



Noun's the time for a revolution

Sisomo — sight, sound, motion — is how Kevin Roberts sees the future

by Liam Dann

Advertising guru Kevin Roberts has set himself an ambitious goal for the New Year — he wants to get a new word into the world's vocabulary.

The New York-based Kiwi, who heads international advertising agency Saatchi & Saatchi, has coined the word "sisomo" to describe a world where human interaction is dominated by electronic screens.

The word is an amalgam of: sight, sound and motion. Three things that Roberts — who is back here for his Christmas break — believes all communicators must consider if they want to successfully deliver a message.

"Our use of screens is now beyond the belief of the last generation," he said.

Screens have progressed from the movie theatre to living rooms to the work place and cars.

The rise of video screens on cameras, music players, portable computers and mobile phones means few people are not carrying a screen with them everywhere they go.

Roberts said businesses — and anyone else who wanted to communicate with the public — had to be considering sight, sound and motion in everything they did.

Sisomo is also the title of his latest book, a magazine-style guide to the world of screens, which will be launched worldwide in the new year.

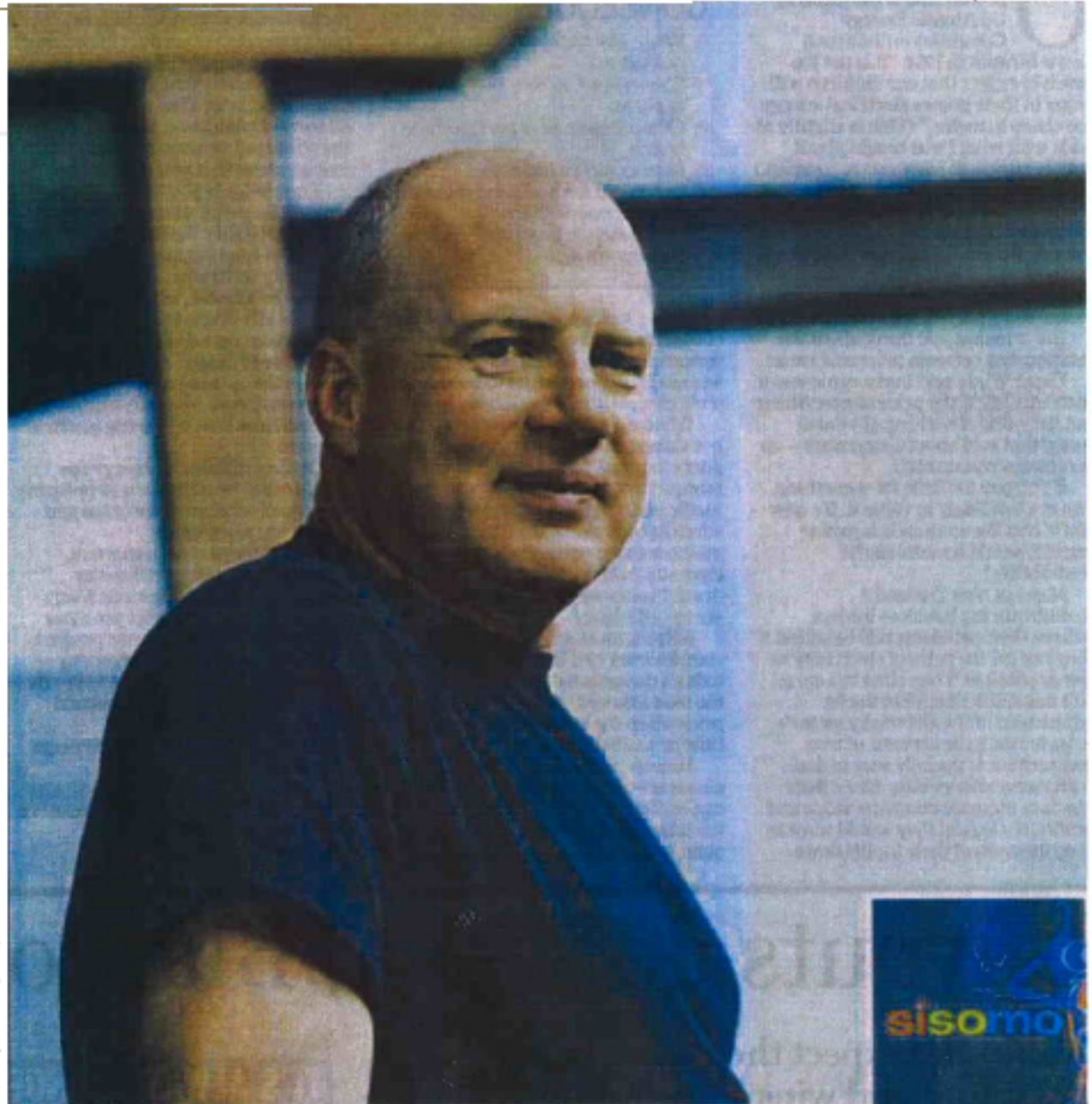
"Revolution starts with language," he said — quoting publisher Alan Webber. "So, creating a new word was a deliberate move."

It's technically a noun, but Roberts has no shortage of ideas for how it can be dropped into casual conversation as a verb. How about: "We're sisomoing all our ideas" ... or "The story sisomoed up really well."

To the uninitiated, it sounds suspiciously like marketing jargon but the book is not just aimed at the advertising industry.

Roberts said a lot of the interest in the concept was coming from the news media, the big retailers and the electronics companies.

"Mass marketing is dead. You can't



INNOVATOR: "Creating a new word was a deliberate move," says Kevin Roberts and inset, the book *Sisomo* which he has written.

PICTURE / JANE USSHER

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just buy a 30-second slot on TV. So everybody is asking, what's next?"

Coming up with one-word solutions to that question might be a fun exercise, getting them accepted by the wider public is another matter.

But Roberts is better placed than most to get his new word noticed. His job comes with a high media profile — one he has done his best to build on. In

September, he hit international headlines with his suggestion that the US "war on terror" should be rebranded.

Roberts launched the word *sisomo* at an advertising industry conference in New York last month.

Since then he has made two US TV appearances and attracted many articles in business sections. One internet-based English dictionary has

sisomo on its list of candidates for inclusion. But Roberts is hoping for more of a global linguistic splash.

"I've just been in Russia and Korea talking about it and they can all say *sisomo*," he said. "We just want to see it becoming part of the lexicon."

ON THE WEB
www.sisomo.com

