



The Monday Podcast



Book crossing: an interview with Agneta Starker (16.04.2007)

Good morning and welcome to the Monday Podcast from AllThingsGerman.net and Pension-Sprachschule.de

Good morning!

With us this morning is Agneta Starker, a freelance language teacher from Oberursel. Good morning.

Good morning!

And you're here to talk to us about book crossing.

Yes.

So Agneta, what is book crossing? You sent me an e-mail about two weeks ago, I did sign up, but I'm kind of stuck. What's the purpose of book crossing?

OK, well there's the homepage, that's www.bookcrossing.com, and it's the idea of an American, of course. It's free. There are currently over 500.000 members, and...

What do you do?

Yes, the purpose is that you have a lot of books at home, and if it's a novel and you read [it] once, and then you say "What [do I] do with it?" And you need more space, so you can go to that homepage and register the book and it gets a certain number. And then you can print out a little piece of paper where you put in the number and there's also an explanation about how book crossing works. And you then you have this book with its number and you can say "OK, I want to release it in the wild". And then you take the book and go on a walk and maybe leave it in the library, or in a coffee shop, or in the supermarket, or on a bench, or wherever.

Any unusual places that you could think of?

In our favourite place – in the U-Bahn!

Yes, maybe nobody will find it, ever, but...

In a bar? I could think of some unusual places to drop a book.

And, of course, for book crossers the goal is that somebody finds it and goes on the homepage and puts in the number and does the journal entry and say "Well I found this book in this and this bar and great – I'll read it, and thank you". And so the owner knows where the book is, and that it's not in the waste, and that's the main purpose.

OK, so you can always keep track of it.



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Yes.

And of course probably read some interesting entries. Is it written in a forum style when people make a journal entry or when they find it, is it like a blog?

Yes, there is free space, they can write whatever they want and of course it's interesting when already 10 people have made journal entries and everybody... there's also a rating system from 1 to 10 stars, so you can see how people like the book and what they write about it, and you can compare and that's interesting.

Have you ever seen or followed up on an interesting journey, like a book that made it from Hamburg to, say, Italy, or...

Yes, there are a lot of books that... on the homepage you can always see... there's a bar you can see on the left-hand... the most recent 3 releases and catches, and then you can click on them and see where they have travelled. And now they also have a world map, and every time someone leaves a book it pops up and you can see that in the United States, or in South America, or in Germany somebody just released a book.

OK, and do you get... how often have you found a book, actually?

I haven't found one yet.

OK, but you've released books?

Yes, 7 so far.

OK, and you are keeping track of them on a daily basis, or, I mean, how often do you check where they are?

Well, you... when you registered... you get an e-mail as soon as somebody does a journal entry on your books.

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