Internet Filters and Monitors

Opening Disclaimer: Because Internet filters are a good resource, we want to highlight what we think are some of the most helpful solutions currently available. Keep in mind that our list is not exhaustive. New tools and technology are invented every day. Inclusion on this list does not imply any endorsement by Katy ISD, Nottingham Elementary, or Kingsland Baptist Church. We recommend each family research what will best serve their family and technology needs.

QUSTODIO: Qustodio is one of the most solid Internet filters on the market and appears to be highly recommended by just about everyone who reviews it.

Works with:

Pros
- Strong content filtering: filters by category, browser independent, blocks anonymous proxies, filters HTTPS sites, evaluates web pages on a case-by-case basis
- Detailed activity log
- Extremely customizable time limits
- User-friendly: can set up and monitor activity from almost anywhere
- App blocking
- Facebook monitoring (but not Messenger)
- Location tracking
- Can read and block SMS (Android only)
- Child can press a panic button (Android only)
- Option to associate a profile or an entire device with a specific child

Cons
- Expensive
- Facebook is currently only social platform it reviews
- iOS version has more limits than Android version
- Antiquated online portal

Other info
- Free version protects one device, comes with web filtering, time quotas for activities, and records seven days of activity

Pricing
- Small Plan $54.95/year, 5 devices
- Medium Plan $96.95/year, 10 devices
- Large Plan $137.95/year, 15 devices

CIRCLE WITH DISNEY: Circle with Disney offers several parental control products. We recommend at least using the Circle Home device in conjunction with the companion app Circle Go. The reason is that Circle Home is a device you install that will filter all of the devices in your home, but Circle Go will protect your kids' devices when they leave the house. Note that Circle Home doesn't replace your router, but rather works with it.

Works with:

Pros
- Content filtering by category, browser independent, blocks anonymous proxies, doesn't overblock, protects all devices in the router's network
- Circle Go protects a child's device even if using cellular data or a friend's network
- Detailed activity log
- Time limits
- App blocking
- Circle Home is a good price
- Can pause the Internet
- Circle Home plus Circle Go is a unique model

Cons
- Circle Go currently only works with iOS
- Circle Go is easy to disable, but you'll be notified
- Confusing blocking messages appear when you access HTTPS sites
- No location tracking
- Circle detects all devices in your home, but it's confusing which ones it's talking about
- Assumes every device is used by one person

Other info
- Circle Go has a one-month free trial
- Can't use Circle Go without Circle Home

Pricing
- Circle Home $99 one-time fee
- Circle Go $4.99/month, 10 devices

KASPERSKY SAFEKIDS: Kaspersky Safe Kids is a well-rounded and highly affordable option for managing your children's Internet use.

Works with:

Pros
- Content filtering by category, option to warn about content instead of just blocking it, evaluates web pages on a case-by-case basis (but only on Windows currently), blocks anonymous proxies, filters content on all the major browsers, flexible options for limiting Internet access, real-time alerts
- Activity log is in-depth
- Time limits
- User-friendly
- App monitoring and blocking (not on iOS)
- Monitors games on iOS
- Location monitoring and geofencing
- Thorough and customizable alerts
- Unlimited devices and profiles
- Inexpensive

Cons
- Good browser filtering, but failed to block off-brand browser (one the reviewer coded himself)
- Limited social media monitoring

Other info
- Free version lets you manage online activity, apps and devices

Pricing
- $14.99/year, unlimited devices and child profiles

MOBICIP: Mobicip has an interesting model in that it's cloud-based and that, once you determine your rules for your children's devices, an agent enforces those rules. The solution's filtering abilities are strong, and although it has some limitations, Mobicip is solid option.

Works with:

Pros
- Content filtering by category, browser independent, blocks anonymous proxies, blocks HTTPS sites, evaluates web pages on a case-by-case basis, child can request access to certain pages
- Activity log
- Time scheduling
- New apps blocked by default till parent approves (Mobicip doesn't filter their content once approved)
- Filters YouTube videos, works better than YouTube's Restricted Mode
- Ability to whitelist/blacklist specific sites
- No limit to how many profiles you add

Cons
- Could be more user-friendly
- Time limits feature is minimal
- No social media monitoring (apart from YouTube)
- No ability to cap Internet use
- Some communication issues with console and local agent who helps manage the app
- Feature that blocks specific words often overblocks

Other info
- Free version supports limited content filtering

Pricing
- $39.99/year, 5 devices, unlimited profiles

OPENDNS HOME: We highly recommend using OpenDNS along with a parental control software product. Used alone, OpenDNS is limited. But the free version of OpenDNS is pretty comprehensive, and because it is a DNS solution, it will filter all devices on your network. This is advantageous because it can filter gaming consoles and other Internet-aware devices, such as iPods. So if you get an Internet filtering software and use it with OpenDNS, you willget the broader range of features that the software provides while covering more devices than software can protect.

Works with: All Devices

Pros
- Content filtering by category, blocks HTTPS sites and anonymous proxies (even at lowest filtering level), child has ability to request access to a site
- Activity log is detailed, but you can't break it down by device or user
- Ability to whitelist/blacklist specific sites
- Free version probably has all the features you would need

Cons
- No real-time analysis of content
- Extremely limited malware and phishing protection
- Reports show all URLs, even those that aren't websites
- Has none of the features offered by software (like real-time analysis of content, social media tracking, in-depth activity tracking, or real-time notification of problems).

