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CA Inc., Internet Security Suite 2.0

CA's Internet Security Suite provides security and spam filtering for Outlook and Outlook Express filtering. It must be complemented by the K9 Web Protection plug-in from Blue Coat to provide web filtering.

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	Danish	Dutch	English	Estonian	Finnish	French		
	German	Greek	Hungarian	Italian	Latvian	Lithuanian	Maltese		
	Polish	Portuguese	Slovak	Slovenian	Spanish	Swedish			
Languages Filtering Criteria	Czech	Danish	Dutch	English	Estonian	Finnish	French		
	German	Greek	Hungarian	Italian	Latvian	Lithuanian	Maltese		
	Polish	Portuguese	Slovak	Slovenian	Spanish	Swedish			

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	●●○○	2,4	2,3	2,8
Tailoring and monitoring the filtering	●○○○	2,0	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	●●●○	3,0	2,6	4,0
Effectiveness for kids	●●○○	2,0	2,0	4,0
Effectiveness for adolescents	●○○○	1,5	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	●○○○	1,0	2,7	4,0
Legal Compliance	●●●○	3,0	2,4	3,5

1. Configurability

This tool requires child carers to install two separate software programs: Internet Security Suite and K9 Web Protection. This is less convenient than an integrated installation for the full functionality. Nevertheless, the installation is quite straightforward.

Potentially harmful content is categorised, so child carers can choose what needs to be blocked. However, there are no user profiles, so the policy is applied to everyone who uses that PC. Child carers do have the possibility to temporarily disable the filter.

Several default policies exist. Furthermore, a custom policy can be tailored to the child carer's own requirements.

We did not find an obvious way to automatically update the software or black lists / white lists.

2. Usability

The user interface is easy to understand. The menus are self-explanatory and therefore it is quite easy to install and customise the tool.

Online help is easily accessible but provides very little information.

The user interface is available in English only.

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	N/A
Newsgroup	N/A
File Transfer Protocol	N/A
Voice over IP	N/A
Streaming media	Disable
Peer-to-peer	N/A

Web filtering: URL based filtering

K9 supports filtering based on different categories. K9 provides the child carer the ability to add keywords that cause websites to be blocked if they appear in the URL. However, when a word is only a part of the URL, the website still is accessible.

Web filtering: Content filtering

K9 does not filter web pages based on their content. Furthermore, it does not support ICRA filtering.

Instant messaging MSN

K9 does not filter MSN messages. However, the Internet Security Suite allows blocking Internet traffic from the MSN application.

Chat IRC filtering

K9 provides an option to block web pages that contain chat applets. However, K9 does not filter or block chat sessions through IRC applications like mIRC.

Email filtering

K9 provides the option to block email. When activated, all browser based email services are blocked. This setting does not block or filter email traffic when using email applications such as Outlook Express.

Newsgroup filtering

K9 provides the option to block newsgroups. This option only blocks browser based newsgroups. News clients like Thunderbird and Outlook Express still provide access to newsgroups.

File Transfer (FTP) filtering

The option to block File transferring is not provided. FTP is therefore not blocked. Individual FTP applications can be added to a list of programs that cannot connect to the Internet. However, FTP via a browser such as Internet Explorer remains possible in that case.

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

VoIP blocking is not supported by K9.

K9 is able to block streaming media.

K9 provides the option to block peer-to-peer. However, our tests pointed out that the use of peer-to-peer traffic was not blocked.

4. Performance

The CPU and memory consumption tests were not performed on this system, since its filtering mechanism significantly modifies the JavaScript code in the web page, causing technical issues to our testing method.

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 start-up screen does mention that a virus scanner, firewall etc is running.

The user is only notified when a page is blocked. He then gets a "K9 Web Protection" page, mentioning the name of the blocked URL, the K9 category it belongs to, which is the reason (website category) why the site is blocked, and the option to override the blocking temporarily or permanently, by providing the child carer's password.

When trying to access the log file, the file was too big to handle and we could not scroll through the events. K9 starts logging from the installation of the software and continues to increment indefinitely. There is no option to select only the last few days/months or to view the events in several parts. It is however possible to restart the statistics and reset all counters, but this has to be done manually.

The logged events contain information about date and time, (other) content categories and the website URL.

The reports in K9 are filters that can be applied on the activity log. In the "Category Summary", all categories are shown with the number of URL requests (allowed, allowed with a warning and blocked). When clicking on a content category, the log file is opened and all events are shown for this specific content category.

The same is true for "General Overview". Here, we can see all event logs for "URL requests", "Blocked by category", "Blocked by keyword", "Blocked by URL override", "Allowed by URL override", "Local requests", "Unrated" and "System overrides".

6. Security Integrity

Network tests

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

Local tests

By inserting special parameters in forbidden URLs, we were able to bypass the filtering mechanism and access harmful pages on known "bad" sites (e.g. playboy.com and sex.com). These sites were of course black listed and should not have been accessible at any point in time.

7. Legal Compliance

CA's website privacy statement states that users may choose not to reveal certain types of data identifying them and thus, not to access the portions of the vendor's services that require such information. Also, it is explicitly mentioned that if the vendor chooses third parties to provide a number of services, these parties are bound by a written agreement not to use the users' data for other purposes than the ones determined by the vendor and to keep such data confidential. Further, users are informed that their data may be transferred or processed in the US or another country outside of their country of residence.

On the contrary, the "opt-out" mode found on the vendor's website raises some concerns. Users have normally to express their consent for receiving commercial communications by "ticking" the "yes" or "no" button. However, the "yes" button is pre-ticked in the on-line purchase order.