
Dima: Hi, welcome to this edition of 6 Minute English with me, Dima Kostenko

Rebecca: and me, Rebecca Byrne, hello. And today our topic is – virtual conflict, or e-wars.

Dima: E-wars? I don't think I've heard that one before – presumably it's one of the many words with the prefix 'e-' that have been mushrooming in recent years.

Rebecca: *that's right*

Dima: Rebecca, perhaps you could do me a favour and begin by explaining what that prefix means and where it comes from.

Rebecca: *explains (started with e-mail, short for electronic, or virtual mail; later began to mean anything that goes on online, in the cyberspace, giving rise to a great number of new nouns like e-books, e-tickets, e-commerce, even e-government)*

Dima: OK, it's true that in this series we regularly discuss all things digital, but why e-wars?

Rebecca: Well it's because recently some senior officials in the field of telecommunications have been giving a rather grim warning - that the next world war could take place online. One of them is the head of the International Telecommunication Union Dr Hamadoun Touré. He says cyber-attacks could potentially be as damaging as natural disasters - and that our increasing reliance on e-communications makes even the most developed countries vulnerable to an attack by online criminals. We'll hear from Dr Touré in a

moment but first, it's this week's question for you Dima. In the next extract Dr Touré mentions four e-words: e-commerce, e-government and two others. The question is: which one of the following three do you think he does NOT mention? Is it

- a) e-education;
- b) e-health or
- c) e-transportation?

Dima: *Guesswork*

Rebecca: We'll check your guess in a minute, once we've listened to Dr Touré. Don't forget to listen out for the four e-words, and also for the following language: 'a tsunami', which is a huge destructive wave that is usually produced as a result of an earthquake; and 'dependent on cyberspace', meaning completely relying on being connected to the online network'.

Dima: That's 'a tsunami', 'dependent on cyberspace' and four words with the prefix 'e-'. Ready? Here's Dr Touré:

Clip 1 0'17"

It's worse than a tsunami - look how dependent we are on the cyberspace today. If we are cut off from the network today, there are some patients that will die in the hospital. We will not have education without e-education, health without e-health, commerce without e-commerce and government without e-government.

Dima: Well he does talk about e-education, e-commerce, e-government and even e-health (whatever that means!) But there's no mention of e-transportation...
Which means that my earlier guess was right/wrong...

Rebecca: *congratulations/better luck next time*

Dima: Well, never mind e-transportation. You'd better tell me what we do about it – how do we protect ourselves from online attacks, or e-wars?

Rebecca: Well Dr Touré says there are a number of various safeguards already in place.

Dima: 'Safeguards' – in other words, security measures, or restrictions aimed at protecting someone from harm.

Rebecca: That's right. For example, it's already possible to track individual users through internet addresses, including those suspected of committing online crimes.

Dima: That's good to know, but I would think it's not always an easy task to determine straight away if someone's involved in cybercrime or not... My question is, isn't there a danger then that these restrictions – these safeguards – could sometimes be applied mistakenly?

Rebecca: Well Dr Touré specifically warns that any measures to protect against cybercrime must not lead to a curtailing of legitimate internet use. As you listen to him, look out for these word combinations: 'invading their privacy' ...

Dima: ...meaning watching and/or recording what people do in their own space and time;

Rebecca: 'denying them that basic human right' ...

Dima: ...that's not giving people the opportunity to enjoy what they are entitled to;

Rebecca: and – 'access to information' ...

Dima: ... meaning the means, or the possibility to find things out. Let's listen:

Clip 2 0'13"

We have to be sure that protecting people in cyberspace does not mean invading their privacy, does not mean denying them that basic human right of access to information.

Rebecca: That was the head of the International Telecommunication Union Dr Hamadoun Touré.

Dima: And you can find out more about this story – and about words with the prefix ‘e-‘ – simply by following the links from our website, bbclearningenglish.com. But before we go, here’s another chance to go through some of today’s key vocabulary.

Rebecca: We talked about the expression ‘dependent on cyberspace’, meaning relying a lot on being connected to the internet. We said that a cyber-attack could potentially be worse than ‘a tsunami’, a huge destructive wave that is usually produced as a result of an earthquake. Then there was the word ‘a safeguard’, meaning a security measure, sometimes of a restrictive nature. We also had these word combinations: ‘invading their privacy’, meaning watching and/or recording what people do in their own space and time; ‘denying them that basic human right’, which is another way of saying ‘not giving people the opportunity to enjoy what they are entitled to’; and – ‘access to information’, meaning the means, or the possibility to find things out. And of course we discussed some of the words that are formed by adding the prefix ‘e-‘, meaning electronic, or virtual, to an existing noun.

Dima: I'm afraid that's all we have time for today. Until next week.

Both: Goodbye!