



Cybersafety tools

How can I protect my family from unwanted internet material?

The internet has become an integral tool for many Australians to access information. Children are using the internet more and more for education, socialising and accessing information. It is therefore important that families know how to protect themselves from unwanted internet material.

Voluntary filtering of child abuse material

Three of Australia's largest internet service providers (ISPs), Telstra, Optus and Primus, have agreed to voluntarily block child abuse material at the server level. This means it is done automatically without end users needing to do anything. Recently, Webshield and ItXtreme have also volunteered to block child abuse material at the ISP level. The Australian Government will continue encouraging other Australian ISPs to follow the example of these ISPs.

ISP-level additional content filtering services

Some ISPs may also offer additional content filtering at the server level that is in addition to blocking child abuse material. Examples of ISPs in Australia that offer these services include Webshield and ItXtreme.

- > Webshield: www.webshield.net.au/filter-options
- > ItXtreme: www.itxtreme.com.au

Parental control tools

In addition to internet content filtering at the ISP level, several parental control tools are available. These can be installed and operated by parents on home computers, providing web browser, search engine and operating system level filtering.

The take-up of internet connected devices such as smartphones, gaming consoles, televisions, and tablet computers are fast becoming a popular means for children to access the internet. The industry is developing filtering technologies for many of these products. These technologies are effective in helping parents keep their children safe online.

Web browser filtering

One simple method parents can easily use to block unwanted online content is to activate the internet safety functions offered by the major web browsers such as Microsoft Internet Explorer and Mozilla Firefox. These safety functions allow an 'administrator' (parent/carer) to use a password protected system to customise the computer's settings according to their own family's preferences.

Internet Explorer contains a 'Content Advisor' feature that allows parents to create black or white lists of websites (black meaning it blocks sites on the list, and white meaning it only allows the sites on the list). This includes an adjustable ratings system that can restrict certain types of content from being viewed. While Mozilla Firefox's filtering feature is not 'built-in' to their standard product, third party add-ons are available for this purpose.

Google Chrome offers parents the option of choosing controls that are suited to their family through downloadable extensions from other developers and companies.

Further information on how to activate the Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox or Google Chrome safety functions is available from their websites:

- > Internet Explorer: <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/dd361897.aspx>
- > Mozilla Firefox: <https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/search/?q=parental+control&cat=all>
- > Google Chrome: <https://chrome.google.com/extensions>

Search engine filtering

In addition to filtering at the web browser level, internet search engines such as Bing, Google and Yahoo! provide parents with safety tools to block undesirable online content such as sexually explicit material.

Bing, Google and Yahoo! have a 'SafeSearch' option which gives parents the ability to change settings to help prevent unwanted content appearing in search results. They each provide 'moderate' and 'strict' levels of filtering, enabling parents to select the level of content filtering their family receives.

Further information on how to activate the Bing, Google and Yahoo! SafeSearch functionality is available from their websites:

- > Bing SafeSearch: <http://onlinehelp.microsoft.com/en-au/bing/ff808441.aspx>
- > Google Safety tools: www.google.com.au/familysafety/tools.html
- > Yahoo SafeSearch: <http://help.yahoo.com/l/us/yahoo/search/basics/indexing-07.html>

Operating system filtering

Parents can also restrict undesirable internet content by using parental controls provided by the major operating systems. For example, the popular Windows, Mac and Linux operating systems have parental content controls that are easily activated.

Microsoft offers a Windows Live Family Safety 2011 package that allows only predefined internet material to be accessed. It also lets parents put limits on when certain programs can be used at specific times during the day. The safety package can be downloaded for free from Microsoft's website and includes easy-to-follow instructions. The safety package is compatible with Microsoft XP, Vista and Windows 7.

Apple's Mac OS X product features parental controls similar to those offered by Microsoft. Parents can manage, monitor and control the time their children spend on the computer, including the sites they visit and the people they chat with online.

The Linux operating system also has various applications and programs for internet content filtering.

