

Part 1

IT WORKER: You're through to Victoria University IT department. How may I help?

STUDENT: Yes, I've been locked out of my email account. Can you help?

IT WORKER: Are you a student or an employee?

STUDENT: Both. I work at the University Union. In the cafe.

IT WORKER: All right. Which email account is giving you trouble? Is it your personal account?

STUDENT: Actually, it's for a society.

IT WORKER: A society. Right. Which society is it, then?

STUDENT: It's the Rugby Club. I'm the vice-president.

IT WORKER: That's good, because I can only give information on the account to one of the officers of the society. Let me see. (pause) Could you confirm your name?

STUDENT: Rakesh Singh.

IT WORKER: How do you spell that?

STUDENT: R-A-K-E-S-H ...

IT WORKER: I mean the last name? Is it just 'Sing,' as in 'Sing a song of sixpence'?

STUDENT: No, it's sing with an H on the end.

IT WORKER: Oh, right. That's what I thought. They have your name spelt incorrectly in the system.

STUDENT: Oh, dear. Will that be a problem?

IT WORKER: I can fix it. What exactly was the trouble you were having with the Rugby Club email account?

STUDENT: Well, I was trying to log in just now, and it said I had the wrong password.

IT WORKER: That's not good.

Part 2

Tim: I'm Tim Cole, and as an experienced travel writer, I'm here to tell you not to believe everything you read in guidebooks because following some of the recommendations they give can result in the most bizarre situations. I'll never forget the night I arrived in Sydney, for example. I'd turned up at the address of what I thought was a budget hotel given in the guidebook at 1 a.m., exhausted and looking forward to a few hours' rest, but instead found myself at a comedy club, which at the time I didn't find at all funny.

The problem is that too many travellers are too trusting of their guidebooks and don't bother to research even the most basic facts before they set off. Some guidebooks are

only updated every couple of years, so it's no wonder many things have moved on by the time you get there. The most important thing when choosing a guidebook is to check the publication date; if it's not within the last twelve months, don't buy it.

Then the other thing to think about is who the guidebook is aimed at. If you're into the history and culture of a place, don't buy a guidebook full of information on the alternative nightlife scene. But my pet hate, and something I'm always extremely wary of, are the restaurant suggestions. So often I've turned up somewhere and the menu, price and décor bear no relation to the place I've been reading about – if they haven't already gone out of business and shut down, that is.

Other things to look out for in a guidebook are the maps. These need to be detailed but not so small you can't read them. You don't want to have to carry a magnifying glass around with you. Books that include unnecessary information are another thing I find annoying – like photos of famous places, for example. We already know what the Eiffel tower looks like! Why not include more background information instead?

Of course, most guidebooks are also now available in a digital format and many travellers prefer using these because they're obviously not heavy to carry, so you can download as many as you like. But I don't find them easy to use at all because navigation is much harder than flicking through the index at the back of a book. Life's just too short and you can never guarantee you'll have wifi access anyway. Until I can get a digital travel guide which is tailor-made for my individual trip, I'm happy to stick with the traditional form of guidebook.

However, on my trip to Hawaii last summer I experimented with a new way of getting good travel advice: Twitter tourism. Instead of using a guidebook, I decided to rely on the advice of locals and visitors alike – and let them choose what I should visit, where I should stay and what I should eat. I didn't mind as long as their advice was based on a recent experience. It actually worked out really well and it felt like a real adventure. Without the Twitter travel tips I'd never have visited the Ukulele Festival or eaten spam sushi. One thing I'd never imagined doing – and I'm so grateful for the advice – was a ten-kilometre kayak expedition along the coast for a night time swim with manta rays in a huge cave. A truly magnificent sight. And my top tip for anyone visiting Hawaii!

Part 3

In this evening's talk I'm going to be telling you about the peacock, which is one of the world's most spectacular birds and a great favourite in zoos and tourist attractions in many countries. The peacock is best known for its tail, which is huge and brightly coloured and, sort of, stands up behind it. People say that it looks like a fan. When the bird opens and closes this tail, it's a wonderful sight.

There are two main types of peacock, the blue and the green. The green peacock lives in Southeast Asia, in countries such as Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia, whereas the blue peacock originally comes from India. And it's the blue peacock that you are more likely to see in other parts of the world, because it is better able to live in different climates than its green cousin. And it has been kept by humans for many centuries.

In ancient cultures, blue peacocks were kept both because they looked nice and also because they were good to eat. The Ancient Romans certainly had them two thousand years ago, and there is evidence of them in Ancient Egypt three thousand years ago. But it is thought that the first culture to keep the birds were the Mesopotamians, who lived four thousand years ago.

Now, as I said earlier, the blue peacock is spectacular to look at. The bird has a long thin neck and a very small head on a big body and looks a bit like a turkey. It's only when it opens its tail that you realise how beautiful it is. The tail, which stands up behind the bird, grows to a length of over two hundred centimetres and is a wonderful shiny bluegreen colour. This tail is covered with large egg-shaped spots which are called 'eyes'. It makes a wonderful pattern and in the sunlight the colours are magnificent, the blues, greens and blacks turning to purple, black and gold.

Unfortunately, it is only the male bird that has this tail because the purpose of all this wonderful display is to attract a mate. The female bird, which is actually called the peahen, is brown and rather dull looking compared to her multi-coloured mate. The male walks up and down displaying his tail to impress the female bird. It's such a famous sight that we even find reference to it in different languages. In English, for example, we have the expression 'as proud as a peacock' to describe men who take a lot of trouble over their appearance.

In the wild, the peacock's natural habitat is the forest, where they live in small family groups. They like to live near water in hilly jungle areas. Although they can fly quite well, they cannot go very fast and they usually only fly for short distances, usually to escape from danger. When danger approaches, they warn each other by making loud shrieking noises. Although they spend most of their time on the ground, peacocks usually sleep in trees. They move into the lower branches in the late afternoon and then gradually move higher up as night falls.

One of the best places in the world to see different types of peacocks is called Peacock Paradise and it is located in Melaka in Malaysia. There you can see both types of bird, and there's also a visitor centre which provides lots of information about peacocks and other similar birds. There's even a pool full of crocodiles to watch if you need a change from birds! If you get the chance to go, it's certainly worth a visit.