Parental Controls Product Reviews 2010

Overview

Reliable independent product reviews are an essential tool for evaluating parental controls.   Included in this summary are all reviews of parental control products since 2007 appearing in publications such as PC Magazine, Mac World, and Computer Shopper, as well as well-established review websites such as Top Ten Reviews. The products are ranked by an average review score, which is adjusted to a 5 star scale. Not all product reviews are given ranks, and in these cases the products are listed alphabetically.

Product Categories

Reviews: Internet Parental Controls
Reviews: Kid Safe Browsers
Reviews: Mobile Phone Parental Controls

All Products:

BitDefender	Blue Coat K-9	BSecure	Buddy Browser
CA Internet Sec.	ChatWatch	ContentBarrier	Cyber Patrol
Cyber Sitter	D-Link	FilterPak	FSecure
IamBigBrother	IBoss	IMView	IShield
Kajeet	Kaspersky	KidRocket	KidView
Kido'Z	KidZui	KidsWatch	McAfee Family
McAfee Sec	MobiCIP	MyKidisSafe	Net Nanny
Norton Sec	Norton Family	PC Pandora	PeanutButterPC
PureSight	Safe Chat	Safe Eyes	Safe Eyes Mobile
Smobile Sentry	Spector Pro	Trend Micro	WebRoot

Reviews:	Internet Parental Controls
Content Barrier Average ★★★★	MacWorld, Aug 2008 (Full Review) (★★★★ of 5) **Summary:** If you have a hard time keeping up with your kids and maintaining Parental Controls, ContentBarrier X4 can be a big help. Computer Active, Oct 2007 (Full Review) (★★★★ of 5) **Summary:** The software offers an impressive degree of control without overwhelming the user with advanced settings and unnecessary fine-tuning, which makes it very easy to use.
Cyber Patrol Average ★★★★	Computer Shopper, Sep 2007 (Full Review) (★★★★ of 5) **Summary**: Apart from one or two small glitches this is a good program, but it's not as good as some others. Top Ten Reviews, Nov 2008 (Full Review) (★★★ of 4) **Summary:** Overall, CyberPatrol offers an easy to use filtering solution with quite a bit of versatility and utility. The software isn't the best available, but has a unique combination of features and abilities that make it a good choice for effective internet filtering for the whole family. PC Magazine, Nov 2008 (Full Review) (★★★★ of 5) **Summary:** 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. It's an especially good choice for school or library.

McAfee Family Protection Average ★★★★	[Web User, Oct 2009 (Full Review)](#) (★★★★ of 5) **Summary:** Products like this will never be perfect. The problem is that for every site on the 'block' list, there will be others that have yet to be identified. But on the whole, Family Protection does a good job of preventing access based on the administrator's criteria. [Computer Shopper, June 2009 (Full Review)](#) (7.7 of 10) **Summary:** McAfee Family Protection lacks some advanced options parents might expect, but its attractive price may be enough to sway them. [PC Pro, Dec 2009 (Full Review)](#) (★★★★★ of 6) **Summary:** The blocking tools offer impressive flexibility. Our teenage tester was thwarted from accessing porn via Google Images, nor could he perform searches for sexually-explicit material.
Net Nanny Average ★★★★	[PC Magazine, Feb 2010 (Full Review)](#) (★★★★½ of 5) **Summary:** Net Nanny remains PCMag's Editors' Choice for traditional parental control. It does everything you'd expect and goes beyond the competition in real-time per-page content analysis and resistance to attack by budding hackers. [PC Magazine, Feb 2008 (Full Review)](#) (★★★★ of 5) **Summary:** Net Nanny 5.6 is powerful and flexible. Its content filtering, IM monitoring and time scheduler are hardened, so kids can't circumvent them, and the Flash-based activity reports are outstanding. [Computer Shopper, Sep 2007 (Full Review)](#) (★★★★ of 5) **Summary**: This is a good program and passed all our tests, but it can be overly restrictive. [PC Magazine, Nov 2008 (Full Review)](#) (★★★★½ of 5) **Summary:** 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. Editors' Choice. [Top Ten Reviews, Nov 2008 (Full Review)](#) (★★★★ of 4) **Summary:** ContentWatch offers Net Nanny with the cutting edge technology to create the ultimate internet safety software. Net Nanny has combined all the right features (and then some) in an easy-to-use internet filtering solution. Net Nanny is the best. [Computer Shopper, May 2009 (Full Review)](#) (8.5 of 10) **Summary**: If you need help controlling your child's Net access, Net Nanny can provide an abundance of tools, though you'll have to purchase a yearly subscription for each PC you want to cover. [Laptop, May 2008 (Full Review)](#) (★★★★ of 5) **Summary:** Although it's more difficult to configure than other parental control programs, Net Nanny offers a very good array of protective tools for children. [Mac Life, Oct 2009 (Full Review)](#) (★★★ of 5) **Summary:** Net warden? Maybe, but you can decide how intrusive you need the app to be. And with the Net Nanny securely in place, parents can go back to doing whatever it was they were doing while their children surf the Web safely.

