

Learning English podcasts ... from the
Hellenic American Union©

Level: Advanced

Lesson: 31

Title: "Archiving the Web"

Summary:

Vanessa and Alexander are interviewing Brewster Kahle, founder of the Internet Archive who speaks about his efforts to collect all the published works of mankind.

The advanced podcasts are a series of excerpts of broadcasts from a live radio show entitled World report. The main hostess of the show is Vanessa. Vanessa with her reporters Nick, Alexander, Lisa and Denise are interviewing their guests and provide us with information about some current but rather unique affairs. First you hear the entire excerpt and you are asked a general main idea question. Then, you hear the same excerpt in two parts. After each part you are asked three to four questions on some of the details.

In this episode of World Report, Vanessa and Alexander are in the middle of a live show in a radio studio. Alexander is reporting live from San Francisco. Brewster Kahle, founder of the Internet Archive, also joins them. Listen to their conversation and answer the question that follows about the main idea.

Dialogue:

Vanessa:

Hi and welcome to World Report. Alexander is in San Francisco and he's joined by Brewster Kahle, founder of the Internet Archive. Thank you both.



Alexander:

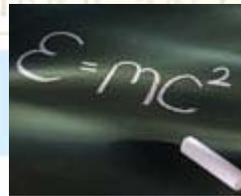
Hi Vanessa.



Brewster: Good afternoon.



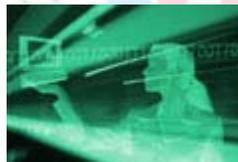
Vanessa: Brewster, could I start by asking you... on your web site you mention that your mission is 'global access to all human knowledge'? **Sounds mind-boggling.** Could you elaborate?



Brewster: Well, suppose you took all the published works of mankind, then all the music, video and TV material, software, web pages ever produced, preserved them for the long term and made them available to people...



Alexander: **Incredible. So you're not just archiving web pages.**



Brewster: Far from it. Along with web pages, we're storing music, movies and books. And it's so rewarding to see our efforts bearing fruit.

Vanessa: **Sounds awesome.**



Alexander:

Brewster, **I guess** you've accumulated a huge amount of material by now.



Brewster:

Well, we started back in 1996 by taking snapshots of all available web sites every two months and storing them on hard drives. It's now about 500 terabytes of information. The archive is growing at about 50 terabytes each month.



Alexander:

Incredible. **It must take** a huge number of servers to keep all that in storage.



Brewster:

Well, it does. And we're saving double copies. History's taught us archives should always be saved in multiple copies in various locations. **I suppose we have the destruction of the Library of Alexandria to thank for that.**



Vanessa:

I'm sorry?

Brewster:

In 300 BC, they set out to collect every book from every possible source, and surprisingly they almost got there. But it all went up in smoke. One of the catastrophes of civilization, and there's a lot to be learned from that.

Vanessa:

Brewster Kahle, Alexander, thank you both very much.

Now answer the following question...

What is Brewster trying to collect?

All the published works of mankind, all the music, video and TV material, software, web pages ever produced.

Now listen again to the dialogue in parts. After each part there will be 3 to 4 questions on some details...

Part 1

Vanessa: Hi and welcome to World Report. Alexander is in San Francisco and he's joined by Brewster Kahle, founder of the Internet Archive. Thank you both.

Alexander: Hi Vanessa.

Brewster: Good afternoon.

Vanessa: Brewster, could I start by asking you... on your web site you mention that your mission is 'global access to all human knowledge'? **Sounds mind-boggling**. Could you elaborate?

Brewster: Well, suppose you took all the published works of mankind, then all the music, video and TV material, software, web pages ever produced, preserved them for the long term and made them available to people...

Alexander: **Incredible. So you're not just archiving web pages.**

Brewster: Far from it. Along with web pages, we're storing music, movies and books. And it's so rewarding to see our efforts bearing fruit.

Vanessa: **Sounds awesome.**

Now answer the following questions ...

1. What does Vanessa mean when she says "**Sounds mind-boggling**"?

When Vanessa says "**Sounds mind-boggling**", she means she finds the term 'global access to all human knowledge' difficult to understand.

2. What does Alexander mean when he says "**Incredible. So you're not just archiving web pages**"?

When Alexander says "**Incredible. So you're not just archiving web pages**," he means he finds the idea surprising.

3. What does Vanessa mean when she says "**Sounds awesome**"?

When Vanessa says "**Sounds awesome**", she means she is impressed by the project.

Now listen again to the second part of the dialogue.

