

专八阅读训练: Multitasking, or Mostly Distracting?专四专八考试
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https://www.100test.com/kao_ti2020/644/2021_2022__E4_B8_93_E5_85_AB_E9_98_85_E8_c94_644897.htm 编辑点评：21世纪被信息技术所主宰。电脑，因特网，手机，电子游戏等等，都在竞相吸引人们的注意力。人是不是适合在同一时间做多件事情呢？这个问题，只有让专家们来为我们解答。 Children born in the 21st century come into an age dominated by information technology. Computers, the Internet, cell phones and video games all compete for the attention of young people, as well as many adults. And experts say that the constant use of such devices can affect the way people think. Its estimated Americans now consume three times as much information each day as they did in 1960, and surveys show that students in the U.S. spend at least six hours a day using electronic devices. Many of these students use several types of media at once. for example, listening to an iPod and working on the computer, while a television plays in the background. But this multitasking as its called may not be so new. In fact, some feel its as old as humanity itself. "Its my belief as a scientist that all humans are born multitaskers," says James Olds, a neuroscience professor at George Mason University in the U.S. "Its probably one of our species-defining characteristics." Olds says that multitasking has advantages that enhance survival. He cites the example of a commercial airline pilot, whose attention must be divided among many sources of information. "The pilot is now really sort of, master data controller, running a war room, if you will," he says. "The ability

to fly a modern commercial jet is tremendously advantaged by growing up in the digital age that we exist in now." But other researchers say that each time a person switches tasks, it takes twice as much time to complete the task. And Steven Yantis, a brain scientist at Johns Hopkins University, says that people who use several forms of media at once - so-called high media multitaskers are even more easily distracted. "The high media multitaskers were always in a state of looking at multiple sources of information simultaneously, and so they found it more difficult to ignore information that they knew was irrelevant," Yantis notes. "And that distracting information impaired their ability to focus on the task at hand." Scientists say that the human brain continues developing well into a person's 20s, but the effect of constant multitasking on brain development is not known. And like a computer, the human brain has a limited amount of information it can process at once, according to Steven Yantis. "Although there are billions and billions of neurons, so it has very high capacity, it's not infinite, it's limited, and so we are constantly having to make choices about what we're going to devote our mind to." When it comes to information found in an online or digital environment, that devotion may go too far. Researchers at the University of Connecticut found that seventh-grade students had difficulty discerning that a website showing a mythical endangered "Pacific Northwest Tree Octopus" was a hoax. Says James Olds, all but one of 50 children thought the information on the website was valid - a shocking number. "The danger of the net is that information doesn't have appropriate labels of credibility attached to it. We need

to figure out a way as a society to come up with methods, especially for our children, or rating the credibility of whats out there." So the question remains - are new media making people less attentive, less studious, or more gullible? Most experts say no, according to Lee Rainie of the Pew Research Center. "This isnt a technology question, this is a human question," says Rainie. "The Internet makes people more of what they already are. So if youre dumb, if youre prone to shortcuts, if you dont have a good (truth) detector in your head, the Internet will give you lots of information, lots of ways to divert yourself, lots of ways to make you more lazy than you already are. By the same token, if youre an information omnivore, if you really want to gain expertise in a subject, if you really want to study something in depth, youve never had a better environment than the online environment." Psychologists continue to study the effect of the Internet on learning, but initial research shows that Internet use can have a positive effect on standardized reading test scores of children. Unlike television, home Internet use is interactive, and experts say it encourages young people to be more self-directed learners. Notes: a war room: a room where strategic decisions are made (especially for military or political campaigns). Pacific Northwest Tree Octopus: The Pacific Northwest Tree Octopus was an internet hoax created in 1998 by Lyle Zapato. This fictitious endangered species of cephalopod was given the Latin name "Octopus paxarbolis" (which roughly means, "Pacific tree octopus").

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