

## Real English Conversations: The Pre-Google Dark Ages

### Introduction

Hi! Lori here, welcoming you to another episode of Real English Conversations from BetterAtEnglish.com. In today's conversation, my English friend Michael and I talk about how much we use and depend on the Internet in our daily lives, particularly Google. In our conversation, which was completely unplanned and spontaneous, we ended up using quite a few phrasal verbs. I have highlighted these phrasal verbs in the vocabulary notes, as well as some idiomatic expressions. As always, you can find the full transcript and vocabulary notes on our website, [www.BetterAtEnglish.com](http://www.BetterAtEnglish.com).

Here we go!

### Conversation Transcript

- Lori: Can you imagine what life would be like without the Internet?
- Michael: Without the Internet?
- Lori: Yeah
- Michael: Like in **the good old days**? Way back and...
- Lori: Yeah, the **Dark Ages**! [Laughs]
- Michael: Oh goodness! Yeah. It's...it's funny I mean, that...that's we joke about it but, umm... Thinking about that yeah, it would be like the dark ages because we're so...people are so **reliant on** the Internet.
- Lori: Yeah, I know I am.
- Michael: Yeah, oh me too, for sure. Umm...
- Lori: Yeah
- Michael: Ahh...Yeah, aside from obvious things like...email, umm...and, ahh, Skype and, aah, MSN and these sort of things, just for chatting with people, umm, it would just be...it would be crazy not having all that information at your fingertips.
- Lori: Yeah, yeah.
- Michael: Because for me, that's the main thing, with the Internet, is **looking things up**.
- Lori: Oh yeah, can you imagine me **going even one day without** my precious Google?
- Michael: Err...I think you'd **crack up**!
- Lori: Yeah! [laughs]
- Michael: I think...
- Lori: I'd be outside talking to lampposts.  
[laughter]
- Michael: Yeah that's...
- Lori: Going crazy!
- Michael: Umm... No, I really hope that you don't get a power cut this winter because you'll go...err...going cold...errr...what is it?... **cold turkey** without—
- Lori: Yeah I won't be able to google things! Oh my God!
- Michael: Oh no!

Lori: No, I love Google so much, it's so useful; it's such an **awesome** tool.

Michael: Sure, I mean it's...it's funny I was just thinking recently umm...that apart from the usual websites that I would go to, to get news or perhaps some of the music websites where I'll just log on and have a look and see what's new in the world, umm, the vast majority of the time that I'm on the Internet is actually going to Google and then looking something up.

Lori: Oh yeah, yeah.

Michael: Because if there's some information I need to know about, then it's straight to Google.

Lori: Yeah.

Michael: Umm...You know, it's unlikely that I would go to some other site, I'd just let Google do the finding for me and then see where it takes me.

Lori: Yeah,

Michael: and...

Lori: No, it's amazing.

Michael: It...it's like having umm...just the biggest encyclopedia [laughs] **at your fingertips** you know, it's quite amazing...

Lori: Yeah, sometimes **I would say** I use Google hundreds of times a day.

Michael: I've seen you do it! [laughs] I'm sure...

Lori: Yeah, you know constantly googling things and checking things and it's...

Michael: Right.

Lori: I don't know what I would do without it; it **puts you in touch** – you know, the Internet in general and...and email and chat and the different social networks – it just puts you in touch with people all over the world.

Michael: Well, absolutely, I mean I know of at least one fantastic relationship that **came about** through the Internet!

[laughter]

Lori: Yeah, and no matter what your **niche** interest is, you can find other people all over the world who are interested in...in that same thing.

Michael: Absolutely!

Lori: You know, it's underwater basket-weaving, or whatever it is, you'll be able to find forums and...

Michael: Rolling around...rolling around naked in dog food, whilst barking, umm...

Lori: Yeah, I guess! I'm sure! It wouldn't surprise me!

Michael: I'm sure there's a whole community out there.

Lori: Yeah, yeah, who are...who are into that.

Michael: Yeah.

Lori: Umm, and it's...that's really cool that you can connect with people all over the world and...

Michael: Sure

Lori: Share the things that you love, it's...I think it's really cool.

## Final Words

Thanks for tuning in to this episode of Real English Conversations at BetterAtEnglish.com. And to those who have donated since last time, thank you very much for your support. We really appreciate your generosity. These casts take a lot of time to produce, and your continued donations are an enormous help. But donations aren't the only thing that make us happy; we love when you email us or record messages for us, like this: Thanks so much Rocío, messages like yours make all our effort totally worthwhile! See you next time!

## Vocabulary notes

<b>the good old days</b>	When people talk about <i>the good old days</i> (sometimes spelled <i>the good ole days</i> ), they are referring to a previous time period that they remember fondly and preferred to the present. This phrase is often used whimsically (as Michael does here), or even ironically, as in "Back in <i>the good old days</i> when children were thrashed and women were bashed."
<b>the Dark Ages</b>	The term <i>Dark Ages</i> refers to a period of European history stretching from about AD 400 to 1000. Lori's reference to the Dark Ages here is a form of <i>hyperbole</i> , or extravagant exaggeration.
<b>looking things up</b>	To <i>look something up</i> (or look up something) means to search for information in a book or other source. For example, you can look up words in a dictionary, or look up information on Google.
<b>going even one day without</b>	To <i>go without something</i> means to not have something that you usually have, or not use something that you usually use.
<b>crack up</b>	To <i>crack up</i> (informal) means to become mentally ill or experience severe mental distress.
<b>cold turkey</b>	To <i>go cold turkey</i> means to abruptly stop using an addictive substance, such as narcotics, alcohol, or other drugs. This informal phrase is often used when talking about abruptly stopping any habitual activity, rather than taking a gradual approach.
<b>awesome</b>	The adjective <i>awesome</i> is Am. E. slang meaning <i>excellent</i> , <i>superb</i> , <i>impressive</i> , etc. Some language pedants react very negatively when <i>awesome</i> is used in this way, and prefer that <i>awesome</i> be used in its traditional sense of "inspiring great awe." Lori thinks Google is <i>awesome</i> in both senses of the word.
<b>at your fingertips</b>	If something is <i>at your fingertips</i> , you can access it and use it very easily. For example, "Google and the internet put all the world's information at your fingertips."
<b>I would say</b>	Used as Lori does here, <i>I would say</i> means "I estimate" or "I believe."
<b>puts you in touch with</b>	To <i>put someone in touch with somebody</i> means to make direct contact between them possible.
<b>came about</b>	To <i>come about</i> means to happen, start, or occur.
<b>niche</b>	In this context, a <i>niche</i> is a small area of specialized interest. You often hear about <i>niche markets</i> , i.e., smaller, specialized markets for particular products or services.