	[Web User, July 2009 (Full Review)](#) (★★★★★ of 5) **Summary:** Net Nanny is synonymous with parental control software and rightly so – it's as good as these things get.
Online Family. Norton Average ★★★★	[PC Magazine, May 2009 (Full Review)](#) (★★★★ of 5) **Summary**: This free Web-based product has everything you'd expect in a parental-control system and more. It blocks bad sites, controls time on the computer, supervises chat, and even watches social network use on all your PCs and Macs. Settings are stored in the cloud, making remote configuration and reporting simple. [BusinessWeek, July 2009 (Full Review)](#) (★★ ½ of 5) **Summary:** Simply designed site lets parents monitor a variety of surfing activities for all in the household. Default settings are restrictive, and unblocking sites can take hours. The software is free for the rest of the year, so it's worth a try despite some drawbacks [Computer Shopper, May 2009 (Full Review)](#) (8.4 of 10) **Summary**: Though it lacks some of the advanced features found in the leading parental-control programs, OnlineFamily.Norton moves beyond the competition in encouraging communication between parents and kids. [PC Pro, Dec 2009 (Full Review)](#) (★★★★★★ of 6) **Summary:** The blocking tools offer impressive flexibility. Our teenage tester was thwarted from accessing porn via Google Images, nor could he perform searches for sexually-explicit material
PureSight Average ★★★★	[Computer Shopper, Aug 2009 (Full Review)](#) (8 of 10) **Summary:** PureSight enters the parental control software competition with a powerful filtering engine and an easy-to-understand interface.

Safe Eyes Average ★★★☆	PC Magazine, Feb 2010 (Full Review) (★★★☆ of 5) Summary: Safe Eyes 6.0 is a very good parental control system. If you need a product that works on both Macs and PCs, Safe Eyes is your best choice. Laptop, May 2008 (Full Review) (★★★ ½ of 5) **Summary:** Safe Eyes' easy-to-control interface and powerful controls, especially for social networking protection, will leave parents anxiety-free. PC Magazine, Jun 2007 (Full Review) (★★★★ of 5) **Summary**: Safe Eyes 5 does everything you'd expect a parental control utility to do and more. Its Web-based protection covers up to three computers (PC or Mac) and allows remote management from a browser. And this is one tough cookie. The kids won't break its protection. Computer Shopper, Sep 2007 (Full Review) (★★★ of 5) **Summary**: As with the other programs here, Safe Eyes lets you block or allow specific programs and websites. This feature worked fine, too. This is a good piece of software. Wired, Oct 2008 (Full Review) **Summary:** 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. Top Ten Reviews, Nov 2008 (Full Review) (★★★ ½ of 5) **Summary:** Safe Eyes has a lot convenient features to protect your family, organized in an attractive interface. Whether you are using it in a home setting or for a business, Safe Eyes is easily scalable to the number of people you want to protect and monitor. It's also easy to customize and use from anywhere.
Spector Pro Average ★★★☆	Mac Life, July 2009 (Full Review) (★★★★★ of 5) **Summary:** Spector Pro's software license agreement requires you to inform anyone using the Mac that their activities are being monitored—this is powerful software, so don't use it for evil! But to keep an eye on who's talking to your kids online or which websites your employees are visiting, Spector Pro just works. PC Magazine, Jul 2009 (Full Review) (★★★★ of 5) Summary: While it does include features related to controlling what your kids do on the computer, Spector Pro's real power is its comprehensive activity monitoring. Mom and Dad can view surfing history, IM conversations, passwords, e-mail—everything! MacWorld, Jun 2009 (Full Review) (★★★ ½ of 5) **Summary:** Spector Pro mac 2009 is a powerful keylogging tool with the additional capability of giving you a visual representation of everything that is being done on a monitored computer at any point in time. Top Ten Reviews, Mar 2009 (Full Review) (★★★★ of 4) **Summary:** Spector Pro can help you effectively and efficiently monitor all online activity. With the best lineup of features and great tools, Spector Pro is a complete monitoring software solution.

