

Gray Google

(So You Think You Can Tell)

By Dave Keight

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Sid sat in a very small room in front of a very big world. The sun shone dimly through the net curtains that covered the only window, set in one wall of the dingy bedsit. It shone upon Sid, and upon Sid's laptop. He was lying on the bed, talking to his friends. Well, they were sort of friends anyway. He had never actually met half of them of course, but what did that mean? Nothing. Friendship could transcend such boundaries. He recognized someone who he could have a good chat to any day. There were many such people, all neatly set down in alphabetic order on his contacts list.

"W00t," Sid exclaimed inwardly. Tracy had just signed in. Tracy was one in a million, something special. Sid could spend hours, LOLing and ROFLMAOing over various bits of net trivia, sharing funny YouTubes, twittering incessantly. He wished she had a web-cam but she said she couldn't be bothered with one. Fair does, thought Sid. He had an imagination.

"A up Trace Wot U up2?" said Sid.

"O jst messin about," came the reply. "Found a LOLworthy YouTube of a snake eating a baby hippo. U wudn't believe it!!!"

"Send me the link," said Sid.

"K," came the reply. Sid watched it. He actually did laugh out loud.

"Wow tis sumthin else," he said. The conversation carried on. Tracy could always make Sid laugh. They chatted for hours, just about this and that. Tracy really was a diamond, always full of the latest bits of cool stuff from the net. Sid was a little bit jealous of her ability to find stuff. It was almost as if as soon as it got posted she knew about it. He checked his contact list again to see who else was about.

"W00t," Sid exclaimed inwardly. Rachel had just signed in. Rachel was one in a million, something special. Sid could spend hours, LOLing and ROFLMAOing over various bits of net trivia, sharing funny YouTubes, twittering incessantly. He wished she had a web-cam but she said she couldn't be bothered with one. Fair does, thought Sid. He had an imagination.

"A up Rachel Wot U up2?" said Sid.

"O jst messin about," came the reply. "Found a LOLworthy YouTube of a dwarf on a trampoline. U wudn't believe it!!!"

"Send me the link," said Sid.

"K," came the reply. Sid watched it. He actually did laugh out loud.

"Wow tis sumthin else," he said. The conversation carried on. Rachel could always make Sid laugh. They chatted for hours, just about this and that. Rachel really was a diamond, always full of the latest bits of cool stuff from the net. Sid was a little bit jealous of her ability to find stuff. It was almost as if as soon as it got posted she knew about it. He checked his contact list again to see who else was about.

"W00t," Sid exclaimed inwardly. Sharon had just signed in. Sharon was one in a million, something special. Sid could spend hours, LOLing and ROFLMAOing over various bits of net trivia, sharing funny YouTubes, twittering incessantly. He wished she had a web-cam but she said she couldn't be bothered with one. Fair does, thought Sid. He had an imagination.

"A up Shaz Wot U up2?" said Sid.

"O jst messin about," came the reply. "Found a LOLworthy YouTube of a bear up an electricity pylon. U wudn't believe it!!!"

"Send me the link," said Sid.

"K," came the reply. Sid watched it. He actually did laugh out loud.

"Wow tis sumthin else," he said. The conversation carried on. Sharon could always make Sid laugh. They chatted for hours, just about this and that. Sharon really was a diamond, always full of the latest bits of cool stuff from the net. Sid was a little bit jealous of her ability to find stuff. It was almost as if as soon as it got posted she knew about it. He checked his contact list again to see who else was about.

"P00t," Sid exclaimed inwardly. BOT578 had just signed in. These things were just faceless clones. Why did those sad geeks spend hours programming them? It was nothing special. Some people spent hours talking to them, trying to find the cracks in their code, tying them in loops. Those people seriously lacked an imagination; he could spot a bot a mile off.

But just to prove it to himself he sent it an instant message.

“A up BOT578 wot U up2?”

“O jst messin about,” came the reply. “Found a LOLworthy YouTube of a cat wearing sunglasses. U wudn’t believe it!!!”

“Send me the link,” said Sid.

“K,” came the reply. Sid watched it. Despite himself he actually did laugh out loud.

“Meh tis ok I guess,” he said. These bots. Not idea what constitutes a normal conversation.