

While the best tool in helping your children use the Internet safely is **communication**, some parents may elect to use digital tools to keep track of their child's web activity. □

□
Suffolk County Sheriff Vincent DeMarco has made such a tool available to you free of charge. This software, *Computer Cop*, allows parental monitoring of web surfing, downloading, gaming, emailing, chatting and other computer activities. The software runs only on the Windows platform. If you have questions about its use or technology requirements, please contact techsupport@computercop.com



General Information Regarding Parental Controls

There are so many variations and combinations of computers, operating systems, software, and Internet Service Providers that it is virtually impossible to provide “one size fits all” instructions for protecting your family and computer environment. This document was designed to help you search for the right answers for your individual needs. It provides basic information on some of the most commonly used software and Internet services. It is not a comprehensive listing of all available resources and is not an endorsement by the Half Hollow Hills School District of any product or service.

IMPORTANT: None of these parental control practices are foolproof. Kids who want to get around them CAN find a way to do so, EVEN IF you use all of the parental control software options. It is VERY IMPORTANT that you actively monitor and supervise your children’s Internet use.

Protecting Your Computer

The first level of protection on any computer is done through your computer’s operating system. The operating system controls your computer and software.

The two most widely used operating systems are Microsoft® Windows® and Apple® Macintosh®. Windows and Mac each have several versions and releases. There are many options for restricting access to your individual computer and its software applications via the operating system. For more information on Microsoft Windows operating systems, visit www.microsoft.com/windows. For Apple Mac, visit www.apple.com.

Controlling Internet Restrictions Using Your Internet Browser

The next level of protection is to set restrictions in the browser. The browser is the software from which you view websites. The most commonly used browsers for Windows are Internet Explorer® and Netscape Navigator®. The most commonly used browser for Mac is Safari®. Within each browser, there are a variety of ways to “lock down” access to dangerous websites.

- **Internet Explorer** – This browser is commonly pre-installed with most Windows based computers. Versions 6.0 and newer provide security for browsing with Content Advisor. This feature allows parents several options to approve or deny access to individual websites. You can select websites by category from the Content Advisor’s automatic defaults, or create a custom list of approved websites for your family’s needs. For more information, visit www.microsoft.com/windows/ie.

- **Netscape Navigator** – The latest version (8.0) of this browser offers security filtering that allows parents to select sites that are trusted and sites that are not trusted. The security filter, when turned on, blocks sites that are not trusted. If you are not sure which sites to trust, you can use the automatic settings within Netscape Navigator. You can also create custom lists for your family's individual needs. Different versions of this browser support different levels of security. However, if your computer hardware supports the minimum requirements, you can download the latest version for free. For more information, visit browser.netscape.com/ns8.
- **Safari** – The latest version of this browser allows parents to control access to websites by placing safe websites as bookmarks. Only the bookmarked websites can be visited. Working in conjunction with the Mac operating system, separate user accounts are set up for each user, and web settings are set at the user level. For more information, visit www.apple.com/macosx/features/safari.

Internet Service Providers

There are many Internet Service Providers (ISP). There are literally hundreds of providers right here in Idaho. If the entire family will be using the Internet service in your home, you may want to select a provider that offers software with built-in parental controls. Here is a partial listing of ISPs that provide built-in controls:

- **AOL[®]** - America Online (AOL) provides the ability to set computer, e-mail, and Internet restrictions in a number of ways. You can monitor online activity with AOL Guardian[®], limit the time spent on the Internet with Online Timer, even lock down your computer so that kids can't use outside browsers like Internet Explorer or Netscape Navigator. For more information, visit the AOL parental control menu at www.aol.com/product/parcon.adp.
- **MSN[®] Premium[®]** - This ISP provides many choices for safer Internet usage. There are options for age-based and custom Internet content filtering, Instant Messenger filtering, and weekly activity reports so that you can see where your children have been browsing on the Internet. For more information, visit the MSN Premium Services website at join.msn.com.
- **Qwest[®]** - This service comes with MSN Premium. For more information, visit www.qwest.com/internet.
- **Earthlink[®]** - Earthlink provides additional software called TotalAccess[®] with Parental Controls. This software is free and easy to use in conjunction with your Earthlink software. For more information, visit www.earthlink.net/software.
- **CableONE.net[®]** – CableONE.net provides a service called WebStop. WebStop is an Internet filter that CableONE.net controls. It automatically filters websites that contain sexual content, violence, and adult material, and will not allow these websites to be accessed on your computer. There is a fee for this service, in addition to your CableONE.net Internet connection costs. For more information, visit www.cableone.net.

