

Table of Filtering Software Reviews

By David Burt, FilteringFacts.org

This database is intended to be a comprehensive index of published filtering product reviews since 1995, so please [send updates](#) and corrections. Most reviews are still available online and can be viewed by following the links.

Note to parents: Some of these reviews are of business products which are generally not available (or suitable for) home settings. Business filter reviews are noted in the “Publication” field.

Date	Publication	Title	Filters tested * = 1st place	Scoring	Verdict
Nov 2008	PC Magazine	CyberPatrol Parental Controls 7.7	Cyber Patrol	4 stars	CyberPatrol offers flexible and comprehensive parental control. Its IM filtering is innovative, though it needs some tuning. You can use it in home, school, library, or business settings.
Nov 2008	PC Magazine	Review: Net Nanny 6.0	Net Nanny	4.5 stars	Net Nanny does everything a parental-control utility should do. It also offers unique features like secure Web-traffic filtering and ESRB-based game control. Balancing privacy and security, it can record IM conversations only if they seem dangerous. E-mail alerts and full remote configuration let you manage wherever you are. Net Nanny remains our Editors' Choice for parental control.
Oct 2008	IT Pro (Business product)	ClearSwift MimeSweeper Review	ClearSwift MIMESweeper	5	Clearswift delivers strong web content filtering with an easily deployed appliance based solution. The use of rules and routes allows for tough policy based access controls and although policy scheduling has still yet to be implemented the ENW looks capable of enforcing a wide range of AUPs in the workplace.
Oct 2008	Wired	Safe Eyes is a Safe Bet for Home Internet Filtering	SafeEyes		Overall, if you are looking for internet blocking/filtering (parental control software), SafeEyes brings a good suite of capabilities along with a high degree of customization. The \$49.95 annual subscription is right in the middle of the pack of other software packages in this arena.
Sep 2008	Top Ten Reviews	2009 Internet Filter Software Product Comparisons	Net Nanny Safe Eyes CYBERSitter WiseChoice.net CyberPatrol MaxProtect FilterPak Netmop McAfee Norton	4 4 4 3.5 3.5 3.5 2.5 2.5 2 2	Internet filter software gives you the ability to control content displayed, block websites and set up passwords. Powerful services like email filtering, popup blocking and chat room monitoring are just some of the tools available with today's internet filter software, each designed to protect against and counteract the tactics of aggressive online porn companies.
Sep 2008	PC Magazine	Bit Defender Security Suite	Bit Defender		With the heuristic filtering turned off, the product won't block inappropriate Web sites. With it turned on, it will block tons of valid sites.

