
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

The English We Speak

Internet speak



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

Rob

Hello, Li.

Li

Hello, Rob.

Rob

On the internet again?

Li

Yes. It seems we can't survive without spending hours on the computer every day.

Rob

Hey, have you noticed how many new words and phrases have been created or have changed their meaning thanks to the development of the internet?

Li

One thing I'm sure about. If someone tells you they're sending you something via 'snail mail', don't expect to open an envelope and find lots of snails coming out of it.

Rob

And your letters won't be delivered by snails either. It would take years!

Li

That's funny when you think about it. Well, not if you are a snail, for sure!

Rob

'Snail mail' is the traditional letter delivering service in which you have a postman and a post box. It's different from email or electronic mail, when the message sent on the computer travels quickly to its destination.

Li

This is one of the expressions in today's The English We Speak:

Examples

I'm sending my auntie Marge this lovely birthday card via snail mail. She lives in Japan.

I much prefer using email these days. All I get by snail mail are these marketing leaflets!

Rob

Well, the verb 'to post' and the noun 'post' have also gained new meanings in the internet age.

Li

If you write an opinion on a social media website - you 'post' a comment - your comment is... well, 'a post'!

Rob

Before, you had to go to the post office to... post your letters. Here are some more examples of this new meaning of 'post'.

Examples

This website's all about how trendy it is to wear fur. I don't like it at all. I think I'll post a comment!

Mary has a blog about food and she publishes new posts every day.

Rob

So, there are no snails in your snail mail and... your 'hard copy' is... guess what?

Li

Not hard at all!

Rob

Yes. 'Hard copy' is what we call the paper version of a document you write on your computer or of a digital picture you take.

Li

Paper is flexible, but the paper document is called 'hard copy'. Let's hear some examples here in The English We Speak.

Examples

I'll give you a hard copy of my report, Mary. You can read it on the bus, on your way home.

I have a digital copy of my wedding picture as a screensaver at work but I much prefer my hard copy in a frame. It's much nicer.

Rob

There you go. 'Hard copy', 'to post' or 'a post' and 'snail mail', all come about because of computers and the internet! New words and phrases are appearing every day and we have to keep up.

Li

That's it from us for today. Bye bye.

Rob

Bye.