



Curating the best and worst of internet culture

Friday April 4, 2025

Hello fellow web crawlers! Andrew here. **Welcome to today's edition of web_crawlr.**

Here's the **latest trending internet culture stories** today: Why the internet is [obsessed with a random tree](#), some of the [best memes](#) to come out of Sen. Cory Booker's record-breaking speech in Congress, why [old conspiracy theories are being resurfaced](#) amid a new virus in Russia, and why [people are having dinner with their cats](#).

After that, the trending team shares with you their pick for "**Main Character of the Week**." Also, don't forget to check out our "**Hot on the Dot**" section to see the most popular story on the Daily Dot yesterday!

P.S. — It's Friday, which means it is time for our **weekly news quiz!** Just scroll down below to answer the question. If you guess correctly, **you might win a "Cache Me Outside" shirt!**

See ya tomorrow!

— A.W.

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⚡ Today in Internet Culture



INTERNET SUPERSTAR

The internet is obsessed with a random tree named Rodney with a 4.9-star rating

The **hottest new tourist attraction** is a [four-and-a-half-year-old tree named Rodney](#).

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VIRAL POLITICS

Cory Booker memes flood social media after Senate marathon—20 of the best

Cory Booker memes took the stand this week before and [after he finished his record-breaking speech](#) against the Trump administration.

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CONSPIRACY

New Russian virus revives old Ukrainian biolabs conspiracy

A new respiratory virus is reportedly spreading through Russia, [drawing unevidenced conspiracies from Russian state media and social media users](#) that it is the work of a Ukrainian bioweapon.

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TRENDS

'He loves it so much': Woman eats with her cat because a viral video suggests 'it means so much to them.' It's not just her

A woman posts a video that **shows her eating dinner with her cat** because a viral video suggested "it means so much to them." Apparently, [she's not the only one who took this advice seriously](#).

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💡 Take Our Weekly News Quiz!



Are you the **most online reader of web_crawlr**? Prove it by **answering our question of the week!** The answer can be found somewhere in one of our newsletters from this week.

If you answer correctly, you'll be **entered to win** our brand new "**Cache Me Outside**" shirt, and we'll **shout out five people** who won the shirt!

WHICH MUSICIAN WAS MOCKED ONLINE FOR HIS RIDICULOUS OUTFIT HE WORE AT THE WHITE HOUSE?

ANSWER HERE!

🏆 LAST WEEK'S WINNERS 🏆

BB W., Sarah H., Roger P., Kimberly C., Stacey M.

MAIN CHARACTER OF THE WEEK

Who dominated the discourse online this week?



By [Ramon Ramirez](#)
Managing Editor



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Main Character of the Week: The teenager who bought a Tesla and got buyer's remorse

Here's the [trending team](#)'s Main Character of the Week:

It's the 19-year-old who **bought a Tesla** and [got instant buyer's remorse](#).

A **teenager** in Utah called the dealership and **complained about his purchase**. The dealer posted this recording and it went viral on [TikTok](#).

And while his complaints about [Tesla](#)'s limitations are **completely valid**, viewers had a **difficult time mustering sympathy** for someone who did not **do their homework** before purchase.

The buyer discovered that his Tesla could **not be charged** at his apartment complex. The teen also realized that charging his vehicle **takes longer** than filling up at the gas station.

These are **easy concerns to Google** before investing.

During the call, which played out like a **father-son conversation** more than a customer-business interaction, the teen's dealer held firm. As the dealer, Alex, said:

"You're going to ask me to lose thousands of dollars because you didn't do your homework. That's not fair to us. You need to take some responsibility here. You don't just get to return a car after driving an hour, many miles and days and changing your mind, getting cold feet. That's not how it works. That's not how the law works. That's not how business works, and that's not fair to us."

'How did he not think about this beforehand?'

I turned 40 on Sunday. I accept that conventional wisdom around everything from sock length to the Latino vote has **dramatically shifted** since I was that young man's age. What helps me not be rigid is remembering what it's like to be 19.

Your friends are undergoing a **personal, existential crisis**. No one works a job for more than six months. You live with 15 other people. You knock on doors for money.

I worked security at the **Austin Convention Center** as a 19-year-old. I would show up after a long night of drinking for my midnight security shift, fall asleep in the events hall while I was supposed to be keeping an eye on speed boats for the boat show, wake up at 7am, **call it a shift**.

Nineteen-year-olds are **awful**. We are embryonic thinkers who exist only as the **center of our own myopic universe**. We kick the PlayStation 2 when we lose a game of **Madden**. We don't realize that the gravy on our frozen Salsberry steak requires a sauce pan, so we microwave the powder. Young men in particular cope with rejection as well as Bob Knight did.

One day, **you realize** that you can cut class and not face detention. So, you skip class. You are callous and short-sighted.

The Tesla teen

If you do it right, 19-year-olds drive cars that are **unreliable, old, and unsightly**. We must reckon with the consequences of our dumb, preventable fender benders. I.e. we can't afford to get our cars fixed at 19, so we drive around in dented cans.

So I have a **little love** for any teenager who is **afforded the luxury** of driving a Tesla. New ones start at **\$44,000**.

Even under the most **charitable circumstances**—say, a teenager comes from a philanthropic family who teaches him good moral values and rewards him with the means to buy a Tesla because of his overseas work for Habitat for Humanity—it is **wrong** for teenagers to drive nice cars.

Please **email me an exception**, and tell me where I'm wrong. Seriously, I'm **not a parent** and **don't pretend** to be an expert on raising empathetic people.

For the moment, however, I maintain that the neuroplasticity of a teen brain is **far too tender** for them to be trusted with anything important. Moreover, driving a bad car—or being asked to take the bus—builds **resilience**, foundational maintenance knowledge that will serve them forever, **gratitude**, and **empathy**.

Think about the friend of yours who rebuilt a 1967 Camaro in the garage with his dad for years in anticipation of his driver's license. Think of the friend of yours who drove a Chevy Lumina from the police auction. Think about the \$500 Dodge Neons paid in full after multiple Baskin Robbins shifts.

And this kid **gets to drive a Tesla and complain about it?**

He comes off as so **naïve** and entitled that it's very difficult for viewers to do anything but point and laugh.

The “**epic fail**” is a tried, true formula for internet virality. Americans coalesce

around one universal idea. In the main character columns that I've written over the past two years, I **try to find understanding and empathy** for the subject. Be it [48 oysters girl](#) or the teens who [stole the Ziosk at Olive Garden](#).

So I'll remind myself that a 19-year-old is **not a person quite yet**. And I hope the next time he's in a position to buy a car, he **internalizes this moment** and makes a **responsible purchase**.

 Crawling the Web

Here is what else is happening across the 'net.

👉 Kids on TikTok are **dropping increasingly heavy objects on their feet**—here's why [it's more than just a weird trend](#).

➡ Is **KitKat** spelled with a **hyphen**? You're **not alone** if you think so. But despite what you and many others may think, [KitKat does not contain a hyphen](#).

 This simple Olive Garden hack could [get you two meals for the price of one](#). You just have to be a **bit shameless about it**.

➲ A woman alleged that she **bought a tin of Pillsbury biscuits** that contained an **unsavory addition: metal scraps**.

🔊 From the **Daily Dot archive**: Distorted TikTok sounds hurt marginalized creators—and AI is making it worse.

Hot on the Dot

This was the **most read story** on the Daily Dot yesterday:

► ‘What are we doing?’: Olive Garden waitress serves food to table of young girls. Then she overhears them say this

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Loved it!



Meh...



Hated it.

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