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- Kaz:** Hello I'm Kaz and this is 6 Minute English. With me today is Finn. Hello Finn.
- Finn:** Hello Kaz.
- Kaz:** So, what news Finn?
- Finn:** Oh nothing new from me. Just the same old stuff, Kaz.
- Kaz:** Oh well, you know the saying: 'no news is good news'.
- Finn:** That's certainly true, Kaz
- Kaz:** It's also relevant to today's programme.
- Finn:** How so?
- Kaz:** Well, have you ever wondered why there's so little good news around?
- Finn:** You're right, Kaz. It's usually bad news that makes the headlines: wars, scandals, murders, financial troubles, disasters...
- Kaz:** OK, so on the subject of bad news, let me try this quiz question on you. According to the BBC, three of the top ten most followed stories of 2012 were about the weather in the UK. But what kind of weather, though? Was it a) snow storms, b) flooding or c) heat waves?
- Finn:** Mmm. I don't think it could be heat waves because we've had a pretty awful summer. I'll try a) snow storms.
- Kaz:** Is that your final answer Finn?
- Finn:** Yup. 'Snow storms' is my final answer.

Kaz: OK. We'll find out if you're right at the end of the programme. But now, let's hear from designer Wayne Hemingway. Now, he was invited into the BBC newsroom and his message to broadcasters was that they should look for more good news, rather than the disasters and grim events that lead most news stories. What kind of stories would he like to get more exposure?

Wayne Hemingway:

*Perhaps it's time to reflect a little bit about why the main news channels seem to help us concentrate on bad news stories and the **seedier side of life**. What bothers me is that on the whole, stories that could move **mankind** forward and positively **impact** on our lives don't get the exposure they deserve.*

Kaz: Finn, what kind of stories would designer Wayne Hemingway like to see getting more **exposure**?

Finn: Now he says that stories that deserve more exposure are ones about moving mankind forward and positively impacting on our lives – in short, stories about improving our lives.

Kaz: Yes, stories that 'move mankind forward'.

Finn: That sounds quite grand Kaz – almost idealistic. I wonder what kind of stories do that?

Kaz: Well, let's find out. Here's Wayne again, talking about just that. What two stories does he mention?

Wayne Hemingway:

*In Japan scientists managed to create eggs from mice stem cells raising the hope of a cure for human infertility. The US Journal, Science, said it was one of the most important **breakthroughs** of the year but you've probably never heard of it. And in Israel, Izhar Gafni has developed a bicycle from recycled cardboard, which could bring cheap, clean transport to some of the world's poorest and most polluted and congested cities.*

Kaz: So what are the two good news stories he mentions?

Finn: The first is a breakthrough, a significant development, in stem cell research that might lead to a cure for human infertility.

Kaz: OK and the second?

Finn: A story about a bicycle made from recycled cardboard.

Kaz: Yes, it's a neat idea.

Finn: He says these cardboard bicycles could bring cheap, clean transport to some of the world's poorest, most polluted and congested cities.

Kaz: Wayne Hemingway is passionate about getting his message across to broadcasters. He thinks that if we are constantly fed a diet of bad news, it's what we'll end up wanting. What word does he use to describe this situation?

Wayne Hemingway:

*It's like saying that **tabloids** sell more than **broadsheets**. If that's fed to the people all of the time that's what they want but, you know, surely we've got to look at things that make us happy sometimes rather than think 'Oh I'm glad I'm inside in the warmth', or you know 'I'm glad I'm not in that country, I'd hate to be there'. It all seems to be a little bit **crass** at the moment and to me it seems to be getting worse.*

Kaz: Did you catch that word he used Finn to describe our appetite for bad news?

Finn: It was 'crass'. He said the situation was 'a little bit crass' at the moment – 'crass' - showing no intelligence or sensitivity.

Kaz: And it's a situation that he thinks is getting worse.

Finn: So what can we do about it?

Kaz: Let's find out. Here's Wayne Hemingway again:

Wayne Hemingway:

*If you search the internet for good news stories there are various websites that address this but they **don't do it justice**. Perhaps we need fewer crime and more design correspondents, more science reporters and fewer war reporters and that way we might just encourage people to go out and achieve more and put a smile rather than **a grimace** on the face of the people at the bus stop.*

Kaz: Finn, what do we need to redress this situation?

Finn: He says that perhaps we need fewer crime correspondents and more design correspondents.

Kaz: OK, as a designer himself that makes sense.

Finn: Yes, but don't forget that design is an important contributor to the British economy – so more of those stories would improve things.

Kaz: OK. And what else?

Finn: More science reporters and fewer war reporters.

Kaz: Yes, he says that this would encourage people to go out and achieve more.

Finn: He says it would put a smile on people's faces, rather than a grimace.

Kaz: Well, that's all we have time for today. But before we go though, the answer to this week's question. According to the BBC, three of the top ten most followed stories of 2012 were about the weather in the UK. What kind of weather was covered? Was it a) snow storms, b) flooding or c) heat waves? Now Finn, you said?

Finn: Well, I said a) snow storms because of the snowy weather we've been having recently. Was I right?

Kaz: I'm afraid not, Finn. The correct answer was ... b) flooding. Thanks very much Finn, goodbye.

Finn: Goodbye.

Vocabulary and definitions

the seedier side of life	aspects of life that are morally degraded, for example, sex scandals and corruption
mankind	the human race
impact	have an effect on or influence
exposure	coverage
breakthroughs	sudden, dramatic, and important discoveries or developments, especially in science and medicine
tabloids	newspapers of small format giving the news in condensed form, usually with lots of pictures and often providing sensational material
broadsheets	serious newspapers with a larger page format
crass	crude and rough
don't do it justice	don't give it the credit it deserves
a grimace	a twisted facial expression that shows distaste or disgust

Read and listen to the story online

http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/general/sixminute/2013/01/130131_6min_good_news.shtml

More on this story:

Wayne Hemingway debates TV good news stories with MPs.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-21165698>

TV news: Wayne Hemingway on science and design stories.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-21161942>