



Family Insider • Parental Controls—Not the Only Solution

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“In the information age, you don’t teach philosophy as they did after feudalism. You perform it. If Aristotle were alive today he’d have a talk show.”

- Timothy Leary

As the Internet becomes the primary tool for communication, research, and entertainment for children, parents should think about their children’s on-line safety even more. Internet dangers have been prominent in the news in recent months, causing parents to ask, “What can we do to protect our kids on-line?”

Conversations on Internet safety solutions often involve questions concerning parental-control software and filters.

Many parental-control programs are available that meet a varying degree of protection and filtering for your home computer. Parental-control and filtering software can be purchased and installed on your personal home computer; or, in some cases, your Internet service provider (ISP) may offer a filtering option.

How do parental controls and filters work? Parental-control/filtering software blocks access to inappropriate Web sites based on content filtering on key words like “sex.” Each brand of software contains a database of blocked sites and key words that it has determined to be inappropriate. Most of these software programs contain categories that can be individually selected by the computer administrator, such as Web sites with text and/or photos of a sexual nature, drug-related Web sites, and sites with racism, hate and violence, and alcohol or tobacco. Most also allow the administrator to add individual Web sites that they deem inappropriate.

Other options are also available to fit the specific needs of the user’s family. Many software programs allow time/day restrictions to prevent children from unauthorized Internet or computer use, or to set individual limits for different users. Many also have restrictive settings



that disallow the sending of personal information through e-mail, instant messages (IMs), or other online communication methods.

However, many parents allow these parental controls and filters to offer a false sense of security. It is important to remember that filtering is never an all-inclusive solution to Internet dangers.

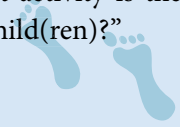
Several issues arise when discussing the effectiveness of software and filters. New inappropriate Web sites are being created daily, and no software can be counted on to be 100 percent effective in blocking all unwanted content. Unfortunately, the more inappropriate sites that a filter catches, the greater the chance that the filter is also blocking appropriate, educational sites, such as those related to personal health or historical topics.

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NAC Tracks

“What type of Internet activity is the most unsafe for your child(ren)?”

Vote here




Parent Controls—Not the Only Solution

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Your child may, at some time, use a computer where there are no parental controls or filters. And smart, resourceful kids can bypass filters. A simple Web search can yield numerous tutorials on how to beat filters and parental-control software. One method often utilized is that of proxy servers. By requesting the restricted page through a proxy, which the filter sees as an acceptable Web site, children can gain admittance to restricted or inappropriate content.

Parental-control software is never a substitute for education and active parenting. It is important that you, as a parent, are involved in your children's online activities and that children are being educated about Internet safety and how to respond to online dangers.

i-LEARN Online (<http://ilearn.isafe.org>) offers parents, community members, students, and teachers online Internet safety education. i-SAFE also offers the i-PARENT program, designed for parents to conduct programs in their schools and communities to educate other parents. It is also important that your children are receiving Internet safety education in their classrooms. Contact your child's school administration members, and ask them to incorporate the i-SAFE curriculum into their plans for the coming school year.

By being proactive and educating yourself and your children, you can ensure that the lines of defense against online dangers are all in place. 

Calling All Parents and Kids

As part of the June 2006 Internet Safety Month campaign, i-SAFE is challenging families to take action and submit how they will join others nationwide to commemorate Internet Safety Family Night via the Web site at www.isafe.org. i-SAFE recommends the following activities for parents and children:

- Create an Internet safety awareness campaign within your community, school, or parent/youth group.
- Create posters to place around your neighborhood about Internet safety awareness, and give tips on staying safe online. Visit www.isafe.org for parent and student tips.
- Organize a community event to build awareness about Internet safety. For example, organize a town march or a community vigil.
- Get involved with i-SAFE. Parents can join an i-PARENT Board and educate other parents and the community about Internet safety. Children can become certified student i-MENTORS and learn how to spread the Internet safety message to their peers, schools, and communities.

This way, you can extend Internet safety practices throughout the year. 

Get Involved—Become Media Savvy

Contacting the media is one of the best ways to raise awareness about online safety and draw attendance to your event. The most important thing to remember is to start early!

Online dangers are reported in the media daily. Parents want to keep their children safe online, so notify the media of your event to maximize the number of parents you can reach in your community.

Here are simple steps you can take to attract media to your event:

- Contact local newspapers, radio, and TV stations about running public-service announcements (PSAs).
- Write letters to local papers to advertise your event. The following are some effective letter-writing tips:
 - > Get to the point.
 - > Be brief (300 words or fewer).
 - > Make local impact.
 - > Sign your letter.
 - > Reinforce the message.
- Send a media advisory to key media contacts at two weeks, a week, and three days before the meeting.
- Make follow-up calls. Concentrate on media personnel responsible for city desks, daybooks, and assignment editors, and do this a day or two before the meeting.
- At your event, assign a person to greet the press, to talk with the press, and to thank them for covering your event.
- Follow up with media contacts who did not attend to report the event's success.



