

# Dominance of British and American English on the World Wide Web in Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei

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## Abstract

This paper discusses the rivalry between British and American English on the World Wide Web, primarily in three countries: Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei. We first provide a brief overview of these countries in terms of their geographical placement, their history as British post-colonial countries, and their usage of English. We then proceed to examine the dominance of British or American English on the Internet in these countries. The Web is used as a corpus to determine whether English text on Malaysian, Singaporean and Bruneian web-sites are closer to British or American English. As a comparison, we have also included three other neighbouring countries in this study: Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and the Philippines. Random datasets are collected to represent English texts from each of these countries. These texts are compared with English corpora from U.K. and U.S. web-pages. The corpora are compared using three methods: (1) determining overlapping word frequencies, (2) determining common words, and (3) examining significant words with log-likelihood statistics. The results from this comparison are used to gauge whether the influence of British or American English in these countries extends to the Internet.

Our results are consistent with our hypothesis; Former British colonies like Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei still favour British English on the World Wide Web. In addition, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea which are indirectly influenced by British English (i.e. through the Netherlands and Australia) also tend to lean towards British English. The Philippines on the other hand still continue to exhibit America's influence with their preference to American English on the Internet.

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