

Do You Know Laptop Clubs?

Sometimes the things that get 'lost in translation' can be hilarious.

My friend's husband is Italian – he's incredibly talented: has an MA, can speak three languages and works for the Red Cross. However, on occasion his multi lingual skills are not quite enough.

He was invited to a stag do with work colleagues– his first, as it seems that the rituals of pre nuptial embarrassment are not widespread in Italy. I met him for coffee the following day. Not surprisingly, he was nursing quite a severe hangover.

"So, how was it?" I asked.

"Not so good,' he replied from behind dark glasses.

My friend and I sat and waited for him to divulge more information. He got the hint.

"Well, the first part was OK,' he said, 'we went to a bar and drank too much. But the next part I didn't really enjoy, was a bit sleazy."

Images of strippers immediately sprang to mind.

"Yeah,' he continued, 'after the pub we went to a laptop club. I didn't really like it."

My friend and I collapsed in fits of hysteria, and the image of a laptop club has remained with me ever since. Semi naked women swapping poles for keyboards? Or perhaps these places might have no need for half rate strip shows and people might just wander in to sit down in front of a computer?

The interesting thing is that, on the whole, computers have been designed to side step global language issues. This is probably just as well, because when you stop and think about it, if each computer system operated in it's own language, the world would be in chaos. In fact the development of the World Wide Web, was based entirely around this concept – that if computers spoke a universal language, global barriers would be removed.

This might be a rather naive assumption, since my knowledge of html and the like is limited, to say the least. But it did get me to wondering how many blunders there might have been in the digital age due to errors in translation. One thing that the web has opened up is the ability to buy things online from anywhere around the world, at any time of day or night.

When Wiis sold out last Christmas, countless blogs and consumer shopping sites devoted themselves to posting sites all around Europe where you could still buy them. I did have a look, but parting with a few hundred pounds in German felt just too confusing. Given the strength of the pound against the dollar at the moment, I regularly shop online in the US. No doubt people from all around the world purchase items online from the UK with the help of a screen translator button.

But. What might happen if the translator button didn't work for someone trying to order a [laptop](#)? Might there be some terrible chance, given the linguistic similarity of the two words in English that they could wind up ordering a lap-dance instead?

About the Author

Sarah Maple uses [Shopping.com](#) to find low [laptop](#) prices and compare different models

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