Two nickname formation strategies are suffixation with –ster or –meister. The suffix –ster has a long history according to the OED, dating from the use of –estre in OE to form feminine agent nouns. There is no mention, however, of the more recent use of –ster in nickname formation. The OED attributes –meister as having US origin as a final element in compounds; the first attested example dates from 1975 and labels Paul McCartney as a “schmaltzmeister”. The more restricted use of this suffix in nickname formation is often attributed to a sketch on Saturday Night Live from 1990 in which Rob Schneider plays a photocopier operator who refers to himself as the “Richmeister”. One UK source (http://www.dfxhost.net/asse/assefaq.html) credits British use of the –meister suffix to Ricky Gervais’ character David Brent in The Office from 2001, who frequently refers to himself as “the Brentmeister”.

However, a moment’s introspection reveals that not all names are amenable to suffixation with –ster or –meister, and of those that are, some are more satisfactory than others. Here we report on the results of a survey of nickname suffixation strategies and acceptability judgements of the resulting nicknames.