	Tech Radar, Jun 2009 (Full Review) (★★★★☆ of 5) **Summary:** Spector Pro offers flexible configuration options, and we found its recording accurate. And while we managed to halt it through a little-known utility, it remained hidden from tools like Activity Monitor.
BSecure Average ★★★ ½	PC Magazine, Nov 2007 (Full Review) (★★★★½ of 5) **Summary:** Bsafe Online is a tough, effective, and comprehensive parental-control solution. It has a few rough edges, but the company is already working on improvements. The current version is a worthy product; the next version could be a knockout.
Cyber Sitter Average ★★★ ½	Top Ten Reviews, Nov 2008 (Full Review) (★★★ ½ of 4) **Summary:** CYBERsitter is one of the most effective programs you will find for filtering offensive content on the Internet, in emails or in IM conversations. CYBERsitter takes an impressive list of features and combines it with superior customizability and effective filters to create an effective Internet filter for your home. You won't be disappointed with CYBERsitter's performance. Computer Shopper, Sep 2007 (Full Review) (★★★ of 5) **Summary**: This is generally a good program, but a few glitches need to be sorted out before we can wholeheartedly recommend it. PC Magazine, Dec, 2009 (Full Review) (★★½ of 5) **Summary:** Being a complete rewrite, this edition has the kind of little problems usually associated with a 1.0 release. It still needs some work, but I'm sure the next version will be much more refined.
iAmBig Brother Average ★★★ ½	Top Ten Reviews, Nov 2008 (Full Review) (★★★ of 4) **Summary:** IamBigBrother is an excellent product. The user design from the main menu is awesome. The designer used colorful icons for each of the applications that are monitored such as yahoo, AOL, and MSN. IamBigBrother is extremely easy to use, as easy as any of the products reviewed.
PC Pandora Average ★★★ ½	PC Magazine, Feb 2010 (Full Review) (★★★★ of 5) **Summary**: While it does include limited blocking of Web sites, PC Pandora's real purpose is comprehensive activity monitoring. Parents can view everything their kids do on the computer; employers can likewise monitor employees. It's a powerful tool that can be used for good or evil.
	PC Magazine, Jan 2008 (Full Review) (★★★ of 5) **Summary**: If you want to control the way your kids use the computer, this isn't the product for you. But if you want to secretly monitor every little thing they do on the computer, PC Pandora will definitely do the job.
Webroot Average ★★★ ½	Laptop, May 2008 (Full Review) (★★★ ½ of 5) **Summary:** Webroot Parental Controls is a good first step at limiting a child's time on the computer, but its lack of instant message–logging support gives us pause. PC Magazine, Jan 2008 (Full Review) (★★★★ of 5) **Summary**: Webroot Parental Controls blocks bad Web sites and offers comprehensive scheduling of your children's computer use. Kids can't get around its site-blocking or program control. There's no real-time notification or Web-based management, though, and the local-network-only remote client is disappointing.

