our, -or, is the etymological form.

3. -or (-our) sometimes represents F. -oir, from various sources, as
manor, OF. manoir, maneir, L. manUre; mirror, F. miroir, L.
*mWrQtorium; so with -our, parlour, F. parloir, L. *parabolQtZrium.

4. -or, repr. ME. and AF. -our, F. -eur, L. -or, -Zrem, a variant of
-ior, suffix of the comparative degree of adjs., in major, minor. See
-ior2.

Stephen Calder	2006-06-27 07:03:22 UTC

> *Post by Andrew Usher*
>> *Post by tinwhistler*
>>> *Post by Jeffrey Turner*
>>>> *Post by fairycat*
>>>> I need to name a software that I'm developing which is implemented for
>>>> auto-documenting certain issue. Which one should I use? Thanks.
>>> I'd <ugh> go with "documentor" if I had to choose one.
>> So does the OED (no listing of "documenter" as a variation).
> The online dictionaries I check list only 'documenter'. Besides,
> 'documentor' violates standard Latin patterns for -or.
> Andrew Usher

I always believed "documentor" would be the word the people chose.

Language is just like that. Full of false analogies.

I notice my Mozilla spelling checker (US English) offers "documenter" as
a replacement for the unknown "documentor" so maybe I was only half right.

--
Stephen
Lennox Head, Australia

Mark Brader	2006-06-27 06:24:32 UTC

> Subject: Which is correct between "documentor" and "documenter"?
> I need to name a software that I'm developing which is implemented for
> auto-documenting certain issue. Which one should I use? Thanks.

"Documenter" is the normal word in my experience.

T.H. Entity   2006-06-27 08:17:41 UTC

> *Post by Mark Brader*
>> Subject: Which is correct between "documentor" and "documenter"?
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>> auto-documenting certain issue. Which one should I use? Thanks.
> "Documenter" is the normal word in my experience.

Yes. As Andrew Usher pointed out, the only way to get "-or" to work
would be to derive it from "documentation", in which case it'd have to
be "documentator".

I'm still perplexed about how "advisor" slipped through to become the
most common form -- I think I need a tranquilisor.

--
THE

Michael West   2006-06-27 11:44:01 UTC

> *Post by T.H. Entity*
> Yes. As Andrew Usher pointed out, the only way to get "-or" to work
> would be to derive it from "documentation", in which case it'd have to
> be "documentator".

Someone at IBM came up with "Documentalist". I actually had that as a
job title for a few months, aeons ago.

--
MW

T.H. Entity   2006-06-27 13:00:19 UTC

> *Post by Michael West*
>> *Post by T.H. Entity*
>> Yes. As Andrew Usher pointed out, the only way to get "-or" to work
>> would be to derive it from "documentation", in which case it'd have to
>> be "documentator".
> Someone at IBM came up with "Documentalist". I actually had that as a
> job title for a few months, aeons ago.

Yes, documentalists are the filing clerks of the new millennium.

--
THE

Andrew Usher   2006-06-27 18:05:46 UTC

> *Post by T.H. Entity*
> I'm still perplexed about how "advisor" slipped through to become the
> most common form -- I think I need a tranquilisor.

'Advisor' is fine - compare 'divisor', 'supervisor', 'vision'.

A true error, though, is 'visitor' - I suspect some association with
the -or of law.

Andrew Usher

Nick Spalding   2006-06-27 10:14:29 UTC

> *Post by fairycat*
> I need to name a software that I'm developing which is implemented for
> auto-documenting certain issue. Which one should I use? Thanks.

I am sure a marketing guru would suggest DocuMentor.

<ducks and runs>

--
Nick Spalding

about - legalese