Cicada 3301: Government spy agency or criminal network? Mystery internet puzzle reopens online

Past participants have speculated that the complex game could be part of a recruitment process for a criminal organisation or even a gateway into MI5
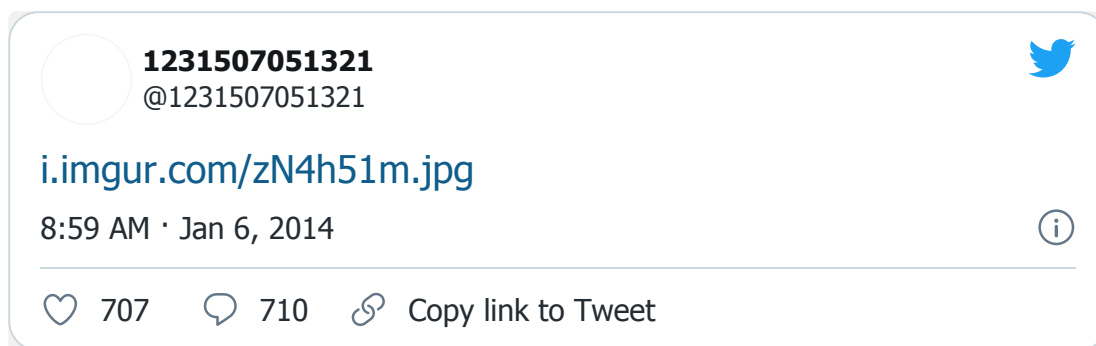
A mystery game for **serious computer buffs** has been relaunched online.

The Cicada 3301 internet puzzle, which now has a cult following, was unveiled in an **anonymous Twitter post** on January 6.

It was first hosted in 2012 when details appeared on internet forum site 4Chan.

A picture of a green moth made out of coding marks the entrance to this year's challenge, which will ask contestants to complete a series of advanced cryptographic tests.

Only advanced computer programmers will stand any chance of winning the competition, which requires knowledge of programmes such as OutGuess.

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@1231507051321

i.imgur.com/zN4h51m.jpg

8:59 AM · Jan 6, 2014   ⓘ

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A complex stenography tool, it is often used by criminals such as **terrorists and paedophiles** to hide data inside images.
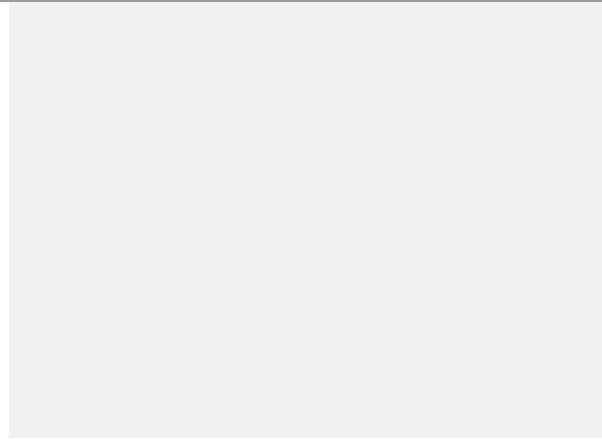
This year, knowledge of medieval Welsh poetry and classical music theory will also be an advantage.

Speaking to the BBC, computer scientist and former contestant professor Alan Woodward had several theories as to who is behind the mystery game.

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He said: "It could be a criminal organisation looking for recruits or it could be a start-up looking to set up a new crypto-currency, possibly even a bank."

"Lots of people think it could be a government agency and that looks reasonably likely as whoever is being recruited isn't telling anybody afterwards."

Conspiracy theories have also emerged about the cryptic graphic.

CICADA 3301 VIDEO

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