

Cyberattacks: A Global Threat

- 1 What would you do if you woke up one fine morning to realise that your computer had been locked, and that you could only regain a _____ to your files after paying a ransom?
- 2 On 12 May 2017, that was the exact p _ _ d _ _ _ m _ _ _ that thousands of people found themselves in. On that morning, the WannaCry ransomware sw _____ across 150 countries, locking up more than 200,000 computers, sending the world into a panic.



*Your personal files have been encrypted!
Please pay USD100 to obtain a private key for your computer.*

- 3 Ransomware, as its name s _____, is a form of m _____ software that locks up all files on a computer, holding them hostage until the user pays a r _____ in exchange _____ a decryption key that unlocks the files. Often, the virus also spreads rapidly, j _____ (Book 2, pg 52) the integrity of other computers in the network.
- 4 In an age when internet-connected devices are indispensable _____ (Book 3, pg 53) us and critical data as well as our precious memories are stored almost entirely on computers, one can only imagine how distressing it would feel to be a victim of ransomware. Yet, the r _____ (Book 2, pg 75; consequences) of large-scale cyber disruptions can be far graver than the loss of personal data a _____.
- 5 To fully grasp how serious cyberattacks can be, we need to understand the danger these attacks pose to s _____ as a whole. Did you know that viruses often target not only individuals, but also businesses, organisations and g _____?
- 6 The recent spate of cyberattacks, for example, claimed companies such as Cadbury and TNT among its victims. In fact, u _ s _ _ _ p _ _ _ _ (Book 3, pg 76) cyber criminals

have also been known to target critical, _____-value infrastructure so as to make a quick buck. In 2016, attackers targeted a hospital in Los Angeles, blocking access to the institution's network, email, and crucial patient data for ten days. For the sake of its patients, the hospital had no choice but to **y_____ to** (Book 1, pg 6) the attackers' demands of \$17,000, or 40 Bitcoins. Such attacks show how cyber criminals operate **w_____** a conscience, and may have no **q_____** targeting critical infrastructure in society, including hospitals, telecommunication providers and utility companies. Should a large-scale cyberattack succeed in **cri_____** key institutions in our country, one can scarcely begin to imagine how **c_____** (Book 2, pg 80, disastrous) the consequences might be!



Public institutions such as hospitals, universities, and police departments are vulnerable to cyberattacks, too

- 7 To make matters worse, analysts **s_____** (guess; predict) that malware will only grow smarter, and become increasingly difficult to deal with. As attacks become more **prevalent** (Book 3, pg 2) and their perpetrators grow **b_____**, the ransom demanded may also increase. Users unable to **comply _____** the attacker's given **d____l____** may find the files on their computers destroyed and lost forever.
- 8 Sadly, widespread ignorance and **c_____ h_____** made cybersecurity particularly challenging. In the **w_____** of the WannaCry attack, most people, instead of taking measures to _____ the security of their devices, appeared to have cleanly forgotten about the attack. Many did not think that they would ever be so **u_____** as to fall victim to cybercrime.
- 9 In addition to complacency, a lack of education also explains why many computers in the world **c_____** to be **s_____ to** (Book 3, pg 5) virus attacks. In a recent study conducted by Avast, an antivirus company, 38 million personal computers in the world were found to be vulnerable, as their users had not downloaded special **p_t_____** released by Microsoft to help **d_____** older computer systems against attacks.



How do we keep our devices safe?

- 10 In the face of a clearly growing **m** _ _ _ _ _ (Book 1, pg 72; *threat*), it is crucial that governments, schools, and organisations do more to ramp up defences in our digital world. Ultimately, the most effective ransomware defence hinges on **e** _____. To reduce our susceptibility to cyberattacks, individuals, organisations, and businesses must invest time and energy in the area of cyberdefence. **R**_____ data backups should be made **m**_____ (Book 3, pg 96; *compulsory*), while the latest security patches should always be installed. While some of us may dismiss pop-up notifications on our computers as **t**_____ (*unimportant*) or even annoying, it is important to realise that software updates can help keep us safe.
- 11 Just as importantly, **n**_____ must guard themselves against ransomware distribution tactics such as phishing attacks and spoofed websites. Today, the downloading of an infected file is still one of the most common **w** _ _ _ [watch your grammar!] viruses seep into our computer systems. For our own safety, we need to be more **v**_____ and **d**_____ (Book 3, pg 75) when surfing the internet. As a rule of thumb, users should not open suspicious-looking emails, and should also stay clear ____ unfamiliar links. Together, our efforts will help reduce the likelihood of a **s** _ _ _ _ _ **f** _ _ cyberattack on our nation.



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Answers

Paragraph 1

access

Paragraph 2

predicament, swept

Paragraph 3

suggests, malicious, ransom, for, jeopardising

Paragraph 4

to, ramifications, alone

Paragraph 5

society, governments

Paragraph 6

unscrupulous, high, yield, without, qualms, crippling, catastrophic

Paragraph 7

speculate, bolder, with, deadline

Paragraph 8

complacency, have, wake, enhance/boost, unlucky

Paragraph 9

continue, susceptible, patches, defend

Paragraph 10

menace, education, Routine/Regular, mandatory, trivial

Paragraph 11

netizens, ways, vigilant, discerning, of, successful