



ESL Podcast 60 – Calling Tech Support

GLOSSARY

to sign up – to request a service; to formally state one's interest in a product, service, or event

* Angela signed up for cooking classes at the local college and will start attending next week.

ISP – Internet Service Provider; a company that makes it possible for people to use the Internet (a network of computers linked together from around the world)

* Edwin's connection to the Internet was slow, so he wanted to switch to a different ISP.

DSL – Digital Subscriber Line; technology that quickly sends information through the same lines or paths used by telephones

* Kayla had a very slow connection to the Internet, but things were much faster when she started using DSL.

modem – a machine that connects a computer to a telephone so that information can pass between the computer and the telephone

* The modem was broken, so the computer could not use the telephone line.

router – a machine that passes information between computers in a network (group of computers)

* The computer was cut off from the rest of the network once the router stopped working.

to be configured – to be set up; for a machine to be started and set in a certain way that allows it to serve a certain purpose

* The printer was configured to work with all of the computers in the office.

toll-free line – a telephone number that does not cost any money to call

* Horacio used the company's toll-free line instead of the local telephone number because he did not want to pay for the call.

technical support – a company or section of a company that helps customers solve problems they have with computers or other technology

* Technical support helped Tianna fix the problem she was having with her fax machine.



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IT – Information Technology; the part of an organization or company that deals with the type of technology used for saving and sending information

* The IT department at the company made sure that the computers at the office could connect to each other.

the only game in town – the only option; the only choice one can make

* Even though Arthur did not like his cable company, he was stuck using it because it was the only game in town.

Ethernet – technology that links together local computers and other technology used with computers

* The Ethernet stopped working, and none of the computers in the office could connect to each other.

diagnostic – a computer program or practice used to find out what a problem is and where it is located

* Once Elise ran a diagnostic on her computer, she learned where the problem was and knew how to fix it.

to connect – to link together with; to get access to

* Domenic wanted to research something online, so he connected to the Internet.

to submit a ticket – to enter a formal notice about a problem or concern that needs to be fixed, so that someone who can fix the problem will know about it

* Cassie submitted a ticket to the maintenance department at her university so that someone would come to the dorm building and fix the broken washing machine.

to be escalated – to be raised; to be made more important on a scale that measures importance

* Don't let this small problem escalate into something that could ruin your relationship. Talk with you wife about it now.

I won't hold my breath. – I don't expect it to happen.; a phrase used to state disbelief about the possibility of an action or event happening

* Jemma is often late to class and when she said that she would be early to class tomorrow, Professor Benevides said, "I won't hold my breath."



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CULTURE NOTE

The Great Debate: Beard or No Beard?

A 2012 article in the *Los Angeles Times* reported research on people's opinions about men with beards. The researchers showed the men and women in the study pictures of the same men when they were "bearded" (with hair on the cheeks and below the mouth) and "clean-shaven" (with no hair on the face). The men had smiling, "neutral" (no expression), and angry facial expressions. The people in the research study were then asked about the men's age, "attractiveness" (good looking or not), "social status" (whether he is respected in society by other people), and "aggressiveness" (willing to confront other people; willing to use force to get what he wants).

Both men and women said that with beards, the men looked older, more aggressive, and of higher social status. What the researchers also found was that women rated men who were clean-shaven as more attractive. The researchers wrote that "natural selection" — Charles Darwin's idea that the more "adaptable" (able to change with the circumstances) we are, the more likely we are to survive — "favored" (gave the best chances to) bearded men because men with more hair were more likely to be seen as aggressive and better able to protect themselves and their families.

So, at least in the early days, it was the scarier ones, the ones who could frighten away dangers, who got the girls and who survived and "thrived" (grew or developed well; prospered).



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 60 – Calling Tech Support.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 60. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

In this episode, we're going to discuss calling tech support for help with your computer. Let's get started.

[start of story]

I recently signed up for a new ISP for my office, using DSL. I managed to get the modem and the router configured properly, but now my email won't work. I dug out the manual that came with the modem and called the toll-free line for technical support. I'm not a big fan of most IT departments, but if something doesn't work, they're the only game in town.

I explained to the tech support person that I couldn't get my email to send or receive. He asked me if I had checked the Ethernet connection from the modem to the router, and I said I did. Then he asked if I had run any diagnostics on the email software and if I was able to connect to the web. I said no to both of these questions.

He told me he would submit a ticket and have the problem escalated to the next level. Someone should be calling me back, he said. I won't hold my breath.

[end of story]

I began the podcast by saying that I “signed up for a new ISP for my office.” “To sign up” for something means to register or to purchase something. Usually we “sign up” for some sort of service that someone is going to give me, or to give us. I “signed up” here means I bought a new “ISP.” “ISP” stands for, or means, “Internet Service Provider.” This is the company that provides you with Internet access in your home or in your office.

I was signing up for a “DSL” Internet service. “DSL” is an Internet connection that comes over your phone lines. The other type of connection would be a “cable Internet” connection, where it comes through a separate cable that is used to bring you your cable television stations. But I’m talking about a “DSL,” which is a



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phone connection. It's a fast connection. It's not a "dial-up" connection. A "dial-up" connection is not very fast. "DSL" is much faster, and cable is usually faster than "DSL" in the United States.

