



English For French

ENGLISH CONVERSATION - Wednesday 27th Thursday 28th September

2017

18h00 - 20h00

Hi, meet my online persona!

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/english/features/6-minute-english/ep-161103>



Are we different online than we are in real life? Sophie and Neil discuss their views on social networks, and why we often use different identities for different social media – Neil reckons he's cooler on Twitter!

This week's question

How many social media accounts does the average person have? Is it...

- a) 3?
- b) 5?
- c) 8?

You'll hear the answer at the end of the programme.



English For French

Vocabulary

get something

understand

psyche

mind

wordsmith

someone who is skilled with words

handle

name

street

urban culture

blooper

embarrassing mistake

laughing stock

look very silly when you're trying to be serious

tribe

social (or ethnic) group

Transcript

Sophie

Hello and welcome to 6 Minute English. I'm Sophie...

Neil

And I'm Neil. Oh, hang on... I've just got a new tweet here. Listen to this: 'Hi Neil, about what you said the other day I...' Oh, this is from a friend who doesn't realize that regular tweets are in the public domain – and that anyone in the world could read them if they wanted to. I need to give her some lessons in cool – she just doesn't get it!

Sophie

Well, Mr Cool, I don't **get** Twitter either – which means I don't understand why people like it. Why do you want to put tweets out there for everyone to read?

Neil

You'd love it if you tried it, Sophie.

Sophie

I'm not so sure, Neil. Anyway, the subject of today's show is online identity. There are lots of social media platforms out there – Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Instagram – and they're all different, and the question is, do we use different identities when we are using different digital spaces? And what's all this tweeting, posting, and hashtagging doing to our language and our psyche?



English For French

Neil

And **psyche** means mind. Well, it's messed with my mind. I'm a total addict. I check my accounts as soon as I get up in the morning – and sometimes in the night if I wake up. I couldn't get through the day without it.

Sophie

Well, I'm the opposite – I'm totally unaddicted – and therefore don't need to worry about my psyche. Now, before we explore this further, let's have today's quiz question.

Neil

OK, here's one for you, Sophie. Can you tell me how many social media accounts the average person has? Is it...

a) 3?

b) 5?

Or c) 8?

Sophie

I'll say 3 – though that sounds like 3 too many to me.

Neil

OK, we'll find out if you got the answer right later on in the show. I've got ... 3... 5 no hang on. I've got 6...

Sophie

While you add up all your accounts, Neil, let's listen to Dr Aleks Krotoski, broadcaster, journalist and social psychologist. She's talking about the language we use to present ourselves online.

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Dr Aleks Krotoski, broadcaster, journalist and social psychologist

Online we have this extraordinary opportunity to explore different aspects of ourselves through primarily text-based communication, by manipulating language and becoming wordsmiths ourselves. So for example, your Twitter handle will have a 'you' that is probably different from a 'you' that you share if, say, for example you have a Facebook account, or is different from a 'you' that you would share if you're on a particular forum of something that you like – some music that you like, or food that you like, or whatever it is.

Sophie

So we are wordsmiths with handles. What does that mean?

Neil

A **wordsmith** is someone who is skilled at using words. And a **handle** means a name.

Sophie

What's your Twitter handle, then?

Neil

Well, you'll need to get a Twitter account to find out. But I have other handles for other social media.



English For French

Sophie

So there are lots of 'yous' out there, Neil?

Neil

Yes. For example, I think I'm cooler on Twitter than on Facebook. I talk more, you know, street. 'Check out my new creps – they're bangin'.'

Sophie

Yo – they're well sick. **Street**, by the way, refers to the language that goes with street – or urban – culture, where things like skate boarding and hip-hop are popular. And I think 'creps' are trainers – am I right, bruv?

Neil

Yes, Sophie. I didn't know you could talk street!

Sophie

I have identities that you know nothing about, Neil! But getting back to Twitter and how big an audience there is, doesn't that huge audience worry you, Neil? Aren't you scared of making a huge blooper online and becoming a laughing stock?

Neil

OK, **blooper** means an embarrassing mistake – and being **a laughing stock** means looking very silly when you were trying to be serious. Well, Sophie, I'm quite careful about how I manage my online identity. I take time to craft my words – just like I craft them for this show!

Sophie

Really? So no bloopers, on this show, then? I seem to remember one or two... Well, let's move on now and listen now to Dr Aleks Krotoski again, talking about what motivates us to put our thoughts and ideas out there online.

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Dr Aleks Krotoski, broadcaster, journalist and social psychologist

It's allowing us a platform for a potential audience that is massive, absolutely huge, so yeah, there is a lot of 'look at me, look at me' online, but that's, I think, because we're trying to reach out to as much of the audience – we're trying to get as much attention as we possibly can, in order to get that tribe. And, also, in order to basically reach out and tell people, 'Hey we're around'. It's like having a telephone on all the time: 'Hey, chat to me. I'm here. Anybody wanna hang out?' It's a big social playground.

Neil

Aleks Krotoski says we're all show offs who want attention. Am I a show off, Sophie?

Sophie

Yes, you are, Neil. Though Aleks says it isn't just about showing off – it's also about connecting with people in our **tribe** – or social group. But that tribe can be enormous because people are reading posts globally – not just in your own town or even your own country.



English For French

Neil

Hastag scarythought! Now, I think it's time for the answer to today's quiz question. I asked: How many social media accounts does the average person have? Is it... a) 3, b) 5 or c) 8?

Sophie

I said b) 3.

Neil

And that is ... not the right answer, Sophie. The average person has 5 social media accounts and spends around 1 hour and 40 minutes browsing these networks every day, accounting for 28% of the total time spent on the internet. Now, here are the words we heard today:

get something
psyche
wordsmith
handle
street
blooper
laughing stock
tribe

Sophie

And that's the end of today's 6 Minute English. Don't forget to join us again soon!

Neil

And remember you can tweet us @bbcle!

Both

Bye!