

Overview

All popular search engines such as Google, Bing, and Yahoo offer parental controls, which typically block search results based on keywords and using site black lists. The filtering of adult content by the major search engines tends to be effective, but the downside is these controls can be easy to disable. Google and Yahoo offer password protection setting for filtered search, which is generally effective for younger users but is fairly easy for a knowledgeable teen to disable. Additionally, safe search settings only apply to the Internet browser you apply them to, so if you have both Internet Explorer and Firefox, you'll need to configure search settings in both browsers. If it's important to you to really "lock in" safe search settings, a number of parental control software products such as Net Nanny and Safe Eyes offer this ability. Another option is to direct children to "walled garden" kids search engines where only pre-screened, age-appropriate sites are displayed in search results. The drawback of "walled gardens" is that a lot of good content is going to be excluded.

We Recommend:

Ages up to 7: Direct children to kids search engines, such as Kids.Yahoo.com
 Ages 8 to 10: Use locked down filtered searches, preferably with a filtering product.
 Ages 11 to 13: Lock down filtered search engines with a filtering product
 Ages 14 to 17: Lock down filtered search engines with a filtering product or monitor use.

Important Features

- ✓ **Block Explicit Words Being Entered.** Search engine blocks the user from searching on explicit words or phrases.
- ✓ **Block Results.** Search engine does not show explicit results.
- ✓ **Filter Settings.** Search engine offers a choice of filtering settings, typically "Strict," "Moderate," and "No Restrictions."
- ✓ **Password Protection.** Ability to fix settings with a password.
- ✓ **No Override Prompt.** When a search display is filtered, the search engine displays a prompt asking the user if they want to override.
- ✓ **Multi-Browsers Settings.** Ability to lock the search engine settings so they cannot be overridden by switching browsers
- ✓ **Pre-screened Content.** Search results are limited to pre-approved, appropriate content.

Product	Blocks Explicit Words Being Entered	Block Explicit Results	Filter settings	Filtered Image search	Filtered text search	Filtered video search	Password Protect	Multi-Browser Settings	Pre-screened Content
Ask	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
AOL	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Bing	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Google	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Yahoo	Limited	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
AskKids.com	Yes	Yes	NA	Yes	Yes	Yes	NA	NA	Some
Fact Monster	No	Yes	NA	NA	Yes	NA	NA	NA	All
Safe Search Kids	Yes	Yes	NA	NA	Yes	NA	NA	NA	Some
Kids.AOL.com	Yes	Yes	NA	NA	Yes	NA	NA	NA	All
Kids.Yahoo.com	Yes	Yes	NA	NA	Yes	NA	NA	NA	All