
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

6 Minute English

Human microchips



BBC
LEARNING
ENGLISH

NB: This is not a word-for-word transcript

Neil

Hello, welcome to 6 Minute English. I'm Neil and with me in the studio is Harry. Hello, Harry.

Harry

Hello.

Neil

Now, Harry, do you have many passwords?

Harry

Passwords - you mean the set of words and numbers which I keep secret and allow me to access information? Yes, I do actually. I've got a few for my computer and the different websites I use, and then there are my cards – credit card, debit card. And there's one for my ID here at the BBC and then there is...

Neil

OK. I get the idea. There are too many, aren't there?

Harry

Oh, yes! Sometimes I struggle to remember them all. And we are advised to learn them **by heart**, in other words, to have them memorised and not written down.

Neil

It's for security reasons. If you write them down and lose the paper you wrote them on, then they won't be secret anymore, will they? Now, how would you like to have access to things with no need for passwords or cards?

Harry

Yeah, that would be brilliant!

Neil

In this programme, I'm going to tell you about a futuristic commercial building in Stockholm, Sweden, where you don't have to remember any passwords, you don't have to carry ID cards and in some cases, you don't even need to carry money to pay for your coffee.

Harry

How does it all work then - by magic?

Neil

No, by inserting a **microchip** under the skin of your hand! A microchip is a very small device with an electronic circuit which can do particular things. In this case, the microchip we're talking about can identify you.

Harry

Wow! I'm not sure I'd want a microchip inserted under my skin.

Neil

No, me neither. It's interesting though, isn't it? Before I tell you about this experiment, let's go for our quiz question. And, of course, it's about passwords. Security firm SplashData publishes an annual report about the weakest passwords people use. Well, which was the most common password used in 2014. Was it:

- a) abc123
- b) the numbers 123456
- c) the words 'trustno' followed by the number 1

Harry

I'm going to go for C, 'trustno' followed by the 1, because actually it's the only one I hadn't heard of, even though it's very obvious.

Neil

Well, all will be revealed at the end of the programme. Now we are talking about the increasing need for ID in a society which works more and more with computers - and you'll learn some related vocabulary.

Harry

Tell us more about this building in Sweden, Neil. You have this microchip put under your skin - and what does it allow you to do inside the building?

Neil

Let's listen to the BBC technology reporter Rory Cellan-Jones. He went there for a visit. He uses an expression to say that the technology is not working perfectly yet because it is brand new. What is that expression?

Rory Cellan-Jones, BBC technology reporter

The new offices will soon host a shifting population of 700 entrepreneurs and employees and they'll all be offered the chance to 'get chipped' if they wish. As well as opening doors that will allow them to use the photocopiers and eventually to log on to computers or pay for food in the cafe. The technology is still **having teething problems** – I found it quite a

struggle to activate the photocopier! And amongst the people working here I found some enthusiasm but also **caution**.

Harry

The expression is 'having teething problems'. When a new project or device doesn't work perfectly we say it 'has teething problems'.

Neil

Yes, the microchip allowed Rory to make the photocopier work just by swiping his hand over a console. But it didn't work straight away.

Harry

And he tells us that some of the workers are reacting with **caution** to the idea of having a microchip put under their skin. 'Caution' means being careful to avoid something dangerous or risky.

Neil

It might be risky but we might all be using it one day - who knows? The group running this scheme thinks this might be a good thing. Hannes Sjobland from a Swedish bio-hacking group seems to believe that linking biology and electronic devices can make our daily lives better - but he is concerned about people's freedom. And what if a government or a big corporation wants to use this technology in the future? What does Hannes Sjobland want to be able to do if it happens? A tip, the word is a verb...

Hannes Sjoband, Swedish bio-hacking group

We are early adopters of this technology, we experiment with it, we learn it, how it works, because I think that there might be a day when the taxman or the big corporates ... they will come and say 'hey, try this chip, try this implant', and then we will be able **to question** their proposals.

Harry

He wants to question their proposals; it means to express doubts about their proposals and intentions. You know what, Neil? I'd rather have my passwords!

Neil

Well, talking about passwords, let's go back to my quiz question. I asked you what the weakest passwords people use is, according to the 2014 report by the online security firm SplashData. The options were: abc123, the numbers 123456 and the words 'trustno' followed by the number 1.

Harry

And I said the third one, 'trustno1'.

Neil

And you were... wrong I'm afraid Harry. The correct answer is B. The password '123456' has been named as the worst password of 2014. The other two were also in the list. Before we go, can you remind us of the words we heard today, Harry.

Harry

The words were:

password

by heart

microchip

having teething problems

caution

to question

Neil

Thank you. Well, that's it for this programme. Go to www.bbclearningenglish.com to find more 6 Minute English programmes. Until next time. Goodbye!

Harry

Bye!

Vocabulary**password**

set of words and numbers which allow the user to access things or information

know by heart

memorise

microchip

a very small device with an electronic circuit which can do particular things

teething problems

when something new doesn't work perfectly the first time it is used

caution

care not to be exposed to danger or risk

to question

to raise doubts about something