

Australia broadband network under attack from birds

6th November, 2017



Australia's high-speed, state-of-the-art broadband network is under attack from thousands of birds. The birds doing the damage are Australia's ubiquitous and colourful cockatoos. They have taken a liking for chewing

the broadband cables that criss-cross Australian towns and cities. They are causing hundreds of thousands of dollars in damage to the cables. The National Broadband Network (NBN) company that maintains the fibre optic cables reports that they need to spend around \$60,000 each time they are called out to fix the cables. The birds' handiwork is also causing great frustration to Internet users across the country. Internet users have reported Internet outages and painfully slow speeds.

Cockatoos are a type of parrot which normally eats fruit nuts, wood and bark. A spokeswoman from NBN said she was at a loss as to why the birds had become partial to chewing the cables. She guessed that it was the colourful plastic that encased the power lines and broadband cables. She told reporters: "They are constantly sharpening their beaks and as a result will attack and tear apart anything they come across. Unfortunately, they've developed a liking to our cables." She joked: "You wouldn't think it was possible, but these birds are unstoppable when in a swarm. I guess that's Australia for you; if the spiders and snakes don't get you, the cockatoos will."

Sources: bbc.com / nation.com.pk / express.co.uk

Writing

The Internet is the greatest invention in human history. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

state-of-the-art / birds / broadband / cities / fibre-optic / handiwork / frustration / parrot / at a loss / chewing / power lines / result / swarm / joked / spiders / snakes

True / False

- Australia's Internet is being attacked by thousands of birds. T / F
- The birds that are attacking cables are not at all colourful. T / F
- The article said the birds have caused millions of dollars of damage. T / F
- The birds' singing is painful for people nearby. T / F
- An Internet company said she knew why birds are chewing cables. T / F
- The fibre-optic cables are inside colourful plastic cases. T / F
- The company said the birds sharpen their beaks on the cables. T / F
- The company said cockatoos will get you if spiders and snakes don't. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. state-of-the-art | a. typically |
| 2. ubiquitous | b. annoyance |
| 3. causing | c. always |
| 4. frustration | d. leading to |
| 5. outages | e. like |
| 6. normally | f. cutting-edge |
| 7. at a loss | g. power failures |
| 8. partial to | h. ever-present |
| 9. constantly | i. flock |
| 10. swarm | j. puzzled |

Discussion – Student A

- What do you think of the Internet?
- How does the Internet work?
- Are you happy with your connection speeds?
- What damage can birds do to the things around us?
- Is the Internet good value for money?
- What frustrations do you have with the Internet?
- What would life be like without the Internet?
- What do you do when the Internet is very slow?

Breaking News English - The Mini Lesson

Phrase Match

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Australia's high-speed, state-of-the-art | a. colourful cockatoos |
| 2. Australia's ubiquitous and | b. sharpening their beaks |
| 3. fibre- | c. slow speeds |
| 4. The birds' handiwork is also causing | d. liking to our cables |
| 5. Internet outages and painfully | e. the cockatoos will |
| 6. she was at a | f. great frustration |
| 7. the birds had become partial | g. to chewing the cables |
| 8. They are constantly | h. broadband network |
| 9. they've developed a | i. loss as to why |
| 10. if the spiders and snakes don't get you, | j. optic cables |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- What do you know about cockatoos?
- What can go wrong to cause problems with the Internet?
- How can the company solve this problem?
- Why isn't the whole of the Internet cable-less and wireless?
- What will the Internet be like in 20 years from now?
- What does the last line of the article mean?
- What questions would you like to ask the company?

Spelling

- high-speed, etats-fo-eth-rat broadband
- Australia's iiquuuotbs and colourful cockatoos
- cables that rcsis-osrsc Australian towns
- The birds' hndiwokar
- causing great toutrnirfas to Internet users
- Internet gouteas
- cockatoos are a type of rprtoa
- atalirp to chewing the cables
- plastic that esndcae the power lines
- snncltaty sharpening their beaks
- they've eddleovep a liking to our cables
- unstoppable when in a marws

Answers – Synonym Match

1. f	2. h	3. d	4. b	5. g
6. a	7. j	8. e	9. c	10. i

Role Play

Role A – Google

You think Google is the best website. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their websites. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): Amazon, Wikipedia or Facebook.

Role B – Amazon

You think Amazon is the best website. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their websites. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): Google, Wikipedia or Facebook.

Role C – Wikipedia

You think Wikipedia is the best website. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their websites. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): Amazon, Google or Facebook.

Role D – Facebook

You think Facebook is the best website. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their websites. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): Amazon, Wikipedia or Google.

Speaking – Sites

Rank these with your partner. Put the best at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|------------|-------------------------|
| • Google | • Twitter |
| • eBay | • Wikipedia |
| • Amazon | • BBC |
| • Facebook | • Breaking News English |

Answers – True False

a	T	b	F	c	F	d	F	e	F	f	T	g	T	h	T
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.