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ContentWatch Inc., ContentProtect 2.1

ContentProtect from ContentWatch Inc. provides browser-independent web filtering, blocking for instant messaging, newsgroups and P2P, as well as time-based application blocking. It also provides chat logging, but does not filter chat.

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	●●○○	1,7	2,3	2,8
Tailoring and monitoring the filtering	●●○○	2,3	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	●●○○	2,0	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)	●●○○	2,0	2,5	4,0
Speed of filtering	●●○○	2,0	3,2	4,0
Security Integrity	●●●●	4,0	2,7	4,0
Legal Compliance	●●○○	2,0	2,4	3,5

1. Configurability

Several users can be created, so each child can have a specific profile. To ease the initial user setup, new user profile settings can be copied from a Factory User, or from previously created user settings. For each profile, the child carer can choose which content categories should be blocked, and whether specific application types such as web browsing, IM, news, P2P are to be blocked or not. Users can be added and removed separately. However, it is not possible to manage users through a group profile.

Program updates can be downloaded either manually or automatically.

2. Usability

The user interface is straightforward and user-friendly, so most options would not require additional guidance for most child carers. The online help seemed inaccessible at the time of our tests.

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

Web filtering: URL based filtering

ContentProtect provides URL filtering. Based on the tests performed, we noted significant underblocking.

Web filtering: Content filtering

ContentProtect provides the ability to filter websites on different categories of content. It does not support ICRA filtering.

Based on the tests performed, we noted significant underblocking, combined with some overblocking.

Instant messaging MSN

ContentProtect allows child carers to either block or allow instant messaging. This functionality worked in our test environment.

Chat IRC filtering

ContentProtect does not provide the ability to block IRC applications like mIRC, but web based chatboxes can be blocked.

Email filtering

ContentProtect provides an option to block email. However, not all web-based email is blocked. Accessible web-based email services were not content filtered.

When using email clients like Outlook Express and Mozilla Thunderbird, all e-mails were downloaded without any content filtering.

Newsgroup filtering

ContentProtect provides an option to block newsgroups. When trying to connect to a newsgroup server in Thunderbird and Outlook Express, a warning message is given and download of the messages is prohibited.

File Transfer (FTP) filtering

ContentProtect does not provide an option to block or filter File Transferring.

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

ContentProtect does not have an option to block VoIP or streaming media.

ContentProtect provides an option to block peer-to-peer. When activated, peer-to-peer connections are not allowed.

4. Performance

Based on the values observed during our tests, we determined that the impact on memory consumption for the tool ContentProtect was low. The results of the tests on CPU usage were quite 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 2, meaning that there was a relevant delay that could be noticed by the user.

5. Transparency

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

When a website or functionality (e.g. IM) is blocked, the user gets a ContentWatch message that the action is blocked. The URL of the blocked website and the reason (content category) is given. The warning message provides the option to request an override, or to override the blocking immediately by giving in the child carer's password.

The reporting provides an overview of the web pages visited and IM messages sent and received, over the past 30 days, per day and per user, categorised by content category. The logging, if

enabled by the child carer, provides a drill-down functionality, starting with overview pie charts with the option to go into more detail till the web page and IM message level, even including the IM content.

6. Security Integrity

Network tests

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

Local tests

The local security tests performed did not identify significant security issues.

7. Legal Compliance

There is a very clear description of solution's functionality through a number of documents (White Paper, users' testimonials, press releases, etc.). The privacy statement contains a number of positive elements, such as (a) the express mention that actual file names or personally identifiable information is not tracked or recorded by Content Watch; (b) changes to the privacy notice will individually be notified to users, (c) a specific clause on children's privacy.

Yet, we noticed that the administration back-end is running on the vendor's site. As we do not know the level of detail of users' information that is actually maintained at the vendor's site we cannot assess whether this complies with the privacy statement published.

Furthermore, the quite wide warranty disclaimer ("the entire risk as to the results and performance of the software is assumed by you") may pose some concerns as to its compliance with the EU fair trade practices rules.