

## PAROLA ACCESSIBILITÀ

### TESTO 4

## BBC - Learning English, The Outernet

*Access to information that's out of this world*

*The idea of delivering information via the internet to every person on the planet is has become a major priority for some of the biggest tech firms.*

*One idea is the Outernet. Neil and Catherine discuss this new system that aims to provide a library of knowledge for poor and remote communities – beamed down to Earth via satellite. They also explain some related vocabulary.*

### LISTEN

#### This week's question

What proportion of the world's population still has no internet access? Is it...

- a) a quarter?
- b) half?
- c) two thirds?

#### Vocabulary

##### e-reader

an electronic device which you can store and read books from the internet

##### remote

a long way from towns and cities

##### entrepreneur

a person who makes money by starting their own business that typically involves some financial risk

##### broadcast

send out electronic signals or programmes

##### picks up

receives

##### drawback

disadvantage

##### bi-directional

two-way / going in both directions

##### one-way

going in one direction

##### time horizons

the length of time it takes to complete something

##### copyright-free

the right to use other people's material or work wi-

thout paying any fees

##### balloon network

group of interconnected balloons

##### boost

increase

##### masts

tall metal towers that send and receive signals

#### Transcript

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

##### Neil

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

##### Catherine

...and I'm Catherine. Hello.

##### Neil

Hello, Catherine! Now, how was your holiday?

##### Catherine

My holiday was lovely, Neil. I was staying on a beautiful island. It was very remote and there was actually no internet access. So, I did feel quite cut off actually.

##### Neil

And cut off means isolated. How did you survive, Catherine?

##### Catherine

Well, it wasn't easy. But I had my e-reader - that's an electronic device which lets you store and read lots of books from the internet. And I read a lot of Harry Potter...

##### Neil

Harry Potter? I know you like wizards, Catherine, but shouldn't you have downloaded some classic litera-

ture? How about Shakespeare's The Tempest? That's got a wizard in it too.

**Catherine**

Well, yes indeed. But Shakespeare on the beach isn't quite right for me, Neil.

**Neil**

Right. Well, today we're talking about how the poorer and more remote - or distant - parts of the world can get access to learning.

**Catherine**

That's right. But before we start, Neil, I believe you have a quiz question for us.

**Neil**

Yes, I do. I would like to know what the proportion of the world's population that still has no internet access is. Is it...

- a) a quarter?
- b) half?
- or c) two thirds?

**Catherine**

I'm going to go for c) two thirds.

**Neil**

Well, we'll find out if you're right or wrong later on in the programme. So Catherine, how can these people get connected to the internet and start surfing?

**Catherine**

By using the Outernet.

**Neil**

The Outer what?

**Catherine**

The Outernet. That's the idea of entrepreneur Syed Karim and its goal is to give people in unconnected communities access to information without having to use expensive mobile phones or two-way satellite networks.

**Neil**

I see. And an entrepreneur, by the way, is a person who makes money by starting their own business that typically involves some financial risk.

**Catherine**

Yes, I've always fancied myself as a bit of an entre-

preneur.

**Neil**

Well, you'll need money and ideas, Catherine. Have you got either of those?

**Catherine**

I've got ideas.

**Neil**

Right. OK. I get it.

**Catherine**

So, can you tell us how the Outernet works, Neil?

**Neil**

Yes, I can. The Outernet uses existing communications satellites to store and broadcast data - broadcast means to send out signals or programmes. Special equipment on the ground picks up - or receives - the data, and this can be copied to phones and computers.

**Catherine**

But the Outernet broadcasts data offline - which means it's not connected to the Internet. There's no communication with the internet for user - so, no emails, no chat forums. And that can be a big drawback - or disadvantage.

**Neil**

Yes. The Outernet doesn't provide two-way communication. But let's hear Syed Karim discussing why one-way access has some advantages. And see if you can spot another word meaning 'two-way'.

**INSERT**

**Syed Karim, business entrepreneur**

Anything that is related to bi-directional communications, the internet, to be able to provide that to the entire world, those are billion dollar projects, multi-billion dollar projects with huge time horizons and enormous complexity. And, you know, our solution that we are offering is instantaneous, I mean, it exists right now.

**Neil**

Did you get it? Another way of saying two-way is bi-directional. So what are the advantages of one-way communication, Catherine?

**Catherine**

It's significantly cheaper. Bi-directional commu-

Communications are multi-billion dollar projects. But the Outernet allows poorer communities to benefit from access to information.

**Neil**

Yes, it does. And the other big problem is the time it would take to establish two-way access. Syed says these projects have huge time horizons - and this means the length of time it takes to complete a project - they're huge, so very big.

**Catherine**

But the Outernet is already providing access to some of the world's most valuable knowledge.

**Neil**

That's right. The project aims to create a library of information taken from websites including Wikipedia and Project Gutenberg, which is a collection of copyright-free e-books. Copyright-free means the right to use material without paying any fees.

**Catherine**

That sounds good. But let's go back to the internet and hear from a BBC reporter talking about another project which aims to get people connected.

**INSERT**

**BBC reporter**

Google for example is working on Project Loon, a network of high-altitude helium balloons, which will boost Internet connections across much wider areas beyond coverage from conventional masts.

**Neil**

It's called Project Loon - meaning crazy - because Google thought it was such a crazy idea, and loon sounds like balloon!

**Catherine**

Yeah. The idea is that users will connect to the balloon network - or group of interconnected balloons - using an antenna attached to their building. The signal travels through the balloon network from balloon to balloon, and then to a station on the ground that's connected to the Internet.

**Neil**

The balloons will boost - or increase - the number of people who will be able to access the Internet.

**Catherine**

Yes, it will. And that's because there will be lots of them - compared to the number of masts or tall metal towers that send and receive signals - that are currently used.

**Neil**

OK, let's have the answer to the quiz question I asked: What proportion of the world's population still has no internet access? Is it ... a) a quarter? b) half? or c) two thirds?

**Catherine**

And I said c) two thirds.

**Neil**

And you were right! The answer is two thirds. Well done, Catherine.

**Catherine**

Thank you.

**Neil**

Now just time to listen to today's words once again. Catherine.

**Catherine**

OK. We heard:

e-reader  
remote  
entrepreneur  
broadcast  
picks up  
drawback  
bi-directional  
one-way  
time horizons  
copyright-free  
balloon network  
boost  
masts

**Neil**

Well, that's the end of today's 6 Minute English. I hope you enjoyed connecting with us today! Please join us again soon.

**Both**

Bye.