Advice from Middle Aged Female Tech
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I have been in the industry with my own company since 1994.   The entire time I have worked in this field there have been very few times any two techs ever agree completely.   The advice I give here is based on my experiences, testing, and what I know works.

Today's Subject: Parental Controls

First and foremost when dealing with kids and teens, is to NOT give in, you're the parent, and in this case NOT their friend, what these programs do is PREVENT logging into sites or chat room that might be, and I say that cause as we all know not every conversation with every stranger is dangerous, but in essence what you are doing by not having parental controls on your computer is letting your child have access to every stranger in the world that wishes to talk to them.   For example, I had a customer that let her 7 year old install the "net nanny" on his own computer – if you don't see the problem, which the child put all the controls/passwords in for his own access "not yours", there is no reason for you to read any further.

For computer AND smartphone control, there is several options.   I am only going to give you a few. For your computer lets start with:

 "Parental Control Bar".   You have heard me more than once say: "Toolbars are bad" – ok, there is ALWAYS exceptions, this is one of them.   The parental Control Bar, which can be downloaded '**http://parentalcontrolbar.org'** – The Parental Control Bar is a free public service that helps concerned parents prevent their children from accessing adult-oriented web sites. Complete our simple three-step installation process and start controlling your family's online activity. You can read more about this service and all what it does on the web site, very good FREE product.

Windows itself built in has a FREE service that lot of people know is there, but didn't realize how useful it can be. You make a NEW user for your kids/teens under a separate log-in, making them a 'standard user' NOT an administrator user.   Here are the instructions to make this a true controlled environment: *note – this part only is a copy from the Microsoft windows site*

To turn on Parental Controls for a standard user account

1. Open Parental Controls by clicking the Start button , clicking Control Panel, and then, under User Accounts and Family Safety, clicking Set up parental controls for any user.   If you're prompted for an administrator password or confirmation, type the password or provide confirmation.
2. Click the standard user account that you want to set Parental Controls for. If the standard user account isn't set up yet, click Create a new user account to set up a new account.
3. Under Parental Controls, click On, enforce current settings.
4. Once you've turned on Parental Controls for your child's standard user account, you can adjust the following individual settings that you want to control:
    o Time limits. You can set time limits to control when children are allowed to log on to the computer. Time limits prevent children from logging on during the specified hours. You can set different logon hours for every day of the week. If they're logged on when their allotted time ends, they'll be automatically logged off.
    o Games. You can control access to games, choose an age-rating level, choose the types of content you want to block, and decide whether you want to allow or block unrated or specific games.
    o Allow or block specific programs. You can prevent children from running programs that you don't want them to run.

Now for the SmartPhones:

K9 Web Protection Browser (For Android – not iPhone) *Android covers everything that is NOT iPhone*

- <u>**Pros**</u> FREE. Fast, fuss-free install. Resists uninstallation. Built on top of Firefox.
- <u>**Cons**</u> No configurable settings. Certain features don't work on Android 4.x devices: you can't block Google Play, YouTube, or other browsers. Installing Helper app requires you to temporarily decrease device security. Child can still open native Google Play and YouTube apps.
- <u>**Bottom Line**</u> Free Web-filtering app K9 effectively blocks porn and malware, but it lacks key features in paid rival apps, like the ability to whitelist or blacklist links, or customize your filter to match your child's age and behavior.

Net Nanny 2.0 (For Android – not iPhone) *Android covers everything that is NOT iPhone*

- **Pros** App management. User-friendly Web admin portal. Lots of configuration settings.
- **Cons Costs $6.99,** No easy way to override filter, which can be a nuisance to parents. Doesn't support Android 4.1 Jelly Bean devices yet.
- **Bottom Line** Net Nanny 2.0 (for Android) is a deceptively simple parental control app for your child's Android device, letting you be as conservative or liberal with your content blocking as you like.

AVG Family Safety (for iPhone) Like most programs for "i" products, couldn't find any for free. ($19.99) This was the least expensive that could be found that did had nanny features….

- **Pros** Lots of configurable settings and filtering categories to choose from. Remotely monitor browsing history. Schedule access times. Ratings-based access control for videos, games, and music. Override blocks immediately with master password.
- **Cons** Doesn't filter apps or programs outside browser, though this is due to iOS restrictions.
- **Bottom Line** AVG Family Safety (for iPhone) blocks an impressive list of inappropriate content and malware, and lets you monitor your child's mobile browsing behavior. It's a very good deal for the price.

Parental Controls for Mac: Mac have several videos on their interior custom parental controls:
'https://www.apple.com/findouthow/mac/#parentalcontrols'
To purchase a program for Mac, there is 'Net Nanny' **http://netnanny.com/mac/parental-controls** - which have more control options than the Mac has on itself. $39.99 price tag…

Net Nanny Compared to Apple Parental Controls

Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard includes expanded parental controls, which allow parents to choose some limits regarding what their children can access while using their Macs. The following is a comparison of the two types of parental control systems, showing why Net Nanny is far superior to Apple's parental controls in Leopard.

	Net Nanny	Apple Parental Controls
Supported Operating Systems	Mac OS X 10.4 or later! (Tiger, Leopard, Snow Leopard and Lion)	Only Mac OS X Leopard and Snow Leopard (10.5 and later)
Minimum Processor Requirement	PowerPC G3 or faster	PowerPC G4 (867 MHz) or faster

Configuration Assistant	✔	-
Profile Presets	✔	-
Internet Access Time Controls for Each Day of the Week	✔	-
Block Specific Protocols like Streaming Video or Peer-to-Peer	✔	-
Anti-Predator Mode in Chat Sessions	✔	-
Work with all Chat Clients	✔	-
Filter Web Access For Specific Categories	✔	-
Regularly Updated Filters	✔	-
Redirect to family-friendly Search Engines	✔	-
Send Complete Logs to Parent	✔	-
Restrict Administrator Accounts	✔	-

For TV and game systems, there is "bob":
'**http://hopscotchtechnology.com/What_Is_Bob/what_is_bob.**html'

BOB helps parents monitor and manage the time their children spend using in-home media. BOB is an easy to use, small device that sits next to a TV, video-game system or computer. The power cord from one of these devices plugs into the back of BOB and is locked in place. Then, BOB plugs into an electrical outlet. After set up – a process that takes about three minutes – the machine monitors the amount of time a child spends using that media device.

Parents decide an acceptable amount of viewing time for each child per day or per week. Specific time periods can be blocked entirely for studying, chores, family time, or sleeping. Each child in the house (up to 6 users) has a four-digit PIN that they enter before they can turn on the attached device. BOB tracks the time used. A "master pin" allows a parent to turn on the connected device at any time.

When a child's preset viewing time expires, BOB shuts off the attached TV, video-game system or computer and won't allow it to be turned on by that user for the remainder of the day (or week).
There are many more out there, but these are in the forefront, do an excellent job, and are the least expensive.

I am always about saving money and not spending it on things you don't need to

Remember ANY questions, email me at: **Montgomery@Hollyecho.com**. If possible, I will include the answer to your questions in my next article.