



TOPICS

American cities: Las Vegas; Google and privacy on the Internet, red tape, to catch lightning in a bottle, pronouncing ordinal numbers

GLOSSARY

privacy – a person’s right to not have personal information shared with others
* Please respect my privacy by not reading my mail or email.

personal data – information about a person, such as name, address, telephone number, email address, social security number, and credit card number
* I learned my lesson. I’ll never enter my personal data on a website again unless I’m sure that I can trust the company.

to compile – to put many things together; to take things from different places and use them to make one larger thing, like a list or report
* The researchers compiled information about average income for more than 20 countries.

to protect – to take care of something or someone; to not let bad things happen to something or someone
* Sienna protects her children on the busy street by holding their hands when they cross the street.

to leak – to accidentally let private information become public; to unintentionally let someone see something that he or she shouldn’t have seen
* When we learned that the bank had accidentally leaked our credit card number to other companies, we closed the account.

user – a person who uses something, especially a computer program
* Are you a Mac or a Windows user?

harsh – strict and severe; unkind; difficult and unpleasant
* The thief received a harsh punishment of 20 years in prison for stealing a CD.

allegation – accusation; a statement that another person did something wrong or against the law
* The senator made an allegation that the company wasn’t paying its taxes.



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to legalize – to make something legal; to make a law allowing something to happen

* Do you think that marijuana and other drugs should be legalized?

gambling – betting; playing games to win or lose money based on chance (probability)

* Some people are addicted to gambling and spend all their money on games.

casino – a place where people play gambling games, winning or losing money

* This casino gives free drinks to people who are gambling.

glamorous – very fancy, beautiful, exciting, and unordinary

* Stephanie looked glamorous on her wedding day, with a beautiful dress and very expensive jewelry.

chapel – a small room that is used for weddings and/or funerals, often in a church

* They decorated the chapel with yellow and white flowers for the wedding.

red tape – bureaucratic delays; the governmental processes and administrative procedures that make it slow and difficult to get something done

* You have to cut through a lot of red tape to open a new restaurant.

to try to catch lightning in a bottle – to attempt to do something that is very difficult; to try to get control of a difficult process or natural force

* Jacomo is trying to catch lightning in a bottle with his first movie.

thunder – loud noises in the sky that happen during a storm when there are bright flashes of light (lightning)

* In Washington, D.C. in the fall, there is thunder almost every afternoon.



WHAT INSIDERS KNOW

Getting Married in Las Vegas

In Las Vegas, people can get married quickly, easily, and inexpensively. Some people choose to have simple “wedding ceremonies,” or the actions and words that are used to get married. But other people go to Las Vegas to have a “themed wedding,” or a wedding that is based on a specific idea.

Some of the most popular Vegas weddings are Elvis weddings, where the wedding ceremony is led by an “Elvis impersonator,” or a person who dresses, speaks, and acts like Elvis Presley, who was a famous U.S. rock-and-roll singer. Other people choose to have their wedding led by a “Madonna impersonator,” or a person who dresses, speaks, and acts like the singer Madonna. These themed weddings have music from those musicians, too.

Other people choose to have an “Egyptian wedding,” where King Tut leads the ceremony, or a “Camelot theme wedding,” where everything is medieval and King Arthur, Queen Guinevere, or Merlin the Magician leads the ceremony. Other people choose to have a “gangster wedding” where everyone dresses like members of the “mafia” (crime organization) and the godfather (the lead of a crime organization) leads the ceremony. There are many different kinds of theme weddings, and you’re sure to find the one you want in Las Vegas.

People who are willing to spend more money can choose to get married in a helicopter, at the nearby Grand Canyon. They can even get married while “skydiving,” or jumping out of planes with “parachutes” (large pieces of fabric held to one’s back that fill with air and let one land safely).



COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

You're listening to English as a Second Language Podcast's English Café number 93.

This is English Café episode 93. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

On this Café, we're going to talk about privacy on the Internet – a recent story about Google. We're also going to talk about another American city as part of our series on American cities. This one is going to be about Las Vegas, or as most people call it, simply, "Vegas." And as always, we'll answer some of your questions. Let's get started.

Our first topic today is privacy on the Internet. "Privacy," you may guess, comes from the word "private," when you are keeping something secret from someone else. Privacy on the Internet has to do with – is related to – keeping your personal information secret so that other people do not see it, use it, or steal it.

There was an article recently in a business magazine; this one is called Forbes (Forbes). Forbes is a large business magazine owned by someone whose last name is Forbes, a very rich man. He actually ran for the presidency of the United States a few years ago, not successfully. Forbes has an article called "Can a Search Engine Know Too Much?" A "search engine" is something like Google or Yahoo that you use to find things on the Internet.