Part 2

Alexander: Brewster, **I guess** you've accumulated a huge amount of material by now.

Brewster: Well, we started back in 1996 by taking snapshots of all available web sites every two months and storing them on hard drives. It's now about 500 terabytes of information. The archive is growing at about 50 terabytes each month.

Alexander: Incredible. **It must take** a huge number of servers to keep all that in storage.

Brewster: Well, it does. And we're saving double copies. History's taught us archives should always be saved in multiple copies in various locations. **I suppose we have the destruction of the Library of Alexandria to thank for that.**

Vanessa: I'm sorry?

Brewster: In 300 BC, they set out to collect every book from every possible source, and surprisingly they almost got there. But it all went up in smoke. One of the catastrophes of civilization, and there's a lot to be learned from that.

Vanessa: Brewster Kahle, Alexander, thank you both very much.

Now answer the following questions...

1. What does Alexander mean when he says "**I guess** you've accumulated a huge amount of material by now"?

When Alexander says "I guess", he means he assumes that it's the case.

2. What does Alexander mean when he says "**It must take** a huge number of servers to keep all that in storage"?

When Alexander says "It must take", he means he assumes that it's the case.

3. What does Brewster mean when he says "**I suppose we have the destruction of the Library of Alexandria to thank for that.**"

When Brewster says "**I suppose we have the destruction of the Library of Alexandria to thank for that.**" he means that the destruction of the ancient library has taught mankind something very important.

Please visit our site at www.hau.gr to find the transcripts, explanations and activities.

GLOSSARY

Accumulate: Alexander told Brewster, "I guess you've accumulated a huge amount of material by now." When you **accumulate** something, you collect more and more of it over a period of time. People **accumulate** wealth, data, evidence, books, and paintings.

Archive: An **archive** is a collection of records, documents or electronic data stored at a special place or in a computer, e.g. a **historical archive**, a **photo archive**. The word stems from Greek, and as in the word "**chemistry**", "**archaeology**", etc. "**ch**" is pronounced /k/. The word is also a verb. People **archive** documents, data, photographs, etc.

Bear fruit: Brewster Kahle said, "It's so rewarding to see our efforts **bearing fruit**." If something (e.g. someone's efforts, or his/her work) **bears fruit**, it produces the successful results that the person has hoped for.

For the long term: The expression '**for the long term**' means 'for the future' or 'for a long time':

Go up in smoke: We find out from the interview that the Library of Alexandria was about to accomplish its goal of storing every book from every possible source when it **went up in smoke**. You can guess from this statement that the library was completely destroyed by a fire. This is the literal meaning of the expression. In a metaphorical sense, if your **hopes** or **plans go up in smoke**, they fail to materialize.

Take snapshots: You heard that the staff of the Internet Archive started their work by **taking snapshots** of all available web sites every two months. A **snapshot** is a photograph.

Terabytes: Brewster said that the team has so far stored 500 **terabytes** of information. 1 gigabyte is approximately 1,000 megabytes. 1 terabyte is 1 million megabytes. The scale goes mega-, giga-, tera-.

ACTIVITIES

Activity 1

Practice using words and expressions from the glossary. Choose the most appropriate word or expression to fill in each blank.

1. All during the party, Stephen kept taking ... of the children.
2. By investing their savings wisely, they ... a fortune.
3. As a result of the dry period, several of the forests
4. The archive is growing at about 50 ...each month.
5. Their efforts eventually It was such a rewarding experience.
6. The staff of the municipal ... was kind enough to let me browse through their collection of World War II photographs.
7. Art museums use special restoration methods to preserve their art exhibits

Activity 2

A. Consider the following explanations

1. The expression '**Sounds mind-boggling**' is used when we are confused, or when we find something difficult to grasp or imagine.

Vanessa told Brewster Kahle: "On your web site you mention that your mission is 'global access to all human knowledge'? **Sounds mind-boggling**. Could you elaborate?"

2. To react to something that impresses us, we say '**Sounds awesome**' or '**Incredible**.'

When Brewster Kahle said that besides web pages, the archive also included software, music, video and TV material, Alexander said, '**Incredible**.' And when Brewster said that along with web pages, they were storing music, movies and books, Vanessa said, '**Sounds awesome**.'

3. The modal verb **must** + **the bare infinitive** is sometimes used to express a logical assumption: "It **must take** a huge number of servers to keep all that in storage."

4. The expressions '**I guess...**' and '**I suppose...**' are used when the speaker is pretty sure that something is true: "**I guess** you've accumulated a huge amount of material." / "**I suppose** we have the destruction of the Library of Alexandria to thank for that."