Blue Coat K-9 Average ☆☆☆	PC Magazine, May 2009 (☆☆☆ of 5) **Summary:** This parental control utility lacks many features found in the competition, most notably the ability to define different settings for different users. But what it does, it does well. If you can live within its limitations it's a good, free choice.
iBoss Average ☆☆☆	C-Net, June 2009 (Full Review) (☆☆☆ of 5) **Summary**: The iBoss Home Parental Control Wireless-N router offers the most comprehensive tool to manage access to the Internet. Beyond that, it's a rather simple router.
iShield Average ☆☆☆	Computer Shopper, Sep 2007 (Full Review) (☆☆☆ of 5) **Summary**: This is a good program, but its filters need to be more consistent. PC Magazine, Feb 2008 (Full Review) (☆☆☆ of 5) **Summary:** With iShield 2.0, you and your little ones can avoid accidentally viewing porn images online. The software also serves as a browser-independent Internet time scheduler. Its porn detection is mostly accurate, but it won't stop a teen (or spouse) from surfing for prurient pix. PC Magazine, Sep 2007 (Full Review) (☆☆½ of 5) **Summary**: This product will keep your littler ones from accidentally visiting inappropriate sites or viewing naughty pictures, but it won't stand up to a determined teenager. Teens will also easily evade its limited IM monitoring. The image-recognition feature is very clever, but the program as a whole needs work.
Kids Watch Average ☆☆☆	PC Magazine, Feb 2008 (Full Review) (☆☆☆ of 5) **Summary**: KidsWatch shares its ancestry with Webroot Parental Controls, but it has additional features like real-time alerts and IM monitoring. It suffers the same lame remote access feature and several of the same bugs as WPC.
Sentry at Home Average ☆☆☆	PC Magazine, Nov, 2007 (Full Review) (☆☆½ of 5) **Summary:** Sentry At Home can keep the kids off porn sites and stop bad chat or just report any violations to Mom and Dad. Remote monitoring and management is effective, with changes active in near real time. Unfortunately, the product's protection is easily subverted. PC Advisor, Jan 2009 (Full Review) (☆☆☆☆ of 5) **Summary:** Sentry Parental Controls is in a class of its own and probably represents a level of overkill for most parents, but if you want the most comprehensive protection software this must be it.
Web of Trust Average ☆☆☆	PC Magazine, Aug, 2009 (Full Review) (☆☆☆ of 5) Summary: The free Web of Trust browser add-on supplies ratings for over 23 million sites, which it derives from user reports, other Web sites, and malware databases. It doesn't rate every site, but it's free and will help you avoid most unreliable sites.
D-Link Secure Spot Average ☆☆ ½	PC World, July 2007 (Full Review) (☆ of 5) **Summary:** Securespot is brilliant when it works. But it's a service, not a box. And the service doesn't work. Avoid it. PC World Australia, Aug 2007 (Full Review) (☆☆☆ ½ of 5) **Summary:** In the end, the SecureSpot was satisfactory at performing its intended duty, but it did require a bit of fiddling.

