

Microspeak: Represent

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The more conventional definition of *represent* is along the lines of “to act as a proxy for”. An attorney represents his or her client in court. Your legislator represents you in the assembly. A token on a board represents your position in the game.

At Microsoft, the word *represent* takes on a stranger meaning. Here are some usages inspired by actual sentences:

- We need someone to represent this bug at the morning meeting.
- Can somebody represent which OS versions are affected by this issue?

In the first case, I’m guessing that the word *represent* means “to act as an advocate for” or possibly just “to serve as a source of information on”.

In the second case, it appears that the word *represent* just means “tell us in an official capacity”.

These new senses may be influenced by rap lyrics and what is genteelly referred to as *urban culture*.

If somebody actually knows what the word “represent” means at Microsoft, please add a comment. I asked the person who made the second statement for a definition, but what came back was merely the “act as a proxy for” definition, which clearly doesn’t make sense. (How can a person act as a proxy for a list of operating systems?)



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