Web Users Reshape Language By Adopting Net Lingo

Some Parents Try To Adjust To Acronymns

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MADISON, Wis. -- A new, informal language is sweeping the Internet, and if you have children, it's probably being spoken in your home.

The words coming alive in recent years aren't really even words, but they are speaking volumes on the Web. Those words have made their way at the Newman family home in Verona, although they're often lost in translation, WISC-TV reported.

"What's that mean?" asked mother Michelle Newman, watching her daughter Hillary and friends, Jade and Molly, typing away.

Hearing the girls describe this unusual online language can sound foreign to many parents.

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"We have W-B-U, like 'What about you?'" explains Jade, a 15-year-old Verona High School student.

"I usually use B-R-B. Or B-B-L, like 'Be back later.'" said Hillary, also a 15-year-old Verona student.

"Or like O-M-G is mostly when something is like shocking happens, when you wanna like tell somebody." said Jade.

Michelle Newman said these letter combinations were all very confusing at first.

"Oh, different letters, combination of letters, and everything," said Newman, "It took me a long time to know what BFF is. I go, 'What's BFF?' 'Best friends forever, mom!'"

They might not know it, but "BFFs" Hillary, Jade, and Molly are re-shaping the way society that communicates. Through chatrooms, instant messages and social networking Web sites like Facebook and MySpace.com, the use of those cryptic, convenient acronyms allow the girls to create a language all their own, according to a University of Wisconsin professor.

"The technology itself, particularly with chat rooms and messaging, theres an emphasis on the efficiency of inputing and sending messages," said Rob Howard, a UW communication arts professor. "So something like 'Be Right Back' or 'BRB' is efficient, and that way the technology has an effect.

Howard teaches a course on Internet communication. He said that net-friendly lingo catches on quickly. "So once someone starts to use something like this, be right back, it spreads rapidly," said Howard, "And you can see a much faster proliferation of these terms."

For Michelle Newman, it's a far cry from the days that she remembers using a party-line telephone. "Its a new language," she said, "I tend to forget those little initials too and I always have to go, 'What's this mean again?' It's a whole new world."

"You are seeing something that is happening far more rapidly today than you did, say, with the printing press," said Howard.

So if the printing press made Gutenberg :) (Web shorthand for happy), there's a good chance this online chatter would have made him L-O-L (laugh out loud).

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- NetLingo.com

http://www.channel3000.com/technology/15289384/detail.html?rss=c3k&psp=news