One of the problems, of course, of the Internet is that sometimes your personal information – we may say your "personal data" (data) – your personal information is given to other people without your permission. Some people have been saying that Google, one of the largest search engines in world, has been giving away some of its secret, private information about the searches that you do online.

There was a company who published a report saying that Google has compiled a lot of information about its users, but it does not do a very good job of protecting personal data. When we say they've "compiled" (compiled), we mean that they have put together – they have collected. "To compile" is to collect and organize. "Users" are the people who use their website. Some people say that they have compiled – Google has compiled a lot of information about people who use their website, but it doesn't do a very good job of protecting that information – that personal data.



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This has been a very harsh criticism of Google. Google has a very high reputation as being one of the best places to look for information on the Internet. When we say it has been “harsh (harsh) criticism,” we mean that it has been serious criticism – it has been tough criticism.

Google denies these allegations; they “deny,” they say it isn’t true. “Allegations” are like accusations – when someone says that you did something wrong. It may not yet be proven, so we call it an “allegation.” For example, when someone is arrested, say, a famous person – I don’t know – Paris Hilton, for example – just an example – there are allegations that she did something wrong. Well then, that person goes to the judge – to the court – and they determine whether they are guilty or innocent – whether they did it or not.

The case of Google is interesting because they have denied these allegations, saying that the report that criticizes them – that had harsh criticism of them – is “inaccurate,” it’s wrong, and they have defended themselves. They say that they have not leaked any information about their users, or given the information to other people. When we say you “leak (leak) information,” we mean that information leaves your company, in this case, but not by design – not on purpose, it’s an accident. So, “leaking information” here would mean that people are able to find out your personal search information without Google giving them permission to do so.

So, it’s been a very interesting case for Google, trying to defend itself against these allegations – these accusations. Google says that they respect people’s privacy. Notice the verb there, “respect,” that’s a word we often use when we are talking about issues of privacy.

Well, let’s move on to talk about a very different topic, and that is one of our American cities: Las Vegas, Nevada.

Las Vegas is located in the southern part of the state of Nevada. Nevada is basically a desert state; it’s very hot in the summer, very dry. Like Arizona and New Mexico, and most of Utah – those are states in the western part of the U.S. – Nevada is very much a desert state. However, Nevada is a very popular place for people to take a vacation, mostly because in Nevada they have legalized gambling. “Legalized” means it is “legal,” the government says it’s okay. “Gambling” is when you bet money on something, cards or horses or just about any other sort of game, and you try to win money by betting on a certain thing that you hope will win.



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Well, going back to Las Vegas: Las Vegas is sometimes known as “Sin (sin) City.” People refer to Vegas as “Sin City,” and that’s because not only is gambling legal in Las Vegas, and there are many Americans that think gambling is wrong – gambling is a sin, it’s something against God’s law. Vegas is also called “Sin City,” someone unfairly, because in Nevada – in the state of Nevada – there is legalized prostitution. “Prostitution” is when men and women, basically, sell their bodies for some sort of sexual purpose. Well, prostitution is legal in the entire state of Nevada; however, it is not legal in Las Vegas. Many people think it is, but it isn’t; it is legal in other parts of the state. It’s the only state where prostitution is legal in the United States.

Most people, however, go to Nevada – to Las Vegas – to gamble. The city of Las Vegas is huge, and it has been getting bigger every year for the last 20-30 years; it has been growing. In fact, it’s one of the fastest growing cities in the United States. Part of the reason is that it is, as I mentioned, in a desert, so there is lots of land around the city where you can keep building more and more houses. It’s also warm in Las Vegas, especially in the wintertime when it is cold in other parts of the country, so that is also a reason people have moved to Las Vegas.

One of the most famous parts of Las Vegas is called “the Strip” (strip). A “strip” is an area, usually along a certain street. The Las Vegas Strip is about a four-mile section – four-mile area – of one street in Las Vegas, called “Las Vegas Boulevard,” and on this street you can find most of the famous hotels. Most of the hotels have a casino (casino). A “casino” is a large place where you can gamble. Now, it doesn’t have to be a hotel. Some casinos are just places to gamble, but most of the casinos in Las Vegas are combined with a large hotel.

Las Vegas is considered by many people to be a very glamorous city. When we say something is “glamorous” (glamorous), we mean that it is considered very beautiful or very rich. Famous people like to go there; that’s glamorous. In fact, I don’t think Las Vegas is a very beautiful city personally. I haven’t been there in about 15-16 years, back in the early 1990s. If you ever go to Las Vegas, the first thing you will notice is all the lights and all of the activity. For me, Las Vegas is very tiring; it makes me tired because there’s so much action – there’s so many lights. It’s a little bit too much for me. Many people think, however, that it is glamorous.