FilterPak Average ☆☆ ½	[Top Ten Reviews, Nov 2008 (Full Review)](#) (☆☆½ of 5) **Summary:** Overall, this product was a good product. [Computer Shopper, Sep 2007 (Full Review)](#) (☆☆ of 5) **Summary**: Even if it did a consistently good job, FilterPak doesn't do enough to justify its price.
imView Average ☆☆ ½	[Top Ten Reviews, Nov 2008 (Full Review)](#) (☆☆ of 4) **Summary:** imView seemed to be more like a monitoring program than a filtering program and lacked many of the features that the other products we reviewed included
Safe Chat Average ☆☆ ½	[CNET, Aug 2008 (Full Review)](#) (☆☆☆☆ of 5) **Summary:** Parents with any PC skill level will appreciate its effective and comprehensive tools to help safeguard and monitor their kids' computer activities. [PC Magazine, Feb 2008 (Full Review)](#) (☆ of 5) **Summary:** Safe Chat is an instant-messaging aggregator with parental-control features added. Its free competitors do better at managing multiple IM accounts. Worse still, the parental-control elements are limited in scope and can be easily avoided by smart kids.
Bit Defender Security	[PC Magazine, Sep 2008 (Full Review)](#) **Summary:** 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 program like Net Nanny.
CA Internet Security Suite Plus	**Reviews** [PC Magazine, Dec. 2008 (Full Review)](#) **Summary:** it's awkward to configure, its e-mailed reports are nearly useless, and the actual choice of sites to block or allow seems capricious.
F-Secure Internet Security	[PC Magazine, Sep 2008 (Full Review)](#) **Summary:** Parental control that's so easily defeated is worthless. If you need parental control, try a standalone product.
Kaspersky Internet Security	[PC Magazine, Sep 2008 (Full Review)](#) Summary: If you actually need parental control, leave this feature turned off and get Net Nanny 5.6 or another fully functional parental control program.
McAfee Total Protection	[PC Magazine, Dec. 2008 (Full Review)](#) **Summary:** Parental control is unchanged since last year, which means it's dreadful.
Norton Internet Security 2009	[PC Magazine, Sep 2008 (Full Review)](#) **Summary**: Norton's parental-control solution is limited in scope. It doesn't offer the Internet time-control. But at least it does its one task well: Its category-based site blocking is browser-independent, and the kids can't tamper with it
Panda Global Protection	[PC Magazine, Dec 2008 (Full Review)](#) **Summary**: Don't bother installing this feature. If you actually need parental-control software, get a standalone solution like Net Nanny 5.6 or Safe Eyes 5.0.

Trend Micro Internet Security	PC Magazine, Dec. 2008 (Full Review) **Summary**: Trend Pro's parental control is more complete than that of most suites. I especially like its ability to keep the kids from sending out personal information—even the top standalone parental control programs like Net Nanny and Safe Eyes don't have that. PC Pro, Dec 2009 (Full Review) **Summary:** It didn't take long for our teen testers to bypass the controls. The "teen" profile claims to block access to adult content, but our tester found hard-core porn via Google Images.