B. Read the following statements or questions and give an appropriate response selected from the aforementioned words or phrases to express amazement.

1. Did you know it took the National Gallery in London years to realize that one of its *Sunflower* paintings by Van Gogh was a fake?

Your reply: ...

2. Wangari Maathai, the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize winner, launched a campaign and managed to plant 30 million trees.

Your reply: ...

3. The adult human brain holds around 100 billion nerve cells.

Your reply: ...

*C. Read the following statements about Albert Einstein. React to them, making guesses and assumptions. Use '**I suppose...**', '**I guess...**' or '**He must...**'*

1. Einstein's teachers gave him very low grades.

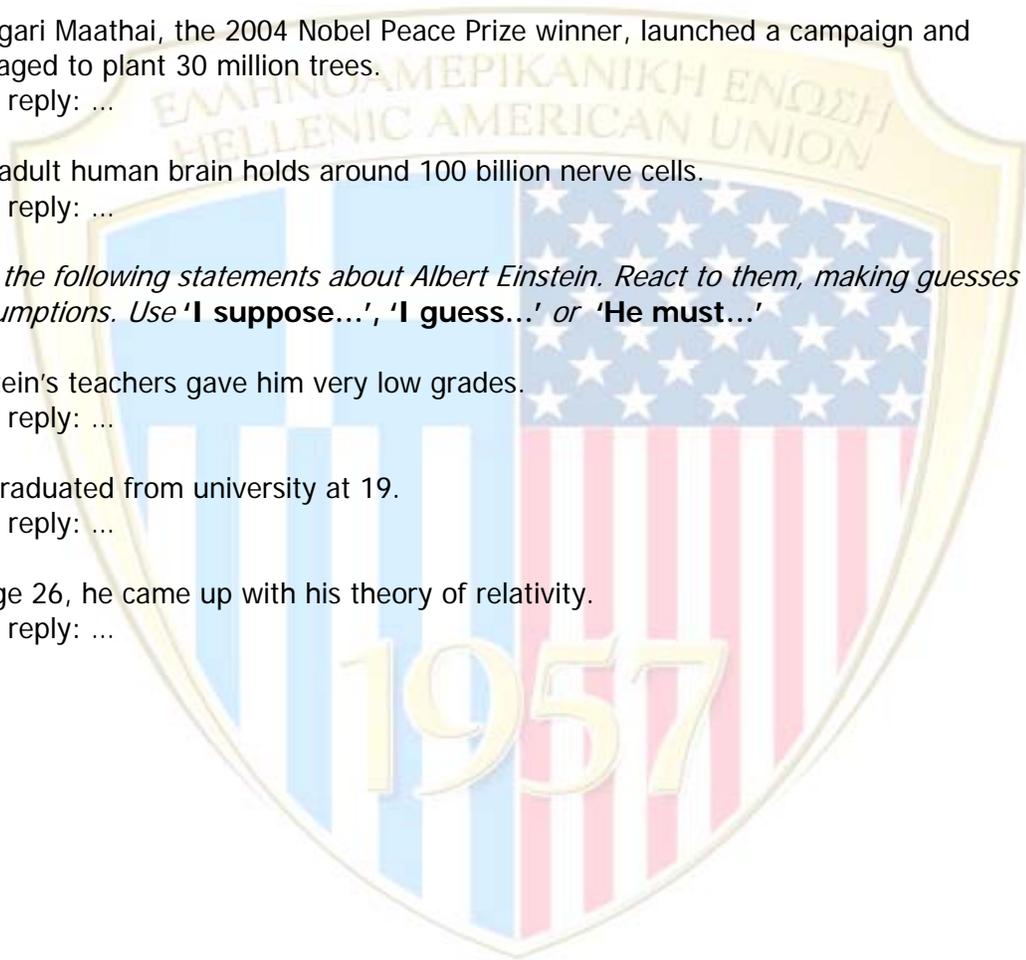
Your reply: ...

2. He graduated from university at 19.

Your reply: ...

3. At age 26, he came up with his theory of relativity.

Your reply: ...



KEY TO ACTIVITIES

Activity 1:

1. snapshots
2. accumulated
3. went up in smoke
4. terabytes
5. bore fruit
6. archive
7. for the long term

Activity 2B: (possible answers)

1. Incredible
2. Sounds awesome
3. Sounds mind-boggling

Activity 2C: (possible answers)

1. **I guess** they thought he was an underachiever.
2. **I suppose** he did a lot of studying on his own.
3. **He must have been** a genius.