Other info
- The VIP version retains activity logs for a year (vs. 2 weeks in the free version), allows your whitelists and blacklists to hold 50 URLs each (vs. 25 in the free version), and comes with a whitelist-only mode where users can only surf sites you've approved

Pricing
- Open DNS Home, Free
- Open DNS Home VIP, $19.95/year

NET NANNY: Net Nanny has extremely strong content filtering features. However, it is a bit expensive and its software needs to be updated.

Works with:

Pros
- Content filtering by category, option to warn about content instead of just blocking it, child can request access to blocked site, blocks HTTPS sites, blocks anonymous proxies, evaluates web pages on a case-by-case basis, customizable option for blocking profanity
- Activity log is very in-depth
- Time limits
- User-friendly
- Remote management and notifications of activity
- Ability to whitelist/blacklist specific sites
- Installing NetNanny on iOS doesn't count toward one of your licenses
- Can create child profiles (if child uses more than one device)

Cons
- Expensive
- No location monitoring
- iOS support is extremely limited
- Software needs to be updated
- No social media monitoring

Offer info
- No free version
- No free trial

Pricing
- 1 device, PC or Mac, $39.99
- Family Pass (includes iOS and Android):
- $59.99/year, 5 licenses
- $89.99/year 10 licenses
- $119.99/year 15 licenses

SYMANTEC NORTON FAMILYPREMIER: Norton Family Premier is an affordable solution with a wide range of features. We also love that the company encourages parents to have open and ongoing conversations with their kids.

Works with:

Pros
- Content filtering by category, has customizable options
- Activity log is detailed
- Time limits
- User-friendly
- App and messaging tracking (limited on iOS)
- Tracks YouTube and Hulu videos (but not videos on other online platforms)
- Location tracking
- Good web interface, can check on activity from any computer
- Child can request access to a site
- Affordable
- Relational model

Cons
- Doesn't currently work on Macs, limited features for iOS
- Advanced web tracking only possible through limited and easily disabled plugin
- Filter failed with some HTTPS sites and an anonymous proxy
- Doesn't block profanity if it's on a site that isn't in a restricted category
- Very limited social media supervision
- Doesn't monitor online gaming

Other info
- No free version
- 30-day free trial

Pricing
- $49.99/year (currently priced at $19.99 for the first year), unlimited devices

COVENANT EYES: Covenant Eyes is a good solution, but does lack some of the abilities of the best Internet filters available. We really wish it had the ability to monitor browsers independently and to filter secure sites. Points in its favor, however, are its strong emphasis on accountability and the extensive resources on its blog.

Works with:

Pros
- Content filtering based on six sensitivity ratings, can customize ratings, content filtering and blocking
- New VPN monitors more activity on iOS, such as Safari/Siri, YouTube, some apps; also forces safe search across all browsers
- Activity reporting sent to an accountability partner
- Time limits
- Panic button
- Strong customer support
- Can't uninstall without admin's permission
- Ability to whitelist/blacklist specific sites
- Relational model encourages accountability

Cons
- Features limited on Android
- No HTTPS filtering
- Have to use the CE browser to filter content, issues with effectively blocking Google images
- Limited monitoring features compared to other solutions
- No chat or email monitoring
- Android version difficult to use

Other info
- Specifically created to prevent porn use
- 30-day money back guarantee

Pricing
- Personal $11.99/month, unlimited devices, filtering is an extra $1.50/month
- Family $15.99/month, unlimited devices, no extra cost for filtering

LOCATEGY: Locategy is another solution that is a bit lacking in the area of content filtering, and it is mobile only. But if a primary concern is tracking your child's location in case of an emergency, this app is a good choice for you.

Works with:

Pros
- Content filtering by category, effective on the browsers it filters
- Activity log is basic
- App usage blocking and scheduling, remote app locking
- User-friendly
- Strong location tracking
- Remote wipe feature (if someone steals the phone)

Cons
- Expensive compared to similar products
- No browser independent filtering, only filters Chrome and Samsung browsers
- Can't block calls and messages
- No social media monitoring
- Limited features on child app
- Good iOS design, poor Android design

Other info
- Free model gives you 3 devices and the ability to block 1 app, reporting feature saves five days of data, app defines 2 places when geofencing

Pricing
- $20 for 3 device licenses
- $35 for 5 licenses
- $70 for 10 licenses

Additional Resources

"[20 Online Review Sites for Collecting Business & Product Reviews](#)," HubSpot

"[Bypassing content filters: How to see the web they don't want you to see](#)," PC World

"[5 Myths and Truths About Kids' Internet Safety](#)," Common Sense Media

"[What are some good rules for screen names and passwords?](#)" Common Sense Media

"[How can I make sure my kid isn't sharing too much on Facebook or Instagram?](#)" Common Sense Media

"[Google Family Link (for Android)](#)," *PC Mag*

"[ESET Parental Control (for Android)](#)," *PC Mag*

"[How to use parental controls on your child's iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch](#)," Apple Support

"[Set up parental controls](#)," Apple Support