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Ban the word 'až'



Few Czech words are as versatile as the adverb and conjunction "až." It can mean "up to," "as many as," "not until," "as late as," "except for," "too much so" or "pending," to mention a few of the main ones. Advertisers love the word, because it can suggest profoundness without actually saying much of anything. A store can offer a discount of "až 70%" ("up to 70%") without revealing that only one dirty t-shirt is selling for a 70% discount and that the other discounts, if there are any, are only 5-10%. When the financial press writes that such-and-such a company plans to expand and to hire "až 500" workers, it could mean 500 or also five, because five is also "up to 500." Or did the writer actually mean the full 500? The reader often has no way of knowing what was meant, so "až" is an ideal word for anyone who wants to obfuscate. Which of course means that "až 50%" of our readers won't agree with us this time!

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