					If you want category-based filtering of inappropriate Internet destinations, turn off this feature and get a real stand-alone parental-control
July 2008	Filtering Facts	Review: Livia Web Protection offers the first-rate filtering of Websense for Parents	Livia Web Protection		For the parent who wants to have secure and robust filtering or monitoring in the home, this is definitely worth the \$4.95 per month. If what you are most concerned about is blocking adult content from your family, this is the product for you.
June 2008	CRN (Business product)	Mucking up Malware	Sophos WS1000 ContentProtect SonicWall	5 4 4	“This was a challenging comparison because all three products made a strong showing in testing. Each product did its job, namely filtering Web traffic and providing information on that traffic flowing in and out of the network. Yet, each also had unique features, interfaces and functionality.”
May 2008	Laptop	Parental Control Software	* Safe Eyes Net Nanny Webroot	4.5 4 3.5	“Safe Eyes’ easy-to-control interface and powerful controls, especially for social networking protection, will leave parents anxiety-free.”
April 2008	SC Magazine (Business product)	Web Content Management	* 8e6 Technologies Barracuda Web Filter Clearswift Cymphonix GFI WebMonitor IBM Proventia Web Pearl Echo Suite St. Bernard iPrism Trend Micro Websense Express	5 5 4 4 4 5 4 5 4 5	“The bottom line for this group is that you probably need it, you absolutely will benefit from it, and there are some precautions as you evaluate and purchase. Beyond a product’s feature set, you should consider the latency it adds into the network. Usually this is not great unless your policies are very complicated or badly written.”
Mar 2008	PC Magazine	12 Tools to Keep Kids Safe Online	Bsafe Online iShield 2.0 iShield Plus 2.0 Kidswatch Net Nanny 5.6 NoodleNet PC Pandora Safe Chat * Safe Eyes 5.0 Sentry At Home SnoopStick Webroot	3.5 3 2.5 3 4 3 3 1 4 2.5 3 3	“Look first for per-user configuration options, especially if you share a computer with the kids. You don’t want the software to monitor or control your own computer use, and the restrictions you’d choose for a 6-year-old are naturally different from those for a 16-year-old. Some products, like Webroot Parental Controls and PC Pandora, tie their configuration settings to Windows user accounts, which is fine if you use separate accounts for each user. Others, like Safe Eyes and NoodleNet, define program-specific accounts. This is better if the whole family uses one Windows account, but it does require a separate log-on to the parental-control system. Also, it’s possible that the kids may wind up using your grown-up no-restrictions account if you forget to log out. The most flexible products, like Net Nanny and Bsafe Online, define program-specific accounts that you can optionally tie to Windows user accounts.”
Feb 2008	PC Magazine (Business product)	Websense Express 1.0	Websense	4.5 stars	“If you want to know what your employees are doing on the Web but don’t want an app that adds a lot of management overhead, you can’t go wrong with Websense Express.”
Jan 2008	Filtering Facts	Review: OpenDNS Adult Site Blocking	OpenDNS		For the home user who wants to block out adult-oriented sites, this is a great product. Fast, high-quality filtering that’s always up-to-date on your computer with no latency and simple installation, and it costs nothing. But if you want to block more than just explicit sites, set time limits, filter e-mail, IM, etc., you will need to use other products in conjunction with

					OpenDNS.
Jan 2008	Choice	Test: Net filtering software	Cyber Patrol CYBERSitter Cyber Sentinel Filterpak Integard iProtect You K9 Web Protection NetMop NetNanny 5 Optenet Web Filter ParentalControl Bar Parental Filter Safe Eyes (Mac) Safe Eyes (PC) We-Blocker		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Net filtering can help prevent children from accessing undesirable web content. • Net filters aren't foolproof and may not block all types of content. • They can mistakenly filter out 'safe' content and sites. • They're not a substitute for proper parental supervision. • Some free software can perform as well as commercial programs.
Dec 2007	SC Magazine (Business product)	Websense Express 1.0	* Websense	5 stars	"Websense Express shows that small businesses on a tight budget no longer have to rely on scaled-down web-content filtering solutions. The additional application filtering features make it even better value"
Dec 2007	Information Week (Business product)	Filtering the Malicious Web	Webgate		"Webgate is easy to deploy and configure, even when enabling advanced features. Detection and blocking features worked as advertised, with minimal configuration. The product successfully detected and stopped malware. The largest downside is that the spyware removal tool only works with Internet Explorer. Its file leakage feature is too blunt to be useful."
Nov 2007	GCN (Business product)	GCN Lab Test: Web-content-filtering appliances	* ContentWatch ThreatWall IronPort iPrism WatchGuard WebGate		"Although some came close, none of the filters performed perfectly. Any appliance could be adjusted to near-perfect operation for an organization willing to devote enough time and effort, but we were interested in how the devices' out-of-the-box category definitions fared."
Sep 2007	Computer Shopper	Parental Control Software	* Crawler Net Nanny 5.6 CyberPatrol 7.6 Guardware iShield Safe Eyes 5.0 Pearl Echo CYBERSitter 9.0 Centipede FilterPak	5 4 4 3 3 3 3 2	A good program will run in the background without the user being aware of it, but will give you the option of warning the user when he is doing something he shouldn't. It will also collect information in the form of a log, allowing you to see exactly what sites are being accessed and making it possible to trace a user's web activity. The software should also let you block or unblock specific sites. Finally, parental control software should be easy to use - otherwise you just won't use it, or you won't use it properly.
June 2007	SC Magazine (Business product)	Web Content Filtering 2007	* 8e6 Aladdin eSafe Barracuda Clearswift Network Composer Pearl Echo Suite	5 stars 4 stars 5 stars 3 stars 4 stars 4 stars	"Our overall impression is that web filtering products have come a long way in a short time. They are beginning to show a level of maturity that fits well as a countermeasure to some of the most pervasive security problems we experience today."