Further information on how to activate the Windows, Mac and Linux operating system parental controls is available from their websites:

- > Windows Live Family Safety: <http://explore.live.com/windows-live-family-safety?os=other>
- > Apple's Mac OS X: www.apple.com/au/macosex/
- > Linux web filtering information: www.linux.com/archive/feature/113733

Family friendly internet filters

There are also a number of free or commercially available filtering programs and services that parents can install on their family's computers.

The Internet Industry Association (IIA) maintains a list of family friendly PC filters. To qualify for family friendly status, a filter must be thoroughly tested to block internet content that is prohibited by the Australian Communications and Media Authority, be easy to install and use, and include technical support.

Further information on the Family Friendly Filters scheme is available from the IIA website:

- > Internet Industry Association: www.iaa.net.au/index.php/initiatives/family-friendly-filters.html



Cybersmart program

The government's Cybersmart program is a national cybersafety education program to promote online safety for children and young people. The Cybersmart program aims to inform children, parents, teachers and library staff about cybersafety issues, educate audiences through information, resources and practical advice, and empower children to be safe online.

The Australian Communications and Media Authority maintains the Cybersmart website as part of the Cybersmart program. It provides up to date information for parents, as well as information and activities specifically designed for children.

The government has also established an online Kids Helpline to provide free and private advice to young people who experience issues online. The Kids Helpline is a free, private and confidential, 24 hour counselling service which is offered by phone, email and over the web.

- > Cybersmart: www.cybersmart.gov.au
- > Kids Helpline Web Counselling: www.kidshelp.com.au/teens/get-help/web-counselling/

Cybersafety help button

The government's Cybersafety Help Button provides internet users, particularly children and young people, with easy online access to cybersafety information and assistance.

It provides counselling, reporting and educational resources designed to help children deal with online risks including cyberbullying, unwanted contact, scams and fraud, and offensive or inappropriate material.

The help button was developed in response to advice from the Youth Advisory Group on cybersafety, who told the government they wanted a one-stop shop for online advice and assistance.

It is a free application that can be easily downloaded onto PCs from the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy's website.

There is also a multiple installer package to assist schools to download the help button across computer networks.

To download the button visit www.dbcde.gov.au/helpbutton

For further information on how to install the help button email helpbutton@dbcde.gov.au

Stay Smart Online

The government's Stay Smart Online website helps raise awareness about the importance of cybersecurity and the simple steps Australian internet users can take to protect personal and financial information online.

The Stay Smart Online website provides information about secure online practices for home users and small businesses. It provides information on securing your personal information online, protecting computers and smartphones from viruses and malware (malicious software), and safe social networking practices.

Stay Smart Online also hosts the Stay Smart Online Alert Service, a free subscription-based service that provides information in plain language on how to address the latest cybersecurity threats and vulnerabilities.

The service provides alerts, advisories, factsheets and newsletters. Subscribers also have the option to pick and choose which types of information they would like to receive.

More information is available from www.staysmartonline.gov.au

The budd:e education package

The budd:e cybersecurity education package is a series of media-rich learning activities developed to help primary and secondary school students adopt secure online practices and behaviours. The budd:e modules are interactive, engaging, self-learning, and include advice on malware, securing personal information online and social networking.

Schools have reported that after using budd:e students approach the internet with an improved understanding of safe online practices. Budd:e won the Best Children's award at the 2010 Annual Australian Interactive Media Industry Awards.

Budd:e is available free or can be ordered on a CD-ROM from www.staysmartonline.gov.au/schools_and_teachers

Budd:e is also available on the Learning Federation's educational resources portal via www.scottle.edu.au/ec/p/home

Filtering is not the only solution

The government's approach to cybersafety acknowledges the key role for teachers, parents and carers in the online safety of children, and provides them with the necessary information to assist with this task. However, it is important to realise that any internet content filtering solution should not be relied upon as a substitute for adult supervision of children online.

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