

PARENTAL CONTROLS

Innocent searches online can lead to not so innocent results. If you are a parent, this presents a problem, as there are explicit, disturbing, and illegal sites on the web that you don't want your kids to encounter. Furthermore, with the ever-increasing number of devices that kids use to connect, you simply can't supervise every moment they're online on your own. But parental controls can help keep your child safe.

They can be used to block upsetting or harmful content, control in-app purchases or manage how long your child spends online. And the good news is parental controls are really easy to set up.

WHAT ARE PARENTAL CONTROLS?

They are softwares and tools which you can install on phones or tablets, games consoles or laptops – and even your home broadband.

You can also use them to help you block or filter the content your child sees when searching online. And family-friendly public WiFi can help when you're out and about.

Parental controls are also available to help you to:

- Plan what time of day your child can go online and how long for
- Stop them from downloading apps they're too young for
- Manage the content different members of the family can see.

Access scheduling is another very common feature. Some applications let parents set a weekly schedule for device usage, some control internet use in general, and others offer a combination of the two. A daily or weekly cap on internet usage can also be handy, especially if it applies to all your kids' devices.

So whatever your child is doing online, there's always a way that you can help keep them safe.

TYPES OF CONTROLS

Talk of 'controls' can sometimes be confusing. In essence, there are three types that parents need to be aware of:

- Network level controls are set on the hub or router and apply to all devices connected to that hub or router (covering your whole household).
- Device level controls are set on the device itself, such as a smartphone, and will apply regardless of how and where the device is connected to the internet.
- Application controls are set on the platform or application that is being used. Examples of this would be the settings applied to Google or YouTube. Again, these apply anywhere.

SO WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

Controls are not a single solution to staying safe online; talking to your children and encouraging responsible behavior is critical. However, controls are a vital first step to helping to protect your child online, and here seven simple things you can do:

1. **Set up home broadband parental controls:** make use of controls on your home broadband.
2. **Set controls on your search engine:** encourage your child always to use child-friendly search engines and activate and lock the safe search settings on the browsers and platforms they use.
3. **Make sure every device is protected:** controls should be installed on every device your child uses: mobile phone, tablet and games consoles (both home and handheld).
4. **Privacy settings:** activate the safety measures offered by different sites; social networking sites like Facebook have privacy settings that will help prevent your child seeing unsuitable advertising.
5. **Block pop-ups:** if you're worried about your children accessing inappropriate content though accidentally clicking on adverts in pop-ups, BBC Webwise has advice on how to stop these.
6. **Find good sites and agree on them as a family:** by talking to your child about their interests you can help them find suitable sites to visit and apps to use. Review these sites as they get older.
7. **Manage their use and access:** your child may be less likely to let you know they're distressed by something they've seen online if they think you'll take away their internet access but it may be appropriate to do this in some instances. Be aware of this when talking to them, and let them know they can talk to you or a trusted adult whenever they need to.

THE BEST PARENTAL CONTROL SOFTWARES 2018

1. **Symantec Norton Family Premier** - Norton Family's top-notch web interface and wealth of features make it easy for parents to track and manage their children's activity across their many devices.
2. **Kaspersky Safe Kids Review** - Kaspersky Safe Kids offers well-rounded, very affordable parental control and monitoring, and it doesn't limit the number of child profiles or devices you can cover.
3. **ContentWatch Net Nanny 7** - With configuration and reporting moved to the Web, ContentWatch Net Nanny 7 is fully at home in the modern multi-device world of parental control.
4. **Clean Router** - Have kids on the Web? Clean Router replaces your home router to apply parental control and monitoring to every device on your network.
5. **Circle With Disney** - The Circle with Disney security appliance, controlled by a simple mobile app, provides parental content filtering and time limits for every device in your home network.