

How to stop HQ cheaters, according to people who learned how to cheat

Trivia app HQ's rise in popularity has meant more players, more prize money at stake, and inevitably, more cheaters. Some players resort to frantically googling the answers to the game's wide-ranging questions; some write scripts to google for them. But there's a way to stop players hacking the game, according to the very people who've learned how to beat the system.

Online, developers and hackers have begun sharing their hacks to better explain how these vulnerabilities could be fixed. Developer Stephen Cagnetta explained that he created a script that mirrored the phone's screen to a computer screen, translated the image to computer-readable text, and then googled the answer through one of three methods. One user who goes by AppleCrazy detailed on their blog a similar method of screen capture and automated googling.

According to Cagnetta, his script is effective enough to win "the majority of HQ games ... none of these approaches are fool-proof; however, when I run all three approaches simultaneously, I can get through all 12 questions for about 70-80% of the HQ videos." (He notes that his methods have mostly been tested on YouTube videos of the live game, since running scripts on the game would be against its terms and conditions.) If that sort of success doesn't impress you, consider that HQ gives out thousands of dollars a day to winners.

HQ can easily fix, or at least slow down, people like Cagnetta or AppleCrazy through a few changes. Cagnetta offers advice to the company to alter the game's interface to confuse the

character recognition his script uses to google answers, or to use these cheating scripts themselves to identify weak questions. As for the questions itself, HQ could always consider formats that are harder to find with a single google search – formats that ask players “which of these” or “what is this?” for example.

HQ is heading to Android next, which means its player-base will only grow. Now may be the best time to start cracking down on cheaters.

<https://www.theverge.com/2017/12/25/16817502/how-to-stop-hq-cheaters>