Cyber-crime

The recent rise in Internet crime is causing problems for employers and employees.

1 What would you do if you received the following e-mail?

From: Euro-International State Lottery
Re [Anti-spam]: Congratulations!
We are delighted to inform you that your name has been selected by our computer and that you are a winner in our Lottery of the sum of €200,000. We shall forward the contact information of the bank which will enable you to claim the funds. Please be aware that there are some important documents that will be required by the bank to activate the transfer. Please contact us urgently to guarantee safe receipt of your winnings. Congratulations!

2 Which of the following words do you know?

spyware	adware	scam	spam	fraud

3 Scan the article below. How many of these words, or derivatives (e.g. fraudsters), can you find in two minutes?

Hi-tech fraud
Both the US and the UK are experiencing a rise in 'phishing', pronounced 'fishing'. Fraudsters send an e-mail message that seems to come from a bank (Citibank, Lloyds) or a company like E-bay or Amazon. The message looks genuine, and may direct you to a website which includes a corporate logo. You are asked to send or confirm personal information, such as your bank account number or password. This information is then used for fraudulent activity, such as online gambling, or to siphon off money from your account. As many as 20% of recipients are fooled by this scam.

This is another example of spamming. The nature of spam is changing from being just a nuisance to more serious financial scams. Many mails sell fake pharmaceuticals on the black market. Financial and pharmaceutical spam now make up an incredible 70% of all spam.

IT managers estimate that over 90% of computers in organisations have been infected by some kind of spyware. Many employees unknowingly download spyware onto their machines. This software, which hides somewhere in your computer, collects information about you and what you do on the internet – it may even record your credit card details if you shop on the Internet. On average every PC has 28 so-called spyware programs installed on it, according to one recent audit by a software firm.

Adware is a form of spyware which installs secret advertising software on your computer, such as annoying pop-up ads. There are government moves in various countries to make spam illegal. As the Internet becomes more and more an integral part of our lives so we have to give more time to protecting ourselves against cyber-crime.

4 Read the article again. Did you find out anything new or surprising?

5 Find words in the text from the definitions below.

   (a) to move money from one bank account to another illegally or dishonestly   (paragraph 1)
   (b) a symbol that represents an organisation or company   (paragraph 1)
   (c) risking money, often in a game, hoping to win more if you are lucky   (paragraph 1)
   (d) made to look like something real in order to trick people   (paragraph 2)
   (e) an official examination of a situation within a company   (paragraph 3)
   Definitions from or based on *Macmillan English Dictionary*. Text © Bloomsbury Publishing Plc 2002.

6 Work in small groups. Rank the following crimes in order of their seriousness. Decide on a suitable penalty for each.

sending spam e-mails	**placing spyware on a computer**	**creating / distributing a computer virus**
manufacturing / selling fake drugs	**sending adware across the Internet**	**stealing credit card details**

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