Filtering the Internet

For both Torah and psychological reasons, it is imperative that even necessary internet activity be limited to safe browsing. Every point at which you or your family members access the internet must be provided with an appropriate filter or content control system.

Internet Filters: Three Categories

ISP-Level Filters: Only available from your internet service provider ("ISP", e.g., Rimon, Etrog, Moreshet), these filter all content that arrives via the access point (phone line) before it arrives to the modem or computer. ISP-level filtering protects all computers accessing the internet through the access point.

OS-Level Filters: Available as both free and paid applications (e.g., K9, SafeEyes), these applications run on your computer's operating system (OS) to monitor and either prevent access to "black-listed" content, or alternatively only allow "white-listed" content. Some OS-level filters offer advanced functionality such as user-defined time limits, instant messaging tracking, P2P (peer-to-peer) file sharing control, and gaming and multimedia consumption (music/video) control.

Activity Monitoring: Typically subscription-based, these are applications that run in your system's background to unobtrusively monitor and log all internet activity, while not necessarily restricting it. Examples include Web Chaver, CovenantEyes and SafeEyes. At specified intervals, activity logs are sent to your "*chavrusa*" (partner) who reviews your usage. A similar, more labor-intensive (but cheaper) option is a system-level keylogger.

Choose Filtering Level Depending on Needs

Accidental Browsing Protection

To protect oneself from accidental click-throughs to inappropriate sites, an OS-level filter is typically adequate. Note that these are oftentimes easily circumvented (although K9 is harder to work around). These usually allow access to all popular social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, although some can be configured to block access

- **K9 Web Filter** (http://www1.k9webprotection.com/) provides a relatively safe method of browsing the internet and has several degrees of filtering options.
- **OpenDNS** (http://www.opendns.com/) provides numerous filtering levels but has no password protection to disable. OpenDNS also requires some PC expertise to set up.

While not technically an OS-level filter, for the purposes of browsing the internet at this level, OpenDNS functions in a similar capacity.

Impulsive Browsing Protection

In addition to a basic password-protected OS-level filter (the more advanced the better), an activity monitor is strongly recommended.

- **Web Chaver** (http://www.webchaver.org/) (activity monitor only) is quite inexpensive ($4 per month) but should be used in conjunction with a filter.
- **Safe Eyes** (http://www.internetsafety.com/) ($50 per year) offers built in activity monitoring in addition to advanced filtering and other functionality. Email filtering is offered as well. A discount is available for *frum* families.

Protection from Filter Circumvention or Disabling

If children are in the home, or if you use an unlocked WiFi wireless network that is accessible to the people nearby your home, more secure filtering technology is vital, even if you think your children are not using the internet. In addition to an OS-level filter and an activity monitor, you need an ISP-level filter.

- **Rimon** (http://www.neto.net.il/) offers multiple levels of filtering, both black- and white-list based. Rimon targets the *Dati Leumi* community. Most levels allow social networking sites through.
- **Etrog** (http://www.etrog.net.il/), a subsidiary of Rimon, targets the *Charedi* community. A strict and extensive white-list based filter, it does not allow most social networking sites through at this time, nor will it allow women's clothing sites (eg., GAP.com) through its filters.
- **Moreshet** is a filtering service available through most standard ISPs (such as 012, 015, 017, and Netvision), and offers multiple levels of filtering, including an email-only option.
- **Nativ** is technically an OS-level filter, but it is offered in conjunction with a "*kav mugan*" (protected line).