			St. Bernard iPrism SurfControl Websense Webwasher	4 stars 4 stars 4 stars 5 stars	
Dec 2006	New Man Magazine	Zapping Porn	* BSafe Safe Eyes Content Watch iShield eBlaster		“Internet filters help weed out this content. But after testing the five most popular blockers, we found that some software tools work better than others.”
Jan 2006	Network Computing (Business product)	The Fix Is In: Filtering Workplace Web Use	* Websense SmartFilter Iprism		“While all three of the products covered here can be used to control Web access by content category and content type, the most straightforward solution for this problem was Websense Enterprise.”
Aug 2006	Web User	Internet Filtering Roundup	* Cyber Patrol 7.6 McAfee Privacy CyberSitter 9.0 Bright Filter Safe Eyes 2006 Net Nanny 5.1	5 stars 4 stars 3 stars 3 stars 3 stars 2 stars	
Nov 2006	Top Ten Reviews	Internet Filer Review	* Content Protect CyberSitter Net Nanny Cyber Patrol Filter Pak Cyber Sentinel McAfee Norton Security Cyber Snoop Child Safe	4 stars 4 stars 3 stars 3 stars 2 stars 2 stars 2 stars 2 stars 1 stars 1 stars	“With Internet filter software and proper supervision, parents can keep their families safe and sound from the ever-present problem of online pornography.”
Nov 2006	PC Magazine	Review: Webroot Child Safe	Webroot Child Safe	4 ½ stars	“It’s very, very good at the important things—controlling how much time kids spend on the computer and where they can go on the Internet.”
Mar. 2006	PC PRO	Labs: Internet Filtering Software	* CyberPatrol 7.5 Guardware iShield CYBERSitter 9 Net Nanny 5.1.2 Cyber Snoop 4.0	5 stars 3 stars 3 stars 3 stars 1 star	“So, the bottom line is that internet filtering software can certainly be one line of defence when it comes to preventing access to certain aspects of the online world, but it’s not a cure-all.”
Mar 2006	Consumer Guide	Web filtering review	* SafeBrowse 2006 Content Protect 2.0 CyberSitter 9.0 * Cyber Patrol 7.5	4 stars 2 stars 3 stars 4 stars	
Feb 2006	Web User	Review: Safe Surf	Safe Surf	4 stars	“In testing SurfSafe, we found that in general it did a good job of determining the type of content that was suitable for the selected age group.”
July,	PC Magazine	Buying Guide: Parental	*PC Moderator	4 ½ stars	“Most of these programs filter HTML traffic and block access to Web sites

