

ISP Parental Controls Comparison 2010

Overview

There are hundreds of Internet Service Providers (ISPs) in the United States. Many offer free parental controls and security products with subscriptions. The most popular ISPs typically offer “security suites” from security software vendors which include anti-virus, anti-spam, and other security features along with parental controls. The drawback to security suite parental controls is that they typically offer only the most basic parental control functions. Other ISPs, such as AT&T, Verizon, and AOL have developed their own parental controls. As the chart shows, all of the ISP-provided parental controls offer significantly fewer features than a stand-alone parental control product. Popularity ratings from [ISP Planet](#).

We Recommend:

Ages up to 7: ISP parental controls are a good solution in conjunction with a kid safe browser such as KidZui.

Ages 8 to 11: ISP parental controls often provide adequate filtering and time management, which is often enough for children of this age.

Ages 10 to 13: ISP parental controls may provide a basis for parental controls, but lack many key features for managing this age group. A stand-alone parental control suite such as Safe Eyes, Cyber Patrol, or Net Nanny is a better option for this age group.

Ages 14 to 17: ISP parental controls may be appropriate for basic filtering. Many parents will likely want a more comprehensive filtering or monitoring product, such as Norton Family or Spector Soft.

Important Features

- ✓ **Auto Alert.** Can be programmed to send automatic e-mail alerts triggered by specific events, such as viewing an inappropriate web page or IM message.
- ✓ **Block Private Info.** Can be configured to blocks the transmission of private information such as name, phone number, etc. via IM and e-mail.
- ✓ **Contact Mgmt.** Control over who can contact children via IM, E-mail, and social networks.
- ✓ **E-mail Block and Monitor.** Ability to block or monitor e-mail for a user through an e-mail program as well as web-based e-mail such as Hotmail.
- ✓ **IM Block and Monitor.** Allows the blocking or monitoring of 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.
- ✓ **Safe Search control.** Allows for the safe search setting of popular search engines such as Bing and Google to be locked in place. “Keyword” refers to the ability to block certain keywords from being entered in search engines, rather than enforcing search engine settings.
- ✓ **Time Mgmt.** Ability to limit Internet and/or computer use to preset times.
- ✓ **Web Filter List.** Contains a pre-selected list of categorized websites for blocking, rather than simply the ability to block through the use of keywords.
- ✓ **Web Monitor.** Ability to record the URLs, and in some products the categories, of websites visited

Product	Provider	Web Filter list	Web Monitor	Multi profile	Time Mgmt	Auto Alert	Safe Search control	Contact Mgmt	Block Private Info	Social Network Monitor	E-mail Block	E-mail Monitor	IM Block	Screen capture	IM Monitor	P2P Block	Game Rating Mgmt	Vista	XP	Mac
10 Most Popular Internet Service Providers in the United States																				
AT&T		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Web	No	Web	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Roadrunner	CA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Web	No	Web	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
Comcast	Symantec	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	Web	No	Web	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
AOL		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Web	AOL	Web	No	AOL	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
United	Symantec	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	Web	No	Web	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Qwest	Microsoft	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Verizon		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Web	No	Web	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
Charter	F-Secure	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Web	No	Web	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
EarthLink	Kaspersky	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Optimum	CA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Web	No	Web	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No