

## **Cyberterrorism**

As computer systems are delegated more responsibility for the running of our day-to-day lives, they become vulnerable to terrorist attacks. Cyberterrorism is a term that arose to describe the infiltration of computer systems and the use of them by organizations or individuals for terrorist purposes. Cyberterrorism can work by disrupting the information systems that run public infrastructure (transportation, communications, and power), thereby creating alarm and panic. It can also involve the transmission of threats and propaganda using the anonymity of cyberspace.

**Further Discussion** Some people argue that cyberterrorism is, in fact, not terrorism because of the unlikelihood of cyberterrorism causing physical harm to anyone. Cyberterrorism, these people say, boils down to hacking computer systems and information warfare, but does not add up to a real threat. Others disagree, fearing cyberterrorism could result in a disastrous shutdown of infrastructure. What do you think?

**Activity: Opposing Viewpoints** In small groups, discuss the opposing viewpoints on cyberterrorism. Is it or is it not a valid terrorist threat? It may be helpful to look at other instances when computer systems have been manipulated (computer viruses, hacking, etc.) and the consequences of those manipulations.