Ask an Expert—*Education First, Then Software*



Q *We've educated our kids about the dangers online, but we'd still like to use parental-control software on our home computer. What is the best software to filter or block material?*


A There are many brands of parental-control software now available at many prices and with numerous features and purposes, including blocking questionable Web sites, filtering instant messaging and e-mail, monitoring online or computer accessibility, different protection levels for multiple users, and more.

The best way to determine what's best for your family's needs is to do an online Web search. Type in "parental control software reviews" in the search bar. You will be rewarded with a number of Web sites offering you reviews of the most well-known, and some not so well-known, parental-control options.

Remember that software in itself is not a perfect solution. Don't allow a computer armed with parental-control software to offer you and your family a false sense of security. While software may add a layer of defense between your computer and the online world, nothing takes the place of Internet safety education. Educating your children should be your first line of defense against online dangers and inappropriate situations online.

To become part of an i-PARENT Board in your community to help raise awareness about Internet safety, e-mail us at parents@isafe.org.

In Action—*Team Up To Make a Difference*



A long history of collaboration has enabled the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) and Los Angeles County PTA Districts to team up with i-SAFE to educate parents and students

about Internet safety! Even in this heavily populated area, the message that personal safety on the Internet is a critically important responsibility for all is getting out to the 1.7 million students and their parents.

No one approach is being used. For example: Thirty-Third District PTA featured the i-SAFE message at both the Principals/Unit Presidents Conference and the Superintendents/Council Presidents Conference, which reached out to 300 educational leaders in 33 school districts. The annual Secondary Conference featured the same message by appealing to more than 200 high-school students.

LACOE also picked up the challenge, alerting educational leaders in all 80 school districts within Los Angeles County about the problems related to Internet safety in schools. This was followed by inviting districts to send high-school students to a countywide conference sponsored by LACOE, PTA, Microsoft, and i-SAFE. More than 500 students heard from a variety of media personalities, including experts from Microsoft and the FBI.

Parents and students at LACOE school sites have appreciated the short yet informative Internet safety presentations



at their meetings. The presentations have triggered many discussions about how to keep students from giving out personal information when using this oh-so-important resource, the Internet—which is here to stay. In the future, local school safety committees will be urged to include Internet safety as part of their plans for keeping their schools safe in every way.

Nancy Jenkins
Parent Academy
Los Angeles County Office of Education


Did You Know?

Get 'Net Safe tour Begins

i-SAFE and a broad coalition of others began a 12-city tour in May to help spread the message of Internet safety and incite consumers to take action in their communities' by making Cyberspace a safer place. This grassroots effort began in Washington, D.C., and will target large metropolitan cities across the country through December 2006, including Boston; Charlotte, N.C.; Chicago; Dallas; Detroit; Los Angeles; New York; Orlando, Fla.; Philadelphia; Phoenix; and Seattle.

i-SAFE Inc. tour partners include The Federal Trade

Commission (FTC); The Department of Commerce; AARP; The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC); The U.S. Chamber of Commerce; RSVP; Boys and Girls Clubs of America; GetNetWise/Internet Education Foundation; National Cyber Security Alliance (NCSA); Microsoft Corp.; and Best-Buy/Geek Squad.

Don't miss out! This could be your chance to get involved in making the Internet a safer place! 

YSOS a Hit With Kids

Recently, more than 600 students representing high schools throughout Los Angeles County were treated to a special Internet safety extravaganza—the Youth Summit for Online Safety.

The Summit, held by i-SAFE, Los Angeles County Office of Education, and Microsoft on April 28 in Los Angeles was successful in empowering teens to be cyber safe and spread the message to their peers, families, communities, and beyond.

i-SAFE friend and 7th Heaven actor George Stults emceed the event, while actor and i-SAFE national spokesperson Robert Davi led off with remarks about the need for Internet safety education in schools. Actress Elaine Hendrix also took time away from the set to come by and address the YSOS.


Students were given the opportunity to ask questions to a panel of music and recording industry experts regarding piracy. Also on the panel were representatives from Micro-



soft, the FBI, and i-SAFE to respond to students' concerns regarding what's appropriate, inappropriate, and even criminal Internet behavior.

Students got a chance to express themselves and show what they learned in unique ways throughout the day. They were assigned to one of five groups, in which they let their imaginations run wild. The music group composed and performed an Internet safety song. Students in the skit group wrote and performed an Internet safety-themed scene. Still others drew and painted life-sized billboards. The public-service announcement (PSA) group scripted and acted out a 30-second Internet safety commercial. The final group took a page out of late-night television and scripted its "Top 10" reasons why Internet safety education is important.

Sound fun? Well, that's not all. The best was saved for last, when popular musical artist Anna Nalick performed live.

Did we mention this was L.A.? 



Tech Tip—Checking the History.....

Q We have tried our best to educate our daughter on safe Internet usage. She still spends a good amount of her free time online chatting and socializing with her friends. How can we be sure that she is practicing safe surfing? Is there a way we can look at past sites she has visited online without installing complicated filtering software?

