

Media Players Parental Controls Product Comparison 2010

Overview

Media players such as the iPod were originally designed to play music files, so the only parental concern was restricting music with explicit lyrics. However, the newest generation of media players are now packed with features that allow the playing of movies and in some cases Internet access. Of the four most popular media player manufacturers, only Microsoft's Zune and Apple's iPod offer any parental controls at all. Because media players are a rapidly evolving technology, parental controls are still catching up with the new features.

We Recommend:

Ages up to 7: Media players are generally not appropriate for children in this age group.

Ages 8 to 10: Make sure the media player does not have Internet access and block explicit lyrics with music rating enforcement.

Ages 11 to 13: Make sure the media player does not have Internet access and block explicit lyrics with music ratings enforcement.

Ages 14 to 17: Music ratings enforcement and purchase management.

Important Features

- ✓ **Auto Alert.** Can be programmed to send automatic e-mail alerts triggered by specific events, such as viewing an inappropriate web page.
- ✓ **Block Communications.** Allows the blocking of chat and other contact through a media player.
- ✓ **Block Internet.** Block all online access
- ✓ **Block Private Information.** Can be configured to block the transmission of private information such as name, phone number, etc.
- ✓ **Block Purchases.** Can be configured to block purchasing games, etc. on line.
- ✓ **Contact Management.** Control over who can contact children through the media player.
- ✓ **Music Rating Enforcement.** Allows the restriction of movies and music based on ratings systems.
- ✓ **Time Management.** Ability to limit media player use to preset times.
- ✓ **TV/Movie Rating Enforcement.** Ability to block movies and TV based on ratings systems.
- ✓ **Web Filter.** Includes a web filter for inappropriate content if the media player includes a web browser.

| Product | Time Mgmt | Auto Alert | Contact Mgmt | Block Private Info | Music Rating Enforce | Block Internet | Block Communication | Monitor | Web filter | TV/Movie Rating Enforcement | Block Purchases |
|--------------------------------|-----------|------------|--------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------------|---------------------|---------|------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| Apple iPod | No | No | No | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No | Yes | Yes |
| Microsoft Zune | No | No | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | NA | Yes | Yes |
| Sandisk Sansa | No | No | No | No | No | No | No | No | NA | No | No |
| Creative Zen | No | No | No | No | No | No | No | No | No | No | No |