

*UniEnglish reading – General comprehension (1)***Text comprehension and identifying a writer's viewpoint**

Activity 1: The title of the passage that you are going to read is 'The Internet and Crime'. Read the text and answer the questions below.

- a) What are the two main crimes that people are concerned about?
- b) Do most people think that the internet makes it easier for criminals to commit crimes?
- c) Is it easy to create a web site?
- d) How secure is the internet?
- e) Are sex offenders able to commit more crimes by using the internet?
- f) Is the internet the main way for conmen to operate?

The Internet and Crime

Technology has an important role to play in our lives. From the car alarm to satellite communication systems, technology assists us and improves many aspects of our lives. However, people are becoming increasingly concerned about the way technology, computer technology in particular, is providing criminals with a perfect means to commit crime with little chance of being caught. The main area of concern is the use of the internet by paedophiles and fraudsters. Some people have argued that the internet makes it easier for criminals to commit crimes while others say that it has made little difference.

There is no question that the internet provides the perfect platform for sharing information. All that is needed is a computer and a phone line and you have access to millions of websites offering information about everything from news reports to penis enlargement services! In addition for a few dollars a month you can create and manage your own web site with little more than a few clicks of the mouse. Therefore, it is easy for criminals, child sex offenders in particular, to create a web site for their own purposes.

In addition to the ease by which the technology can be used there is also the problem of security. If Microsoft cannot protect its own software from being hacked or attacked by viruses then the average user has little chance of protecting themselves from such crimes. Every word that we type can be traced by a computer expert. Therefore, personal information and important financial details can be traced and used by fraudsters. There is no question that should they wish to, these experts can get whatever information we choose share with other users.

On the other hand, sex offenders have been around for much longer than computers. The use of the internet has just increased the circulation of child pornography and improved the offender's opportunity to share his crimes, not actually provided them with the opportunity to commit more crimes. The photos still need to be taken and offenders still seek the opportunity to commit offences against children.

As for the fraudsters, every day we hear stories of unsuspecting people being duped by a conman or of credit card theft and mass fraud. The world is full of people ready and willing to trick and cheat their way to riches. The internet provides another way for these criminals to strike, provided of course that they have the know-how. So, it seems clear that the internet does not really make much difference.

In conclusion, the internet does no more make it easier for sex offenders to commit crimes than parents do by allowing their children to play alone unsupervised! Fraudsters have been lurking around corners for as long as there have been people to dupe; the internet has no more responsibility for the prevalence of fraud than any other means which are used. Crime is an endemic problem in our society which needs to be addressed at its roots, not by blaming a machine for what is clearly a man made problem.

Activity 2: Decide if the following answers are true or false, according to the text you have just read.

- a) The internet is really useful for sharing information.
- b) The internet is often used by children.
- c) Sex offenders are a danger to society.
- d) The internet has allowed the distribution of child pornography to widen.
- e) Criminals use the internet to sell stolen goods.
- f) Criminals who use the internet are less likely to be caught.

Activity 3: Which of the following statements reflect the writer's opinion?

- a) The internet is a good place to commit a crime.
- b) Paedophiles are evil.
- c) The internet makes little difference to crime.
- d) Fraud is rare in our society.
- e) Microsoft assists criminals.
- f) The problem is not the internet, the problem is people.
- g) Parents are responsible for paedophilia.