

## **We have ways of making you talk** - Thursday, November 6th, 2008

Background: Babbel.com has just bought out FriendsAbroad.com - but Brit owned Learn10.com is there to make you learn using the methods of the ad industry.

English speakers don't exactly have the best reputation for speaking a second language. Those that do are the exception, rather than the rule. But, now is the time to try, because learning a new language just got a lot more convenient. Learn10 is a new service which helps you pick up 10 new words every day. It uses the thinking of the advertising industry, and you can find it on all over the Internet.

The old fashioned, Brits Abroad way of communicating with "Johnny Foreigner" was to talk loudly, and, if that didn't work, shout. With 750 million people around the world learning English, it's easy to see why native speakers can get away without learning the local lingo, so why try?

Nicola Robinsonova, from learn10.com says that the [number one reason](#) given by Learn10 users, is, because it's fun! Brain fitness and career opportunities are also important, but pleasure was the number 1 motivator for language learners. Learning a language for love was also important, with many learners saying that they were inspired to learn because of their partner, or family.

Why now? We are seeing rapid technological development. There are a host of new products being created for the growing market of online language learners. Many of these are currently free, or available for a small charge. And though 80% of the Internet is in English, there are lots of materials in other languages, such as tv and radio stations and local newspapers. These days you can be immersed without leaving your computer. You can swap languages with native speakers on several language sites such as German based Babbel.com.

One tool, Learn10, was developed when its founders, Mike and Nic, moved to a small village in South Bohemia.

"We'd been learning Czech for 18 months before we moved. Our classes were great - but, lacking time, we skipped class & didn't do our homework. As Czech isn't a common language, there weren't so many resources available for it online. We created Learn10 out of our own need, so that learning a language is part of our day, not

something that takes extra time. We now offer 22 languages (the long tail), so not just the most popular ones like French, German & Spanish.

"I get to see 10 daily words in lots of different places: my email & twitter accounts, blogs and language sites. They're on Facebook, my desktop and we have a screensaver as well. You can even subscribe to an SMS service to get the words sent to your mobile phone every day."

The inspiration for Learn10 came out of Nicola's experience as a researcher for the advertising industry. "We are using the techniques of the advertising industry to help people learn what they want to." says Nicola.

The Learn10 widget spins out user generated lists around the Internet through an affiliate scheme - this means that any publisher can put an 'advert' on their site which holds the content selected by members of Learn10lists.com. Sponsored slots are also available to spread the content even further.

The English language is the lingua franca around the world, arguably the UK's most successful export. If you want to get on in business or a career you need to be able to speak English. In many countries, such as the Czech Republic, you need to be fluent to get a place at a good university.

Nicola says that this affords great opportunities to native English speakers: "if you have an education, and a willingness to travel, you're pretty much guaranteed work in any country. Native English speakers are like gold dust."

"With the beginnings of a new language under your belt, you can make changes to your life... blog from Seville, for example, or create a web 2.0 startup from South Bohemia!"

Ends.