



Dialogue 2

(Robert and David, at David's flat)



R: Ha ha! I've won it!

D: What did you win? A free pizza delivery?

R: Very funny. Actually, a software company from Finland **invited a tender** for website programming. I **put in my bid** and I've won.

D: What? You've got to be kidding me! A third year student, who doesn't even have his own business, will be providing IT services to a company from Finland? Do they know how old you are?

R: No, no, it's not a normal tender. It's for **freelance** programmers, like myself. You see when a company needs somebody to do some **brainless** work, like here – writing code for a web page that nobody ever visits – they don't do it themselves.

D: What, they come to you?

R: Yeah. And people like me: computer **geeks**, **part-timers** or semi-professionals. What they do is **log on** to a special website for **freelancers** and leave the information about the project there – you know, specifications, the **time frame**, etc. And then they choose the best, well... usually the cheapest, offer. Good **price/quality ratio** is usually the main advantage of **crowdsourcing**.

D: But what if what they get from you is rubbish?

R: It's a **calculated risk**. Whatever they pay us is still a **fraction** of what they'd pay if they **commissioned** it to professionals or outsourced it to India.

D: Wait a minute... It says here you should send them project documents in Finnish. May I kindly draw your attention to the fact that you don't know a word in Finnish.

R: I don't. But I know a bloke who is dating an exchange student from Helsinki. She won't say no to a few pounds.

D: This is weird!

R: No, it's globalisation, brother. Some time ago a friend of mine won a bid for translating some ethnic poetry from Swahili into Chinese. Do you think he spoke either of the languages?

D: Let me guess: he had Internet friends in both Africa and China!

R: Exactly! By the way, check this out – somebody is looking for a cheap interior designer here in our town.

D: Really, let me have a look... hm... hm... Get off that chair, kid, and fix me a cup of coffee. I have a bid to win!

Glossary



invite a tender (<i>col</i>)	ask companies or individuals to submit their offers regarding a specific task
put in a bid (<i>col</i>)	send a competitive offer in response to a tender
brainless (<i>adj</i>)	requiring little intellectual work
computer geek (<i>n</i>)	person with impressive computer skills, yet unable to develop normal social relations
part-timer (<i>n</i>)	person working for less time than somebody doing a full-time job
log on (to) (<i>v</i>)	enter a website
freelancer (<i>n</i>)	outsourced service provider who sells specific services for an agreed amount of money within an agreed time span
price/quality ratio (<i>n</i>)	evaluation of a product's price when compared with its quality
crowdsourcing (<i>n</i>)	(neologism) system of work in which companies hire freelance specialists via the Internet to perform specific tasks
calculated risk (<i>n</i>)	risk considered and accepted during the decision-making process
fraction (<i>n</i>)	very small amount; part of a greater entity
commission (<i>v</i>)	assign a task



Exercise 1

Listen to the dialogue again. Write the missing information – a word, two words, or a number – in the gaps.

1. David thinks that what his brother has won is a free _____ of his lunch.
 2. The company that has invited a _____ for website programming is based in Finland.
 3. The subject of the tender is _____ for an unpopular website.
 4. Companies that hire freelance programmers usually provide them with _____ and the time frame of the project.
 5. The money paid to freelancers is usually a _____ of what professionals would charge.
 6. Despite having no qualifications, Robert's friend won a tender for _____ literature.
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Exercise 2

What do the underlined expressions mean?

1. The local authorities commissioned this website to promote the region.
 - a) ordered
 - b) wanted
 - c) designed
2. Why is it so that only a fraction of my colleagues bother to answer my emails on time?
 - a) none
 - b) very few
 - c) some

3. After a few years of working as a photographer for an advertising agency, I became a freelancer.

- a) independent outsourcer
- b) independent specialist
- c) independent entrepreneur

4. Filling spreadsheets with data was one of the most brainless tasks I have ever dealt with.

- a) mindless
- b) uncomplicated
- c) challenging

5. Last year I retired from bookkeeping, but I teach mathematics as a part-timer at the local high school.

- a) teacher
- b) employee who doesn't work full time
- c) pensioner

Exercise 3



Fill the gaps in the sentences with suitable phrases from the box.

bid	ratio	tender	risk
geek	crowdsourcing	on	

1. Apparently, _____ has put many professionals out of work.
2. He may look like a computer _____, but he is a very sociable man.
3. It's not a cutting-edge model, but its price/quality _____ makes it a very good choice.
4. The local authorities have invited a _____ for the modernisation of the roads.
5. If you log _____ to our website, you will find there our full offer and lots of useful information.

6. Buying those shares was a calculated _____, yet in the end we made a fat profit on them.

7. We put in our _____, but it was our competitors who won.



Exam practice



Prepare a short talk on the following topic. You will be asked to speak for approximately three minutes.

What are the advantages of telecommuting for:

- the employer / the company
- the employee
- others