Controlling Parental Controls For Instant Messengers

Instant messengers allow people to connect online and “chat” with each other using both private and public conversation windows. Seemingly innocent information can turn into a dangerous situation if your child begins to “chat” or instant message (IM) someone they do not know.

The information below is designed to help you “lock out” strangers from your child’s instant messages, create “buddy lists,” and allow them to only IM with friends or family. These are only tools, NOT guarantees that your children will be safe. If your children create accounts on their own, without parental permission, these controls can be bypassed. Perhaps the best tool for parents is a separate parental control software package. For more information on this, see the “Parental Control Software” section in this document.

- **AOL Instant Messenger (AIM®)** – This service can be installed with or without using AOL as your ISP. The minimum age requirement to set up an account for AIM is 13. The minimum age to chat is 18. By clicking on Setup/Preferences in the Buddy List window, you can specify various privacy options for both instant messaging and chatting. **Please note that all of these preferences must be set on each individual AIM user account.**
- **MSN Messenger®** – This service can be installed with or without using MSN as your ISP. The minimum age requirement to set up an account for MSN Messenger is 13. The minimum age to chat is 18. By selecting Tools/Options from the MSN Messenger window, you can specify a number of privacy options for instant messaging. **Please note that all security options must be set while signed in under your child’s user account.**
- **Yahoo!® Messenger®** – This messenger service has a minimum age requirement of 13. The minimum age to chat is 18. To set the securities for Yahoo! Messenger, **you must be signed into your child’s Yahoo! account.** From the Yahoo! Messenger window, select Messenger/Privacy Options. From here, you can specify privacy options for instant messaging, chatting and other functions.

A parent can also opt to create a Yahoo! Family Account®. This allows one parent to control all of the Yahoo! Account securities in their home, as long as the children are under the age of 18. For more information on Yahoo! Family Accounts, visit family.yahoo.com/family.

- **ICQ®** – This messenger service has a minimum age requirement of 13. The minimum age to chat is also 13. To set securities for this service, select Main/Security and Privacy Permissions. From here, you can set permission levels for what operations your child can perform, set up an “ignore” list, and set other functions. **You must be signed into your child’s ICQ account to set these securities.**

Parental Control Software

Regardless of whether the ISP you use has built-in parental control software, you may wish to look into acquiring additional parental control software. It can provide additional obstacles for kids who, against their parents' wishes, create their own user accounts for instant messaging, e-mailing, and online chatting. You can get software that offers website blocking, content filtering, online time management, instant message recording, e-mail monitoring, and much more. This type of software allows parents to view records of their children's Internet use, online chats, e-mails, and instant messages. These packages are available for purchase with prices ranging from \$0 - \$200.00.

Although there are many parental control software packages available, here are links to some sites that offer parental control software packages:

- SurfPass[®] (www.cogilab.com/us/homeedition)
- IamBigBrother[®] (www.iambigbrother.com)
- CyberPatrol[®] (www.cyberpatrol.com)
- NetNanny[®] (www.netnanny.com)
- CyberSitter[®] (www.cybersitter.com)
- NetIntelligence[®] (www.netintelligence.com)
- UltraView Plus[®] (www.awarenesstech.com)

Other Helpful Resources

The Internet has many wonderful things to offer. That's why it is so important to learn how to protect your children from danger, while allowing them the freedom to discover. Here are some additional resources for information that will provide you and your children a safer digital world.

- Internet Keep Safe CoalitionSM at ikeepsafe.org
- National Center for Missing & Exploited Children[®] at www.missingkids.com
- Netsmartz[®] at www.netsmartz.org
- CyberNetiquette ComixTM at disney.go.com/cybersafety
- CyberSmart![®] at www.cybersmart.org
- Federal Trade Commission at www.ftc.gov/infosecurity
- Microsoft security webpage at www.microsoft.com/athome/security