
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

The English We Speak

Viral



NB: This is not a word-for-word transcript

Li

Ahhh... So cute! Sweet and cute!

Rob

Cat videos on the computer, Li?

Li

Yes, yes Rob. They're adorable!

Rob

What makes people so obsessed about these cat videos? Let me watch this one with you.

(cat meowing)

Rob

Oh, I've seen this one! It's everywhere! Look how many people clicked on this site to see it. About one hundred thousand by now!

Li

Yes, everybody loves Fluffy!

Rob

Fluffy. Yes. This cat is fluffy and ... crazy!

(cat growling)

Rob

Look! It's gone viral!

Li

What do you mean? Fluffy is MY cat and she's very well-behaved and healthy. No virus in my cat!

Rob

In English, the expression 'to go viral' is used for a picture or a video which has become extremely popular by being circulated quickly and broadly on the internet.

Li

Oh, viral... you mean it spreads quickly like a virus.

Rob

Yes. It can be used with a verb, 'to go viral', or just as an adjective before a noun. You can say 'viral video'. 'Viral' is today's expression in The English We Speak. Let's hear some examples of how it's used.

Examples

*A video of First Lady Michelle Obama dancing with a turnip has gone viral on the internet.
Hundreds of thousands of people have watched her video in support of healthy eating.*

Viral videos are big business nowadays and even marketing companies are posting amateur-looking videos in the hope of cashing in on the trend.

Li

So the viral part of what you said has been explained, but what about the 'crazy cat' part?

Rob

Li, I'm sorry. The good part is that it's gone viral so everybody finds your cat interesting. But the bad part is...

Li

Is...?

Rob

Is that you've got a very angry cat! Very fluffy and very angry! I know you love your pet but you've got to admit it is funny. Let's watch it again.

(cat growling)

Li

It is funny!

Rob

You see? There you go. Fluffy is a star!

Li

Yes. Thank you, Rob!

Rob

You're welcome. Bye bye.

Li

Bye.

(cat growling)