2006		Controls?	Safe Eyes 2006 * ContentProtect iShield Chaperone Pro 5.0	4 ½ stars 3 ½ stars 3 ½ stars 1 ½ stars	that match from a dozen-odd to 40 or more specific categories.”
June, 2005	Consumer Reports	“Filtering software: Better, but still fallible”	* Safe Eyes MSN (9.1) CyberPatrol 7.0 Norton Sec. 2005 McAfee Privacy 7 CyberSitter 9.4	Very Good Very Good Very Good Good Very Good Very Good	“All of the products tested were very good or excellent at blocking pornography...The worst performer blocked 88 percent...we found that the software isn’t very effective at blocking sites promoting hatred, illegal drugs, or violence.”
June 2005	PC Magazine	Review: Cyber Patrol 7	Cyber Patrol 7	4 stars	“CyberPatrol 7 delivers very good filtering that parents can use to help control and monitor kids' PC usage. The filtering can be defeated at times by a determined user.”
July 2005	Web User	Review: Content Protect	ContentWatch Content Protect	3 stars	“ContentProtect does its job extremely well. Its context-based approach ensures that unsuitable material is almost always forbidden.”
March, 2004	PC Magazine (Business product)	“Web Content Filtering: Don't Go There”	Setian SurfControl 4.5 Web Inspector 7.0 * Websense 5.1 8e6 R3000 St. Bernard iPrism Verso NetSpective	4 stars 4 stars 1 star 4 stars 3 stars 3 stars 3 stars	“On the whole, the products did well, but the occasional piece of flesh did get through, and we could shop at esoteric little sites throughout the Web even when the products were set to block shopping.”
Aug, 2004	PC Magazine	Internet Filters	Cyber Patrol Cybersitter EnoLogic iProtect Net Nanny Norton Safe Eyes	3 stars 4 stars 3 stars 4 stars 3 ½ stars 3 stars 2 ½ stars	
Nov 2004	eWeek (Business product)	Websense Enterprise 5.5	Websense		“Websense Enterprise 5.5 caught and blocked access to every phishing site that we attempted to visit during more than three days of testing.”
July, 2003	PC Magazine	Parental Guidance Suggested	Cyber Patrol * Cyber Sitter Kidsnet McAfee Norton PAL	4 stars 5 stars 3 stars 4 stars 2 stars 2 stars	“There's no substitute for supervision, but the following software can help protect your children—when you're watching and when you're not.”
Aug, 2002	Web User	Review: WeBlocker	We Blocker	4 stars	“All the test sex sites were blocked, however, as were downloads and one of our sick sites.”
Aug 2002	eWeek (Business)	Websense Checks Mobile Code	Websense		“During tests, we found Premium Group III was very helpful in blocking and alerting us when users attempted to access sites that were blocked.”

	product)				
Aug 2002	Web User	ICRA filter	ICRA filter	3 stars	"The lack of self-regulation online means ICRAfilter is a bit hit and miss, leaving only the outright block and allow functions to operate with maximum efficiency."
July, 2001	MacWorld	Where don't you want to go today?	Content-Barrier, KidSafe AOL 5.0		"The results? Either the Web is a lot more risqué than we imagined, or Internet-filtering software needs a healthy dose of parental common sense to be truly helpful."
Nov 2001	PC Magazine (Business product)	Content Filtering Par Excellence	Websense	4 stars	"We weren't able to fake out Websense filtering with a random sampling of sites."
Sept 2001	PC Magazine	Clean it Up!	AOL Cyber Patrol 5.0 Cybersitter 2001 McAfee Internet Net Nanny 4.1 Norton Security Web Inspector SuperScout SurfinGate 5.6 8e6 R2000L St. Bernard NetSpective	3 stars 4 stars 4 stars 3 stars 3 stars 2 stars 4 stars 4 stars 5 stars 3 stars 5 stars 4stars	"In testing, most products blocked more than 85 percent of objectionable content—good enough to make a serious dent in inappropriate Internet usage."
March, 2001	Consumer Reports	"Digital Chaperones for Kids"	AOL Cyber Patrol 4 CyberSitter 2000 CyberSnoop Internet Guard Dog Net Nanny 4 Norton Sec. 2001	Very Good Good Good Poor Fair Poor Good	"Filtering software is no substitute for parental supervision. Most of the products we tested failed to block one objectionable site in five."
Jan, 2001	PC World	Keep an Eye on Your Child's Net Habits	Net Nanny		"In testing, Net Nanny blocked unsuitable content fairly well and appropriately."
Feb 2001	eWeek (Business product)	SmartFilter 3.0	SmartFilter		"We were impressed with the quick response from SmartFilter when we tried to access Web sites that were in the "Deny" ACL."
April, 2000	PC Magazine	Parental Filtering	X-Stop 3.04 SOS KidProof eyeguard 1.02 CYBERSitter Cyber Sentinel Exotrope BAIR	3 stars 3 stars 2 stars 5 stars 4 stars 5 stars	"Regardless of which you choose, once you install a parental filtering utility, your kids can explore the world of the Web without wandering into a virtual red-light district."
May, 2000	InfoWorld (Business product)	WebWasher offers strong, flexible filtering	Webwasher		

