How to Monitor Your Kids' Online Activity Remotely

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Every parent laments the inordinate amounts of time their kids spend in front of their screens and on their phones. From scrolling through social media posts and pictures, to sharing YouTube and TikTok videos, to seemingly endless threads of chat, text, and email messages, it can feel like there's a never-ending flurry of online activity.

So given the swaths of apps and digital content easily accessible by your children, what, if anything, can parents do to monitor their kids' online activity? How effective are the remote monitoring software programs and apps at keeping them safe? And are they easy to use?

Thankfully, technology has greatly advanced in recent years to let parents better observe and keep tabs on their children's online activity and help protect kids, too, even when parents can't hover over their children's shoulders as they text away.

At WCFIBER, safety and security is our top priority, whether we're in the field installing and maintaining our advanced fiber technology or when we're working online.

Below we explore four of the most popular and well-reviewed apps and software programs that can help you monitor and better control your kids' online activity, whether they're on their phones, laptops, or tablets.

Norton Family

Part of the Norton line of outstanding digital security products, Norton Family offers a wide variety of features and options for monitoring and controlling your child's online activity. Norton Family's web content filter is noteworthy for its strong security (which parents can adjust and customize) and for a setting that enables your kid to request access from you to a blocked site or app in real time, making it more engaging as well as protective. We're also impressed with the quality of its time-tracking and supervision feature, which can help you enforce homework time. Norton Family does not work on Macs, however.

Bark

Bark is one of the most popular and overall highest-rated parental online monitoring apps. Adept at monitoring social media content instead of simply blocking it, Bark helps hone responsible online usage through its powerful algorithm, which detects concerning or questionable content. One of the more expensive options on this list, Bark's unique features and advanced technology may provide additional peace of mind.

Qustodio

Customizable and loaded with features from strong app-blocking to displaying in-depth search term and browsing history information, Qustodio is consistently ranked one of the best overall parental online monitoring programs. Its sleek dashboard provides detailed overviews on your child's online history and habits. Qustodio's cool family tracker feature lets you keep tabs on any of your kids' current location, and even see where they were earlier in a given day.

FamilyTime

FamilyTime earned a place on this list because it is an especially solid option for iOS products (e.g., iPad, iPhone), which can be more persnickety about monitoring apps and software. It offers more features on iOS than most other similar apps, although per Apple's rules, text messages cannot be monitored. FamilyTime also provides excellent GPS tracking to keep tabs on your kids' location.

Your neighbors at WCFIBER take pride in helping to keep our community better connected and safer for children and families—and we hope we can help make parenting in today's online interconnected world just a bit easier, too!