Hello, I’m Amber, and you’re listening to bbclearningenglish.com.
Today, since we are a website, we join in celebrations for the 15th birthday of the World Wide Web!
The World Wide Web has changed the lifestyle and working environment of people all over the world. In this programme, we listen to a short interview about how the internet has changed our lives.

Ian Pearson is a futurologist - he studies ‘futurology’. He’s concerned with trying to say correctly what will happen in the future. In the first part of his interview, Ian Pearson lists both good things and bad things about the internet. Can you catch any of these?
And he begins by saying that he does not believe the World Wide Web has made our lives completely happy, or blissful. And he uses an unusual expression - using the prefix ‘cyber’ - to describe the condition of being made extremely happy by the internet! What is this unusual expression? Cyber – what?

Ian Pearson

‘I don’t believe in cyber bliss. I think that the future is very much the same as today, where you’ve got good things and bad things, you know, we’ve got email but we’ve got junk mail along side. In the future, we’ll have lots of new ways of doing things, but we’ll have some misuse as well. It’s never going to be Utopia, but, you know, if we get it right, it won’t be hell either.’
Amber: Did you catch it? Ian Pearson says he doesn’t believe in ‘cyber bliss’ – ‘cyber’ means ‘relating to computers, especially to messages and information on the internet’, and ‘bliss’ means ‘perfect happiness’ or ‘enjoyment’. Cyber bliss. And he says the positive things about the internet are ‘email’ and that in the future ‘we’ll have lots of new ways of doing things’. However, the negative things are ‘junk mail’ and future ‘misuse’ of the internet. When you listen again, notice how Ian Pearson balances his sentences to list ‘good things and bad things’.

Also, at the end of this extract, Ian Pearson uses two terms to describe how the internet will never be perfect, but if we ‘get it right’, and work to improve the World Wide Web, it won’t be a harmful or unpleasant thing either. Can you catch either of these two terms, describing two completely opposite situations?

Ian Pearson

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Amber: ‘It’s never going to be Utopia, but, you know, if we get it right, it won’t be hell either.’ ‘Utopia’ is an imaginary perfect world where everyone is happy. If a situation, experience or place is very unpleasant, an informal word to describe it is ‘hell’. ‘It’s never going to be Utopia, but, you know, if we get it right, it won’t be hell either.’

Next, Ian Pearson suggests we can celebrate certain features of the World Wide Web – after all, not many of us would like to go back to 1990 and live without email and text messaging! And generally, technology does help us to be productive with our lives and to organise them! Can you catch the
expression he uses to say that he doesn’t want to go back in time to a world without the World Wide Web?

**Ian Pearson**

‘I certainly wouldn’t want to wind the clock back. I don’t think very many people would. There’s a battle between people who want to use these things to make our lives better and people who want to, basically, be parasitic on all of that to make money by making our lives misery. You know, people are sent junk mail and stuff like that. We have to find ways of dealing with those people and still allow the benefits to come through to people that want to use it for good things.’

**Amber:** Ian Pearson says: ‘I certainly wouldn’t want to wind the clock back’. This is an informal way of saying that you don’t want to go back to a previous situation. ‘I certainly wouldn’t want to wind the clock back’.

Ian Pearson also says there’s now ‘a battle’, a fight, between people who use the internet for good and those ‘parasitic’ people who use the internet for bad purposes. If you say someone is ‘parasitic’, you mean they don’t work and depend on other people instead. And Ian Pearson says such people are ‘making our lives a misery’ – another useful informal expression. Listen again.

**Ian Pearson**

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**Amber:** More news stories and language explanations next time at bbclearningenglish.com