Feb, 2000	Network Computing (Business product)	Regulating Web Surfing	SurfControl Elron Little Brother SmartFilter Iprism WebSense N2H2		"Our test results showed that network administrators can choose from many effective content-monitoring solutions capable of stifling the most adamant of browsers."
April 2000	Internet Week	Content Security	Cyber Patrol		"Cyber Patrol Proxy for Microsoft's Proxy Server does an excellent job of blocking undesired sites."
May, 1999	PC Magazine	Net guards	Cyber Patrol 4.0 Cyber Sentinel Cyber Snoop 3.0 CyberSitter 99 Net Nanny 3.1 SOS KidProof SurfWatch 3.0 Web Chaperone		"None of these packages are foolproof, and it still must be noted that parental supervisors offer the best level of protection against adult material circulating on the Net."
Feb 1998	InfoWorld	Cyber Sentinel 1.4	Cyber Sentinel		"Cyber Sentinel proved quite adept at flagging all of my attempts at accessing offensive material."
Nov 1998	InfoWorld	SOS Pro	SOS Pro		
Oct 1998	Network World (Business product)	Where do you think you're going?	LittleBrother Pro WebSense WizGuard SOS NNPro.		"All the products with predefined databases allow you to customize their lists, but we found that locating inappropriate sites the vendors didn't include was a challenge."
May, 1997	PC Magazine	Monitor a Child's Access	Cyber Patrol Cyber Sentinel Cyber Snoop Cybersitter 97 Net Nanny SurfWatch Time's Up! WatchDog WebChaperone X-Stop		"Our testing confirms that these packages principally block sites with pornography, obscenity, and sexually explicit content--and they do a pretty good job."
Dec 1997	Internet Magazine	Policing the Net	Bess Cyber Patrol, CyberSitter CyberSnoop SafeSurf SurfWatch WebSense X-Stop		

Nov 1997	MacWorld	Internet Content Filters	Cyber Patrol SurfWatch X-stop	4 stars 4 stars 3 stars	"All the products lived up to filtering expectations, staying out of the way except when necessary to block access."
April, 1997	PC Magazine	"Filtering utilities: seven parental-control software tools"	Cyber Patrol Cybersitter Cyber Snoop Net Nanny Rated-PG SurfWatch X-Stop	Good Excellet Good Excellent Good Fair Fair	"These tools don't take the place of vigilance or simple common sense but allow parents to give their children the freedom to explore the Internet in relative safety."
May 1997	Consumer Reports	Is your kid caught up in the Web?	CyberSitter Net Nanny SurfWatch Cyber Patrol		"None is totally effective."
Aug. 1997	InfoWorld	WebSense sets up a flexible line of defense	Websense		"Every time I tried to access a blocked site, I was presented with my customized "access denied" message."
Nov 1997	Computer Shopper	Cybersitter 97 Makes the World (Wide Web) a Safer place	CyberSitter		"For those times when you need a quick way to tame the World "Wild" Web for young cyber surfers, Cybersitter 97 is a good start"
April 1997	PC Week	Packages keep close eye on Internet use	Websense		"But while the filters blocked obvious sites, such as Playboy, we could easily get to other pornographic sites by going to the picture indexes at the Yahoo site."
Oct 1997	PC World	The Smut Stops Here: or Does it?	SurfWatch CyberPatrol Net Shepherd Net Nanny Cyber Sitter		"Internet-blocking software is neither as easy to use nor as foolproof as parents and developers would like... Among the five programs we tested, two (Cybersitter and SurfWatch 1.6) effectively filtered out all 10 of our bellwether adult-oriented pages."
Sept 1996	Internet World	Safe Computing	InterGo Cyber Patrol, Net Nanny Net Shepherd Specs for Kids CyberSitter Surfwatch	Excellent Excellent Fair Fair Excellent Good Fair/Poor	"While each of the products is sold for the explicit purpose of blocking objectionable material, only three (Cyber Patrol, InterGo, and Specs for Kids) are able to do that with reasonable certainty."
Sept 1995	PC Magazine	Three cybersmut censors try to clean up the Internet	Cyber Patrol Net Nanny SurfWatch		"In the end, none of the cybersmut censors are totally reliable at preventing access to questionable resources."

