

Check your ECCE Reading Skills – Part 1 - Activity 2

Key and Item Analysis

This passage is about hackers.

Hackers, who break into other people's computers, can cause serious financial damage to even the most commercially successful websites. They secretly put software onto other people's computers. It remains there until the hacker activates it. Hackers needn't be computer experts. They can find hacking programs on the Internet, which can be downloaded easily and then used to disrupt other people's systems.

Recently hackers activated millions of computers to visit the same websites at the same time. As a result, a number of well-known company websites got flooded with requests at one gigabyte per second. That is like 104 million people accessing a site at the same time. This naturally caused total disruption. No website can cope with that number of visits. People go to websites for information and news, but if a particular website is not accessible, they go to other sites. As a result the company of the website that has been targeted by hackers suffers a financial disaster. All companies make money from advertising on their websites, but if the site cannot be visited frequently, then revenues from advertising will diminish.

Webmasters can make it more difficult for hackers to get into computers by encrypting messages, but they face a dilemma. Their goal is to have a site open and easy for the public to reach. However, easy access can make websites vulnerable to hackers.

It is difficult to determine the reason hackers cause such havoc. Some say it boosts their egos. Others believe some hackers are against advertising and the materialistic world. This might be the case with the recent attacks since many of the hackers' targets were large commercial sites.

Item Difficulty: More challenging

1. According to the passage, hackers can ...
- A. stop people getting access to the Internet
 - B. destroy millions of computers
 - C. direct people to other websites
 - D. cause companies to lose money

Answer: D

Explanation: The correct answer is D. In paragraph one, the text states that Hackers cause companies to lose money: "... cause serious financial damage". In paragraph two, the texts also states that when hackers attack a website the company that has the website loses money: "As a result the company of the website that has been targeted by hackers suffers a financial disaster."

Item Difficulty: Less challenging

2. What does the passage say about hackers?
- A. They are experts on computers.
 - B. They can produce new software.
 - C. They copy programs for hacking from the Internet.
 - D. They visit many websites frequently.

Answer: C

Explanation: The correct answer is C. The last sentence of paragraph one states that hackers can find hacking programs on the Internet: "They can find hacking programs on the Internet, which can be downloaded easily and then used to disrupt other people's systems."

Item Difficulty: Moderate

3. What did hackers do recently?

- A. They made websites so busy they could not work.
- B. They stopped advertising on websites.
- C. They made millions of visits to websites.
- D. They blocked access to the internet.

Answer: A

Explanation: The correct answer is A. The first sentence of paragraph two states that hackers ‘recently’ got many computers to visit the same websites at the same time. As a result, those sites could not deal with so many visitors: “Recently hackers activated millions of computers to visit the same websites at the same time.” This naturally caused total disruption. No website can cope with that number of visits.”

Item Difficulty: More challenging

4. In paragraph 2, line 3, what does “this” refer to?

- A. flooding websites with requests
- B. 104 million people accessing the internet
- C. one gigabyte per second
- D. a number of well-known sites

Answer: A

Explanation: The correct answer is A. In the sentence, “This naturally caused total disruption”, this refers to what caused ‘total disruption’. The second sentence in paragraph two states what caused ‘total disruption’: “As a result, a number of well-known company websites got flooded with requests at one gigabyte per second.”

Item Difficulty: Moderate

5. According to the author, why do some people become hackers?

- A. They are materialistic.
- B. They are determined.
- C. They face a dilemma.
- D. They are against commercialism.

Answer: D

Explanation: The correct answer is D. The third sentence in the last paragraph states that some people may become hackers as hackers are ‘against advertising and the materialistic world’. The author continues by stating that could be the reason why hackers usually target large sites that sell things to the public: “Others believe some hackers are against advertising and the materialistic world. This might be the case with the recent attacks since many of the hackers’ targets were large commercial sites.”