

Instant Message Parental Controls Product Comparison 2010

Overview

All of the products in this chart except for SafeChat include management of IM as part of a broader Internet parental controls package. There is really no reason to buy a stand-alone IM parental control product unless IM is the only program you want to manage. Most of the products in this chart offer the ability to either block or monitor IM programs. Price is based on the annual cost for subscription and software.

We Recommend:

- Ages up to 7:** IM is generally not appropriate for children in this age group.
- Ages 8 to 10:** IM is generally not appropriate for children in this age group.
- Ages 11 to 13:** Contact management with monitoring.
- Ages 14 to 17:** Monitoring as appropriate.

Important Features

- ✓ **Auto Alert.** Can be programmed to send automatic e-mail alerts triggered by specific events, such as viewing an inappropriate IM message.
- ✓ **Block Private Info.** Can be configured to block the transmission of private information such as name, phone number, etc. via IM.
- ✓ **Contact Management.** Control over who can contact children via IM.
- ✓ **Block All IM.** Allows the blocking of Instant Messaging programs.
- ✓ **Record Chats.** Can record messages sent and received by Instant Messaging programs, such as Windows Live IM, Yahoo IM, AOL, etc.
- ✓ **Multi Profile.** Allows for the creation of multiple user profiles with different levels of filtering, blocking, and monitoring.
- ✓ **Filter Words.** Can block inappropriate words or phrases in chats.
- ✓ **Time Mgmt.** Ability to limit Internet and/or computer use to preset times.

Product	Average Reviews (w/ links)	Cost (USD)	Multi profile	Time Mgmt	Auto Alert	Stealth Mode	Block Private Info	Contact Mgmt	Block all IM	Records Chats	Filter words	My Space IM	AIM	Yahoo	MSN (Live)	ICQ	Google Talk	Vista	XP	Mac
Net Nanny	★★★★☆	\$49.95	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Content Barrier	★★★★☆	\$49.95	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Cyber Patrol	★★★★☆	\$39.95	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
McAfee Family	★★★★☆	\$39.99	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
Norton Family	★★★★☆	FREE	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
PC Tattle Tale	★★★★☆	\$49.95	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Safe Eyes	★★★★☆	\$49.95	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Spector Pro	★★★★☆	\$99.95	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
B-Secure	★★★★½	\$49.95	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
CyberSitter	★★★★½	\$39.95	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Guardian	★★★★½	\$39.95	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
IamBigBrother	★★★★½	\$29.95	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
KidsWatch	★★★★	\$45.95	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
PC Pandora	★★★★	\$69.95	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Sentry	★★★★	\$47.88	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
SafeChat *		\$34.95	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
WebWatcher		\$97.00	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

* SafeChat is a "stand-alone" products that only manages instant messaging and do not perform other functions.