
Exercises 2 and 3

Speaker 1: Hi, I work in China and what I'm worried about is countries where there's state censorship of news so you only get the news that they – and by 'they' I mean the government – want you to hear. That's one reason why some people say – and I for one would agree with them wholeheartedly – that internet access has now become a basic and fundamental human right. Interestingly though, in China now you can actually get access to some sites banned by the Chinese authorities. Ordinary people have found ways to scale the infamous Great Firewall through, for example, Amazon's Kindle. Now, Kindle software is primarily designed to allow users to access e-books and other digital media but it also allows for web browsing, so you can actually get onto Twitter and Facebook there. It's definitely a step in the right direction, if you ask me.

Speaker 2: I'm on the internet as soon as I wake up and over my morning toast and coffee or what-not I skim through at least three online papers – usually The Telegraph, The Guardian and the Independent. I like the comment sections under the articles, or 'below the line' as they say, where people give their points of view on the issues of the day. Now, if I went out and bought a newspaper, I wouldn't have that choice – that range of standpoints and opinions, even if some of them aren't very sensible – and I'd be paying for something, most of which I wouldn't read and then I'd chuck it away. Yes, I know it can get recycled, but with the net, there's no paper involved and I can immediately save anything I'm really interested in. Or just revisit the page whenever I like.

Speaker 3: I'd just like to say that as far as I know, none of the people I know use Twitter for news of what's going on in the world. Most Twitterers or Twits or whatever they're called use it to keep in touch with celebrity gossip or to promote their own boring lives to other people who've got nothing better to do than be permanently locked onto their mobile in case they miss the astounding news that Frankie is on a bus. If you've got something important to say, tell someone – call or text them personally. The whole world doesn't need to know what you had for breakfast!

Speaker 4: What I want to know is who's responsible for what goes onto these sites. I mean, if anyone can upload whatever they like to Wikipedia or sites like that, then how do we know it's true or real? Who checks? My son's doing his A levels this year and does a lot of research on the internet, but he doesn't know how much of the information he can really trust. Probably very little of it, if you ask me. If you Google something, you may well get somebody's weird opinions coming up, not the facts you want. There has to be some sort of control body, in my opinion, sorting out the relevant and accurate from the rubbish, and not letting idiots post any old stuff online, where it might be misinterpreted as being useful and relevant.

Speaker 5: I think it's great that we have instant access to breaking news through 24-hour news channels like CNN and dedicated news websites that you can access anytime you like – or even contact you – on your laptop or mobile. There are so many apps available for things like iPhones and iPads that you can get anything you want anytime. It's all so different from just a few years ago when you had to wait for the news to come on at certain times on the TV or radio. Sitting down to watch the six o'clock news with the family! Doesn't that just seem really old fashioned now?

Speaker 6: Well, I heard a talk on the radio the other day by an anthropologist or someone like that who said it's impossible for anyone to have more than 125 friends, so how can anyone meaningfully say they've got more than that on Facebook or any other of these social networking sites? And anyway, friends are people you've actually met in the flesh and get on with. You want to spend time with them doing things, not just typing stuff to someone you've never actually met. If I'm your Facebook friend, I could be making up a whole pack of lies about myself and my news and what I'm up to and you'd never know.