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Panda Software, Platinum 2006 Internet Security 10.03

Panda Platinum 2006 Internet Security is an integrated suite of products for parental control, anti-virus, privacy, anti-spyware, etc.

Its support of platforms and languages is summarised in the table below:

Type	Client	Server	Service						
Platforms	Win95	Win98	WinME	Win2k	Win03	WinNT	WinXP	Linux	MacOS
Protocols / Applications	browser	instant msg	chat	e-mail	news	file transfer	peer2peer	VoIP	Stream
Languages User Interface	Czech German Polish	Danish Greek Portuguese	Dutch Hungarian Slovak	English Italian Slovenian	Estonian Latvian Spanish	Finnish Lithuanian Swedish	French Maltese		
Languages Filtering Criteria	Czech German Polish	Danish Greek Portuguese	Dutch Hungarian Slovak	English Italian Slovenian	Estonian Latvian Spanish	Finnish Lithuanian Swedish	French Maltese		

The feedback given by the User Reference Group is summarised as follows:

Test domain	Score	Actual score	Average all tools	Best tool
(Un)installing and updating the tool	●●○○	2,0	2,3	2,8
Tailoring and monitoring the filtering	●●○○	2,4	2,5	3,2

The scores of the Lab tests are summarised as follows:

Test domain	Score	Actual score	Average all tools	Best tool
Local language support	●●●●	4,0	2,6	4,0
Effectiveness for kids	●●●○	2,5	2,0	4,0
Effectiveness for adolescents	●●○○	2,0	1,8	2,5
Effectiveness for kids (porn only)	●●●○	2,5	2,6	4,0
Effectiveness for adolescents (porn only)	●●●○	2,5	2,5	4,0
Speed of filtering	●●●○	3,0	3,2	4,0
Security Integrity	●●●○	3,0	2,7	4,0
Legal Compliance	●●○○	2,0	2,4	3,5

1. Configurability

The installation of Panda Platinum 2006 Internet Security is straightforward. The tool comes with a useful default filtering policy.

Potentially harmful content is categorised and can be easily fine-tuned by the child carer in several custom made filters. These filters can be assigned to a user profile, created and managed by the child carer. It is not possible to manage users through a group profile. Child carers do have the possibility to temporarily disable the filter.

Product updates are downloaded automatically.

2. Usability

The user interface of Panda Platinum 2006 Internet Security is easy to understand. The menus are self-explanatory and therefore it is quite easy to install and customise the tool. The tool can be used with only a keyboard, but this is rather difficult.

Help information can be easily accessed and is available in several languages. The user interface is also available in several languages.

3. Filtering Algorithm & Effectiveness

The scores of the Lab tests for the individual effectiveness tests are:

Content Type	Score
Web ICRA filtering	N/A
Instant Messaging	N/A
Chat	N/A
Email	1
Newsgroup	N/A
File Transfer Protocol	N/A
Voice over IP	N/A
Streaming media	N/A
Peer-to-peer	N/A

Web filtering: URL based filtering

Panda Platinum 2006 Internet Security provides the option to block websites based upon several content categories. Furthermore, the child carer can maintain a white list (allowed) and black list (denied) of website URLs.

Web filtering: Content filtering

Panda Platinum 2006 Internet Security does not support ICRA filtering.

Instant messaging MSN

Panda Platinum 2006 Internet Security does not provide instant messaging blocking or filtering. However, the IM application can be added to a list of blocked programs, so it cannot connect to the Internet.

Chat IRC filtering

Panda Platinum 2006 Internet Security does not provide IRC chat filtering or blocking. However, the IRC chat application can be added to a list of blocked programs, so it cannot connect to the Internet.

Email filtering

Panda Platinum 2006 Internet Security provides settings for a spam filter. E-mails are secured by the built-in mail protection. Inbound and outbound messages are scanned to find spam and other potentially harmful content. Spam emails are being tagged as spam, emails containing viruses and other malicious files are automatically disinfected.

Although Panda Platinum 2006 Internet Security provides the option to block browser based email services, we were able to access some email accounts (e.g. Hotmail) while others were blocked (e.g. Yahoo).

Newsgroup filtering

Panda Platinum 2006 Internet Security does not provide Newsgroup filtering or blocking. However, the newsgroup client application can be added to a list of blocked programs, so it cannot connect to the Internet.

File Transfer (FTP) filtering

Panda Platinum 2006 Internet Security does not provide FTP filtering or blocking. However, the FTP application can be added to a list of blocked programs, so it cannot connect to the Internet. It is also possible to add FTP-sites to the black list. Furthermore, it is possible to block the FTP via the firewall.

Voice over IP, streaming media, peer-to-peer blocking

Panda Platinum 2006 Internet Security does not provide VoIP filtering or blocking. However, the VoIP application can be added to a list of blocked programs, so it cannot connect to the Internet.

Panda Platinum 2006 Internet Security does not provide streaming media filtering or blocking. However, it is possible to add the media playing application to the list of blocked programs, so it cannot connect to the Internet.

Panda Platinum 2006 Internet Security does not provide peer-to-peer filtering or blocking. However, the peer-to-peer application can be added to a list of blocked programs, so it cannot connect to the Internet.

4. Performance

Based on the values observed during our, we determined that the memory consumption for the tool Panda Platinum 2006 Internet Security was important compared to the other filtering tools tested. It should be noted that this tool is part of a bigger security package, including firewall or antivirus, and these other components must be also using quite some memory.

However, the results of the tests on CPU usage were very close to those of the base system, thus demonstrating a low consumption of CPU resources.

Based on the HTTP loading tests for this tool, it scored a 3, meaning that there was a low impact in terms of delays and therefore did not degrade the surfing experience significantly.

5. Transparency

When logging in, the user is not informed that Internet filtering, blocking or monitoring software is running.

The user is only notified when a page is blocked. He gets a "web content filtering" page mentioning that access to the requested page has been denied. The page does not mention the reason (website category) why the site is blocked and provides no option to override the blocking.

The log-file contains all information about software updates, firewall blockings and web incidents. It is possible to customize the filter and only see web incidents, e.g. attempts to connect to an unauthorised website. These logs contain additional information about date, time, URL, user and content category, and also the result of the blocking (access blocked, etc.).

Summarised reports contain graphs about blocked threats (known viruses, spyware and other malicious wares). The "unwanted content filtered" topic contains the number of messages with spam and the number of blocked pages.

6. Security Integrity

Network tests

The network security tests performed did not identify security issues caused by the tool.

Local tests

We noted that all users can view the content of the log files, whereas this should be restricted to the child carers only, so children cannot see what another child has done, if there are several children surfing on the same computer.

7. Legal Compliance

The Panda's sales terms & conditions wholly reflect the EU rules of the e-commerce Directive.

In the privacy notice, it is expressly stated that the service provider does not collect any personal data and if it does so, such collection/processing complies with data protection rules. However, we have noticed a number of inconsistencies. The purposes for which personal data are collected (if any) are not sufficiently defined. Other elements are also missing, such as mention of the duration of storage of such data.

Regarding the freedom of users' choice for receiving marketing information, the vendor has established an "opt-in" option. However, the "yes" button expressing the data subject's consent is pre-ticked on the order form.