Reviews:	Kid Safe Browsers
KidRocket Av. ★★★★☆	[Common Sense Media, Nov 2009 (Full Review)](#) (★★★★☆ of 5) **Summary:** There's no substitute for parental supervision, but using the KidRocket browser and its features unquestionably makes the World Wide Web not as wide and definitely a whole lot safer.
Kido'Z Average ★★★★	[PC World, May, 2009 (Full Review)](#) Summary: In short, KIDO'Z is a slick, well-designed app that's perfect for parents who want to let young kids have a little fun online, but who don't want to worry about inappropriate content. [Common Sense Media, Nov 2009 (Full Review)](#) (★★★★ of 5) **Summary:** On the whole, though, Kido'z is fun, intuitive, imaginative and considerate of the unique needs of both children and their parents.
KidZui Average ★★★★	[PC World, Mar 2009 (Full Review)](#) **Summary:** KidZui is a keeper. There are plenty of free activities to enjoy, and the numerous Web sites seem perfectly harmless. If you have children in your household, give this kid-safe browser a try. [CNET, Dec 2008 (Full Review)](#) (★★★★★ of 5) **Summary:** KidZui offers kids one of the safest methods we've seen to use the Web, while parents get the peace of mind that their children are learning and having fun while remaining the final arbiter of the Internet experience [Common Sense Media, Nov 2009 (Full Review)](#) (★★★★ of 5) **Summary:** Parents will like that they can monitor kids' activity (what sites they visit, when they add a friend, and for how long). Kids will like the user-friendly graphic interface and the ability to tag sites and share them with friends. [PC Magazine, Jun 2008 (Full Review)](#) (★★★ of 5) **Summary:** This browser replacement protects kids while offering an engaging multimedia experience and some degree of social networking. [PC Magazine, Dec. 2009 (Full Review)](#) (★★★ ½ of 5) **Summary:** KidZui lets youngsters surf the Web, play games, view videos and interact socially online, "just like Mommy and Daddy." The protected environment is extremely lively, but don't expect your kids to still like it once they've started using computers in school.
Buddy Browser Average ★★★	[Common Sense Media, Nov 2009 (Full Review)](#) (★★★ of 5) **Summary**: Buddy Browser can help parents control what content their kids' access online -- long before kids ever log on. The nifty parental controls allow them to disable other Internet browsers while Buddy Browser is being used; parents also are able to limit the number of hours their child uses the Buddy Browser each day.
KidView Average ★★ ½	[PC Magazine, July 2008 (Full Review)](#) (★★ ½ of 5) **Summary:** Use Hoopah to keep the toddlers out of your files and limit them to kid-friendly Web sites. But when they get older, look for another solution.
Peanut Butter PC Average ★★ ½	[PC Magazine, Jun 2008 (Full Review)](#) (★★ ½ of 5) **Summary:** With Peanut Butter PC you can give your little ones computer playtime without worrying that they'll disable Windows or delete your important documents. Its protective shields aren't quite perfect, but with a little work it will be a good choice for the preschool set. [PC Magazine, Dec 2009 (Full Review)](#) (★★ ½ of 5) **Summary:** Peanut Butter PC's two aims are to amuse your kids at the computer and keep them from doing any harm to your files. Though this version includes more interactive elements, it doesn't strike me as exciting enough for a toddler, and a kid could still accidentally break out.

Reviews:	Mobile Phone Parental Controls
Smobile Sentry Parental Controls Average ☆☆☆☆	[Top Ten Reviews, July 2009 (Full Review)](#) (☆☆☆☆ of 4) **Summary:** SMobile Security Shield Parental Control Edition adds a new dimension to mobile security software by making parental control of the phone paramount. [BlackBerry Sync, Aug. 2009 (Full Review)](#) (☆☆☆☆☆ of 5) **Summary:** This is the best comprehensive security software in my opinion that I have seen yet to monitor your child and protect your child, your child's information, and the phone.
MobiCip Average ☆☆☆	[AppCraver, Apr, 2009 (Full Review)](#) (8 of 10) **Summary:** Mobicip Safe Browser provides a way to customize restriction options according to your preference while still ensuring safe Internet browsing for kids. If you have been hesitating to give your child access to an iDevice because of internet capabilities, definitely check out Mobicip. [Unwired View, Apr, 2009 (Full Review)](#) **Summary:** All in all, the browser worked quite well, and is something I would recommend to any concerned parent. There were no differences in performance whatsoever since it is still working off of the same network.
Kajeet Kids Phone	[CNET, Mar 2009 (Full Review)](#) **Summary:** Overall, we really like that Kajeet is trusting children with real full-fledged cell phones that will transition them easily into adulthood. It's a pretty decent service that lets parents teach their kids responsible cell phone usage, and add that to its low pay-as-you-go pricing, and we think the Kajeet service is great for families. [Yahoo Tech, Apr 2007 (Full Review)](#) **Summary:** All in all, if you're thinking of outfitting younger kids with cell phones and want to use them well and wisely without running up a new monthly bill, Kajeet is a well-designed service worth a closer look.
My Kid is Safe	[SmartPhone, Jun 2009 (Full Review)](#) **Summary:** Your kids will hate this software/service, but I think for a concerned parent, MyKidisSafe is essential. You can control almost every facet of their cell phone use, such as blocking use of it while they're driving or blocking outbound SMS while driving.
SafeEyes Mobile	[LA Times, Mar. 2009 (Full Review)](#) **Summary:** A protective layer for safer surfing. It's an app worth watching for additional functionality.