A It is a good idea to check the Web browser history on your personal computer from time to time to ensure that safe surfing is practiced in your household. If you think your children may interpret this as spying, have an open conversation about it, and make it known that you will be checking the history file periodically. It may also help to raise the topic of inappropriate contact if it's evident in the history but your child has been reluctant to talk to you about it. Checking the content of the history file can also alert you to someone deleting the history file, which could mean they are aware that they are doing things they shouldn't on the Internet and are trying to hide it from you. Now that you know why you should check the Web browser history file, let's talk about how.

Internet Explorer

- To view the history:

There is a "History" button at the top of the browser, or you can click "View" then "Explorer Bar" then "History." You can also hold down the "Control" key (the "Apple" key on a Mac) and "H" key together.

- **To see when a site was visited:**

Find the site in your history folder. Place your mouse cursor over the site, and click on your right mouse button. Select "Properties" from the menu.


Netscape

- To view the history:

Click on "Communicator" then "History" (on some versions, it is Communicator>Tools>History), or you can hold down "Control" (the "Apple" key on a Mac) and "H."

- To see when a site was visited:

The history file in Netscape shows the date and time for the first visit and the last.

If you use a different browser or operating system (OS) altogether, use the "Help" option to find out if history is available and how to access it. 



www.ed.gov

The national department of education site has all the latest news on education initiatives. There is a section devoted to teachers as well as sections that cover issues like providing student resources, answering questions on whether you are eligible to defer or cancel student loan payments, and more. You'll be amazed by the resources at your fingertips.

In Your Neighborhood

Everyday there are many i-SAFE events going on across the country. We've made it easy for you to get involved and help spread the message of Internet safety to your peers and your community. Simply check our "Calendar of Events" at http://www.isafe.org/channels/sub.php?ch=ai&sub_id=3 to find an event near you.



Internet Safety Tip for Parents



Educate yourself on the ins and outs of the Internet.

We're not asking you to know the difference between hardware and software, just to be knowledgeable enough to help your kids.

Ever heard of MySpace, sconex, or Facebook? Google them to find out the hottest places for kids and teens. And if you need us to explain what Googling is, you are in deep trouble!

Spend some time each day on the Internet doing something other than work. Most adults only go online for research, shopping, and paying bills. It is safe to say that's the opposite of what your kids are doing. Check your computer's history to find out where they are going, and go to those sites. Talk to your kids the next time they are online, and have them show

you where they are going, what they are doing, and why.

- 41 percent of students do NOT share what they do and where they go on the Internet with their parents.
- 36 percent of students have NOT discussed how to be safe on the Internet with their parents.
- 73 percent of students say there is a need for kids and teens to learn about Internet safety.

It is midnight somewhere on the Internet. Do you know where your child is online? It's time you asked.

Here's how networking Web sites describe themselves:

MySpace – a place for friends

Sconex – the unofficial Web site for your high school

Facebook – connects people through social networks at schools

Team Up With i-SAFE

Currently, i-SAFE has reached more than one million students with Internet safety information. By providing free materials, programs, and educational videos, students are learning how to make positive choices when challenged with today's technology. Not only are students learning to protect themselves against predators, they are also learning how to make decisions regarding intellectual property, identity theft, and more.

i-SAFE strives to provide your family with the most current information regarding the issues youth face today on the Internet. In order to bring our programs and materials to your community and your home, we rely upon donations.

We would be grateful if you, or perhaps someone you know, could assist i-SAFE in educating as many children as possible. Since i-SAFE is a 501(c)(3) corporation, your donations are fully tax deductible.

To donate, e-mail donations@isafe.org or go to http://www.isafe.org/channels/sub.php?ch=gi&sub_id=2.

We Value Your Input

Do you have a question or a comment about an article? Perhaps you have a story you wish to share with other readers. Do you know somebody whose story will inspire others to get involved? Whatever the case, we would like to know. Please e-mail us at editor@isafe.org with questions, comments, or contributions. If snail mail is your preference, **send written correspondence to:**

i-SAFE Editor
5900 Pasteur Ct.
Suite 100
Carlsbad, CA 92008

i-SAFE has moved! Be sure to make a note of our change in address for future correspondence.
And remember:
Stay safe in Cyberspace!

The series of i-SAFE newsletters also includes the *i-EDUCATOR Times* and *Kewl Timez* (for students). We encourage you to read the others and ask you to use the main article to initiate discussion and action with your students and your community.

About i-SAFE

Founded in 1998 and active in all 50 states, i-SAFE Inc. is the leader in Internet safety education. i-SAFE is a nonprofit foundation whose mission is to educate and empower youth to make their Internet experiences safe and responsible. The goal is to educate students on how to avoid dangerous, inappropriate, or unlawful online behavior. i-SAFE accomplishes this through dynamic K through 12 curriculum and community-outreach programs to parents, law enforcement, and community leaders. It is the only Internet safety foundation to combine these elements. www.isafe.org