

# Software Filtering Explained

## Along with common ways to get around the filters

- An Internet filter is software that stands between your Web browser and your Internet connection, preventing you from viewing certain, “objectionable” material.
- The filtering software is usually installed on either
  - Your computer, or
  - A remote server called a proxy server (in which case your Web browser is set up so that it automatically connects through that server.)
- Filtering software blocks sites based on
  - Software analysis;
    - Keyword searches (usually) cannot interpret graphics. Software analysis alone may not catch a “donkey sex” picture page if that page doesn’t contain prohibited words.
    - Keyword searches cannot use contextual information. A page on the Mars Explorer blocked because it contains “sex.”
  - Human analysis; and/or
    - The lists of filtered sites will always be incomplete.
    - “Bad” sites may not be blocked simply because they haven’t been added to the stop list yet.
    - Stop lists are vulnerable to the personal biases of the people compiling the list.
    - “Good” sites may be blocked simply because of that site’s “politics” (like the Vatican and Quaker Web sites, both of which have been blocked in the past.)
  - Site labeling Internet Content Rating Association (ICRA).
    - Site labels are determined by the site’s owners. Owners can lie about their content or even refuse to rate their site.
    - If a site isn’t rated, it probably won’t be blocked by ICRA.
    - You can block all unrated sites, but the number of unrated sites is so huge – for example, the White House, the Senate, the House of Representatives, and the Supreme Court – that it’s pointless
- Each of these three tools – software analysis, human analysis, and site labeling – has its plusses and minuses.

**THE TRUTH IS THAT FILTERING SOFTWARE KIND OF  
WORKS AND KIND OF DOESN’T.**

- **Bypassing a filter on a PC isn't all that difficult. Bypassing a filter on a server is a challenge – in fact, it is a constant game of action and reaction.**
- **Disable filters**
  - **Make your only local proxy by --- In IE, go to Tools > Internet Options > Connections > LAN Settings. Turn off the proxy then load your own proxy file several can be found on Google.**
    - **Can we say U3 USB devices anyone This works on PCs, and it often works with server-based filters too.**
- **Google Cache can often get past any server filter options**

## **Top methods of bypassing filters**

- **Go to AltaVista's BabbleFish site.**
- **Key in the URL of a porn site and ask Babblefish to translate it into English (even though the site is already in English.)**
- **Changing their browser's proxy**
- **Using an anonymizer Use Google to find CGI proxies which are harder to control than common php proxies, highschool proxy.com and too many others**
- **Use software to find and destroy filtering software on local PC's**
- **Turn off filtering software on local PC**
- **Conducting picture searches at Google, AltaVista, or other search engines.**

The only way to have a truly effective Internet filter system is to monitor access and determine what the students or your children are up at all times when they are online.

### **For home use**

If you have a reason to be concerned about what your young people or other family members are doing online then software like Spector Pro is your best option.

- **It's not filtering software, rather it is surveillance software**
  - **Records emails, chats, Web addresses, etc.**
  - **Keyword detection**
  - **Also takes random snapshots of the desktop.**

Taken in large part from <http://www.netsquirrel.com/powerpoint/powerpoint/filter.zip>