

Keep your English up to date

Not

Professor David Crystal

In the *Sunday Times* a couple of week's ago, I saw a usage written down - previously, I'd only heard it in speech. The headline read: 'Dumb Blondes, Not!' It was an article about a group of very high-powered women, and the headline was saying - Dumb blondes, they are not!

Well, you can see what it is, it's an abbreviation to the word 'not'. It's an unusual usage, putting the 'not' at the end, instead of in the middle. It's a bit like a tag - you know - tag questions, and tag statements. It's used to negate a statement of fact.

But it's more than just a negative. It's actually emphasising the negative opinion of the speaker. The speaker is really saying, 'What I've just said is rubbish!' It's like, 'No way!' or 'I don't think so!'

So it's usually used after an opposite point of view. I heard somebody say this coming out of a cinema, 'O, yeah, it was great film, not!' And then I've heard, 'This is a cool website, not!' And, 'Sure we're ready, not!'

So listen out for it. It's a fashion and it might not last. And if it doesn't, you can always say, 'That's a cool bit of slang, not!'



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