

Hakhel has received the following essential information from Torah Jews who are smart phone experts:

Based on our experiences, the best option is to hold off from getting a smart phone for as long as possible.

For those who have one already, below is a list of the general options for the Torah Jew.

There are 3 main categories of cell phones.

Each has its own operating systems and therefore requires different apps or methods to filter/block/monitor.

They are

- iOS (iPhone, iPad and iPod)
- Android
- Blackberry

For computers, the K9 filter is a very good option for many people. However, it is not recommend for smart phones since the filter has no customization for phones.

For basic/non-smart phones, if they are Verizon or Sprint (or any phones using the CDMA network), select technicians at the following locations can block the Internet and picture messaging from the phone completely:

Boro Park:

TAG office - 718-437-1824 5316 New Utrecht Ave

Flatbush:

Avenue M Computers - 718-676-6910 1222 Avenue M, Suite 601

For all other phones, there is no good filtering solution (some carriers can block the Internet, but not the WiFi capability).

IOS:

OPTION #1 (Locking it down)

Go into SETTINGS-GENERAL-RESTRICTIONS

Turn on restrictions;

-Block Safari

-Lower the level of the apps (so that another browser and inappropriate apps cannot be installed)

-If you don't want Facebook, Twitter and the like, you can block the ability to make changes by selecting "Don't Allow Changes" by the Facebook and/or Twitter options. This is a good practice if an account has not been set up yet on the device.

NOTES:

(1) You cannot disable the WiFi capability, therefore, any apps which are pre-installed before you are locking the device down which have Internet capabilities will still have Internet access.

(2) This system is only as secure as the 4-digit PIN used to turn on restrictions.

(3) These changes can only be made on the actual device, and not remotely.

OPTION #2 (Basic filtering)

After following the steps in option#1, install an app called Mobicip.

Once installed, you need to configure the settings online (from any web browser)

PRICE:

The free version allows you to pick the filter settings based on three levels.

The paid version is \$10.99 per device per year

This version allows you to fully customize the filter settings (which type of site categories to allow/block, white/black listing, and so forth)

NOTES:

(1) Mobicip looks like a regular browser.

(2) It only filters from within the app, which means that if the user can access the Internet from any other app, there will be no filtering for that particular app.

(3) If a change needs to be made, it can be made on any web browser. Simply login to the account online and make the required changes. (We generally recommend the user does not have access to the filter settings online.)

(4) For most users, the paid version is preferred, because the little bit of customization is what is generally needed to make the user happy with the filter.

OPTION #3: (Built in cloud filtering)

Follow the steps in option #1.

While still in the "restrictions," there is an option for web filtering.

This allows the entire device to be filtered, no matter what app you are in.

There are two options:

Option #1 - Filter out mature content

Option #2 - White list (this allows the selected sites and only those sites to work)

NOTES:

(1) This is a free feature, built into iOS7

(2) Any changes need to be made on the actual device

(3) Customization for this method is limited to creating a white list, or allowing websites one at a time on the device.

OPTION#4 (Cloud-based filter)

Get the Venishmartem Cloud Filter (VCF)

This filter is a combination of all of the above, with the following features:

- It filters the entire device, based on you whatever customization you would like
- The restrictions settings can be adjusted upward, and with more options than the standard restrictions
- It cannot be wiped or uninstalled by the user
- The initial installation must be done by a VCF technician
- Cost is \$9.95 per month, 2nd device is 50% off
- Initial installation fee varies by technician

Go to vcfprotection.com for more information and to sign up, or email help@vcf.co.il for any questions regarding the VCF filter.

ANDROID

The Android operating system allows for more flexibility and does not have anything built in, therefore the options are as follows:

OPTION #1:

Block items/apps.

This may include the web browser, ability to install new apps, any pre-installed apps, Internet, WiFi, phone calls, etc.

The suggested app for the lock is Smart App Protector, which can be downloaded from the Google Play Store.

No matter what you want to block, it can be blocked from this app.

NOTES:

- (1) This app blocks, it does not filter anything.
- (2) It is free
- (3) It provides built-in security measures so that it cannot be uninstalled (after you install the app, these measures must be activated from within the settings of the app.)

OPTION #2: ("Basic" Filter)

Install the NetNanny filter from the Google Play Store.

This filter:

- Only filters within the app
- Does not allow you to open any other browser (therefore the filtering is more complete than a standard iOS filter.)
- Can allow/block any existing apps from opening (these changes can be made from any Internet connection.)
- Can block/allow any newly installed app from opening. This allows the user to install any apps which they want, but need the one controlling the filter to actually allow the app to run. This can be controlled from any web browser.
- Can block any newly installed apps from opening
- Costs \$12.99 per year per device
- Can allow/block Internet access during selected time periods

NOTE:

(1) This solution is generally the recommended one, since it filters, controls the apps and allows the administrator (parent/spouse/technician) to make changes from any location.

OPTION #3: (Over-all filter)

VCF recently introduced a filter for Android devices.

This filter:

- Filters all browsers, so that you can use the device's default browser or any browser of your choice
- Allows for full customization
- Is cloud-based, so technicians can make changes without requiring the device to be brought to them
- It costs \$9.95 per device per month, with the second device 50% off.

BLACKBERRY:

Depending on which model/version BlackBerry, the options vary.

For most older models:

OPTION #1:

Jnet - Filters the Internet before it reaches the device (see Jnet mobile for pricing)

OPTION #2(a):

Block the Internet completely with a parental control app

OPTION #2(b):

Download the GYE (Guard Your Eyes) app.

The GYE apps offers the user the ability to block four apps: the built in browser, App World, Facebook and Twitter apps. To unblock any of the four apps, you must call GYE and they will provide you with a onetime use code. This is great option for people who don't want to be bothered with remembering another password or if it's on their own device and they have no one to give the password to.

For the BlackBerry 10:

If you do not want to have Internet access:

The Blackberry 10 comes with built-in parental controls, which allows you to lock certain apps on the phone, including the browser, Blackberry World, Facebook, Twitter, and BBM.

To turn on Parental Controls:

Settings – Security and Privacy – Parental Controls

Turning on Parental Controls allows one to turn off whichever apps one would like to block.

If you want to filter the Internet:

Download the Safe Browser made by Cloud ACL from Blackberry World.

Follow the above steps with regard to turning on the parental controls to block the built-in browser and any other apps which you may wish to restrict.

RESOURCES:

To view an updated list of filters and recommendations online, Venishmartem.com is a good resource.

TAG Flatbush: 718-437-TAG1

Avenue M Computers: 718-676-6910 help@avenueMcomputers.com