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Parental controls

The digital age has changed what it means to be a child. There are some things that children do not want to see online and that you, as a parent, would rather they did not. Parental controls are the names for filters and blockers of certain content, and can help you protect your children from the things they should not see or do online.

27% of 7-11 year olds said they had seen something unpleasant or hurtful online in the last year [1]

2014 saw a 71% rise in online banking fraud [2]

1 in 4 children said they had seen online porn by the age of 12 [3]

Where can I set parental controls and what can I protect?

There are three levels of parental controls that you should be aware of:

Broadband & mobile networks	Devices	Entertainment & search engines
Where? Home broadband (e.g. Sky Broadband) Mobile operator (e.g. Vodafone) Public WiFi	**Where?** Smartphones Tablets Laptops Gaming consoles Smart TVs	**Where?** Search engines Online video sharing (e.g. YouTube) Online streaming and entertainment (e.g. Netflix)
What do they do? Protects your child from accessing age-inappropriate content Prevents access to certain sites	**What do they do?** Prevents access to certain already downloaded apps Prevents the purchasing of new apps Prevents the downloading new apps Prevents changes to privacy settings Prevents password changes	**What do they do?** Protects your child from accessing age-inappropriate content Shows content suitable for their age

Setting parental controls

Children's discovery of the internet should be encouraged when they are in a safe environment. It is important to activate your parental controls in order to filter out content your children shouldn't be seeing. Many parents put this off because they think it will be difficult. It is easy and Internet Matters have created a guide to parental controls including how-to guides to setting up the controls on the major networks, devices, services and entertainment providers in your home, including some of the most popular:
iPhone
Android
YouTube & Netflix

Go to **https://www.internetmatters.org/advice/parentcontrols/** and click on **Set Your Parental Controls** to find out how to protect your children by activating simple parental controls around your home

But remember, parental controls are not fool-proof

Some content and sites can be encrypted, which means they're coded in a way that prevents the controls from knowing that it is. There are also ways of bypassing controls software if your child is technologically savvy enough.
One of the most effective ways of dealing with the issues is by talking with your child about them. Read up about them and work out the best way of approaching this subject with your child. If you maintain an open and honest dialogue with them where they understand the risks, it can often be as effective as preventing them from seeing the content in the first place.

Additional information

The internet is a fantastic source of information. Whether you use it for social media, researching or cheating on the pub quiz, you can discover nearly anything you need to know these days. But while you might be happy to have unlimited access to all this information, you probably don't want your children to, so here are five apps to help you control what they see and do on Android devices, whether its a family device or their own.

- **MM Guardian Parental Control**
- **Funamo Parental Control**
- **Kids Place – Parental Control**
- **AppLock**
- **Screen Time Parental Control**

If you'd like to learn more about other tools you can use to help keep your child safe online, visit:

- **PC advisor** – Best parental control software 15 / 16
- **Yoursphere for parents** – 10 Android parental control apps
- **Common Sense Media** – Everything you need to know about parental control apps
- **BBC Webwise** – Learn more about parental controls on BBC iPlayer, All 4, ITV and Demand 5