Many of the hotels have other things for you to do in addition to gambling. For example, there are water fountains at some of the hotels, such as the Bellagio. There are famous shows in Las Vegas: famous singers, circus people, other



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bands and performers, comedians. All of them have shows in Las Vegas, so you can go and see them perform. If you are a Star Trek fan – someone who likes the television series Star Trek and the movies, I am a Star Trek fan – there’s something called the “Star Trek Experience” at the Las Vegas Hilton Hotel, and you can go and look at what is a recreation of the Star Trek ship. You can sit in the chair where the captain of the U.S.S. Enterprise – the name of the ship on the Star Trek series.

The other thing Las Vegas is famous for is weddings. It’s very easy to get married in Las Vegas, and so many people who don’t want to plan a big wedding will fly to Las Vegas and get married. They get married in places called “wedding chapels” (chapel). A “chapel” is normally a small church. But these aren’t really churches; these are places for people to get married. In fact, I had some coffee recently with a couple of our listeners who were visiting Los Angeles; they were from Germany. They flew to Las Vegas and got married, and then they drove to Los Angeles to see me, but mostly because they were driving up to Northern California on their vacation. A vacation after you get married is called a “honeymoon.” So Jan and Karin, congratulations on getting married in Las Vegas.

Now let’s answer a few of your questions.

Our first question comes from Gustavo (Gustavo) in Uruguay, in South America. Gustavo wants to know the meaning of an expression he heard, “red tape.” For example: “The veterans are facing red tape.”

“Red tape” means many regulations or rules from, usually, a large organization or the government. Usually we say that government offices “have too much red tape,” meaning there are too many forms to fill out, too many steps you have to take in order to get what you want, too many rules and regulations. All of this is part of the idea of “red tape.”

The sentence, “Veterans are facing red tape,” means that veterans, people who were soldiers who fought in the Army or in a war, are facing – are having to deal with, lots of red tape. You’ll also hear the word “bureaucracy” used when people talk about “red tape.” They may say, “There’s too much red tape and bureaucracy.” “Bureaucracy” refers to the people who work for the government, but more generally, the rules and regulations – all the things you have to do if you try to do something or get something from the government. For example, if you have tried to travel to the United States, you know that it is much more difficult now than it was ten years ago; there’s a lot more red tape.



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Our next question comes from Michael in Germany. Michael wants to know the meaning of an expression he read when reading about a sports team: “to catch lightning in a bottle.”

“Lightning” (lightning) is an electrical charge that you see when there are many clouds and it is stormy outside – the weather is bad; it’s going to rain – you will often see light in the sky, even if it’s dark, and it goes very quickly. You see it for only a second or so. Well, that’s called “lightning.” Usually when there’s lightning, you hear a sound; the sound is called “thunder” (thunder). People will sometimes talk about “thunder and lightning,” the noise and the flash of light that you see during a storm.

The expression, “to catch lightning in a bottle,” means to do something that is very, very difficult, to succeed at something that is extremely difficult. “To catch” something means to capture it, to get it. So, of course, it would be impossible to catch lightning from the sky and put it into a bottle – a container. So, the expression means to do something very, very difficult. It is often used with sports teams when they win against a very difficult team or a very tough opponent, someone they are playing who is very good. If they win, that would be like “catching lightning in a bottle.”

Our final question comes from Junji (Junji) in Japan. He wants to know how to pronounce words that – or rather, numbers that have a “th” after them, such as the number six (6), or one hundred (100), or one thousand (1,000).

Well, when these numbers have a “th” after them, they are what we call “ordinal” numbers: first (1st), second (2nd), third (3rd), fourth (4th); these are all “ordinal” numbers. The examples that he wants me to pronounce are six, which would be pronounced “sixth” (6th); one hundred, which would be “one hundredth” (100th); and a thousand, which would be “one thousandth” (1,000th). It’s somewhat difficult because you have to add the “th” sound after the final consonant of the number.

Also remember that the numbers one (1), two (2), and three (3), and then twenty-one (21), twenty-two (22), twenty-three (23), and so forth, use a different form for ordinal numbers; it’s not a “th”. For the number one, it’s “first” (1st); for the number two, it’s “second” (2nd); and for the number three, it’s “third” (3rd). So, you would say, “twenty-first (21st), twenty-second (22nd), twenty-third” (23rd), and then you can start adding the “th”; “twenty-fourth (24th), twenty-fifth (25th), twenty-sixth (26th), twenty-seventh (27th), twenty-eighth (28th), twenty-ninth (29th), thirtieth (30th), and so forth.



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If you have a question, you can email us at eslpod@eslpod.com.

From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thanks for listening. I'll see you next time on the English Café.

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