

An Occasional User of the Internet

F: Well, I'm only an occasional user of the Internet because I don't have a connection myself and I use it for finding answers or finding pieces of information. I'm a great collector of information, for people ask me things and I always see this as a challenge, so for years I've always written in my diary: "Things to find out : Who wrote this" or something, and I go off to the university library and look things up, and now I find it much quicker to find a lot of information on the Internet.

M: I mean, do you use the Internet in the university library?

F: Yes. They've got at the moment ten terminals and it's free because the university, like all universities, is permanently connected to a network, Janet it's called, and that is connected to the Internet or part of the Internet, should I say.

M: Right. OK. What are some of the most interesting or curious places that you've come across while exploring?

F: Well, I think the most interesting places are always the ones that you've just found that day. In fact, I was in the university library this morning because the husband of a friend of mine wanted to learn how to surf. And he was particularly interested in Andrew Marvell, the English poet. So we looked up Marvell. Well, I looked up Marvell instead of Andrew Marvell and the first five sites were some electronics company in California called Marvell Electronics. But what did I find today? Oh, yes, we also looked up some English language pages for English language schools and there was one which had a lot of competition where they had flags of different countries and you had to identify the country and obviously it meant writing the country correctly in English and out of ten we only got one right, which was Estonia.

M: Goodness.

F: I like the interactive pages. There's very nice open university course in biology. It's called The Virtual Frog Dissection -- you can dissect a frog and, yes, you say, what's the most curious, I don't know, there are quite a lot of curious ones. There's one I came across last week. I typed in the name of the village where I used to live in Suffolk and that came up with somebody, somebody who lives in the village has got a page and obviously he is convinced that his house is surrounded by soldiers and tanks and he's being attacked, and he's got a sort of plan of disposition and the names of all the regiments around his house.

M: How extraordinary.

F: Yes, so a sort of persecution complex ...

M: Right. And how do you feel about using the Internet in this way? I mean, is it exciting or

frightening?

F: It can be a little bit frightening because it's very daunting if you go to a very big library and, you see, I mean, I'm at the moment writing for a course, an English course for lawyers, and I get very daunted when I go to the law library here, and think well there's so much I've got to cover and I don't really know where to begin. I'd be much happier if I was in a very small library and had four books and felt, well, I could do all that. But the Internet is so big already that if you're interested in a certain subject, you think: "How am I ever going to find the really worthwhile information, and there so much here?"

Questions:

1. Why does the women use the Internet only occasionally?
2. According to the women, what are some of the most interesting places she has come across while exploring the Internet?
3. Which of following sites on the Internet is NOT mentioned in the dialogue?
4. What is The Virtual Frog Dissection?
5. How does the women feel when exploring the Internet?

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