Anyway, I said, "I managed to get the modem and the router configured properly." "To manage" something means that you succeeded – you were successful in something. "I managed to find a chair in the crowded classroom." "To manage" also means to work with people. To be the "manager" of someone or some people means that you are sort of the boss. But here, the verb "to manage to get" – using it with another verb – means that you were successful. "I managed to call my father last night"; I had some difficulty but I managed to do it.

The "modem" is the part of your computer that connects so that you can get on the Internet or get on email. A "router" is kind of a box. The box will divide or split up the signal to the other computers. They can each have their own wire that connects to the router, or it could be a "wireless router."

A "wireless router" is a router that you don't need wires for. It's a router that works usually on what we call "Wi-Fi" (wifi), where the computers can communicate with the Internet connection without having any wires connecting them. It's a "wireless" connection just like your cell phone is a "wireless" phone. There are no wires to connect it to a telephone line. It works through radio waves, if you will, in the air. You can tell that I am not a computer expert.

I said that I "configured" the router and new modem properly. "To configure" a piece of – a machine or a piece of software means that you set it up. You made sure that it was . . . all the parts were connected correctly, okay? That you made sure that all of the information was provided in the software, for example – that is "to configure" something.

I said that I "dug out" my manual that came with the modem. "To dig out" literally means to take a shovel and put it in the ground to get rid of dirt. That tool we use to get rid of dirt or to dig a hole is called a "shovel." But when we say, "I dug out my manual" or "I dug out my pictures in the drawer," we mean that it was put away in such a manner that it was difficult to find, or that we didn't have it easily available to us.

So, I dug out my manual and I called the "toll-free" number for technical support. "The toll-free line," I said. "Toll-free" means, you probably know, you don't have to pay for the call. In the United States, these were – up until recently these were – all 800 numbers. So, instead of dialing 310-555-1212, you would dial 800-555-1212. The "800" means it didn't cost you any money.



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By the way, in television and in movies we often use the number 555-1212. That's not a real telephone number; it's what we call a "phony" or a false number. And people will use it when they're giving an example and they don't want to give a real telephone number. I will not give my real telephone number here on the podcast.

A "toll-free line" or a "number" is here . . . the "line" is really a telephone number for technical support. "Technical Support" is, as you probably know, the people you talk to when there is something wrong with your computer.

I said I'm "not a big fan of most IT departments." "To be a fan" of something means to like something or like a group of people. You can be a fan of a football team, for example. "IT" stands for Information Technology. These are the computer people who build computers, and program software for computers, and so forth. I said that, unfortunately, "They're the only game in town," meaning there's no one else that you can call. When we say, "He's the only game in town," we mean he's the only person who can do a certain thing.

I called the "tech support" person. And we sometimes say "tech support" instead of "technical support"; it's the same thing. I called the "tech support" person and they asked me to check my "Ethernet" connection. Now, an "Ethernet" connection is just a special type of computer connection we use, usually with connecting to the Internet, though you can also use it to connect two computers to transfer files between computers. Do not ask me how to do that, however. I don't know.

The tech support person asked me if I had run any "diagnostics." A "diagnostic" . . . the verb here is "to diagnose," which means to figure out or to discover what is wrong with something. So, "diagnostics" means that, in many software programs, you can run a program that will check to see what is wrong with your program or with your computer. I said I was not able to "connect to the web." We use that verb "to connect," meaning we are able to communicate with the connection, if you will, and be able to get on the Internet. That's called "connecting to the web."

The technical support person said he would "submit a ticket." Here, "to submit a ticket" – or we sometimes say a "trouble ticket" – means that he's going to fill out a form. He's going to fill out a piece of paper or type in a form on the computer and send it to someone else who will try to help me. So, submitting a "trouble ticket" to an IT department means that you are telling them what the problem is and asking them to help. The problem in my case was "escalated to the next level." "To escalate a problem" – "to escalate" anything – means to bring it to a



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higher level, to raise it up. Here, it means that the supervisor or the person who has more knowledge will look at my problem.

I ended by saying that I was told someone would call me back, or call me on the telephone, but I said, “I won’t hold my breath.” The expression “Don’t hold your breath” or “I won’t hold my breath” . . . your breath, of course, is (breathing sound) – what you breathe, okay? That’s your breath, the air that comes in and out of your body. “To hold your breath” would be, of course, to stop breathing. But when we say, “I won’t hold my breath,” we mean “I don’t expect anything to happen” – that I don’t think this person will actually call me, in this case.

Now let’s listen to our story, this time at a normal speed.

[start of story]

I recently signed up for a new ISP for my office, using DSL. I managed to get the modem and the router configured properly, but now my email won't work. I dug out the manual that came with the modem and called the toll-free line for technical support. I'm not a big fan of most IT departments, but if something doesn't work, they're the only game in town.

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[end of story]

Thanks to our great scriptwriter, Dr. Lucy Tse, for all of her hard work. And thanks to you for listening.

From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Come back and listen to us again here on ESL Podcast.

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