

# WEB FILTER TYPES & OPTIONS

Compiled by Melinda Van Patten, E-Rate Central

## **Browser-based filters**

Browser-based types of web filters are typically extensions, applications or add-ons that can be installed and used with a particular web browser. While not the most thorough filter, these types of web filters are widely available and are very convenient for users. Some popular options for browser-based filtering include Blocks, a program available for Google Chrome and Mozilla Firefox which blocks pre-defined content from user access. The main downfall of these types of web filters is that users can circumvent them by switching web browsers. By doing so, the user renders the filter on the initial browser useless.

## **Search engine filters**

Search engine types of filters sift out unsuitable content from the results a user sees when looking up information through a search engine. Some search engines have this feature built in to their user interface. Google and Bing have Safe Search options for those who want to filter out inappropriate content in their search results. Both of these search engines have Safe Search on as a default, but one does not need administrative privileges to turn these filters off. Search engine filters can also be easily circumvented if the user knows the URL of the site they are trying to access or if they use another search engine that does not have a similar filter.

## **Client-side filters**

Client-side filters are filtering programs installed on the device an employee or student uses. Such filtering programs typically have to be installed and configured on each individual device, making these types of web filters more time consuming to install than others. While these types of web filters may be ideal for a small business, larger businesses may not want to deal with the hassle of setting up this type of web filter on more than a few computers. These types of web filters can also be easily circumvented by those who have administrative privileges since these types of web filters are often directly installed on the device and not controlled by a central program.

## **Network-based filters**

The next type of web filtering is called network-based web filtering. Network-based types of web filters are typically implemented at either the transport or application layers of a network. These types of web filters are set up as either a web proxy or a transport proxy to guard the network. They serve as the middleman between outgoing requests and incoming information. They also usually guard the individual IP addresses of all of the workstations on the network by only displaying the IP address of the filter to outside users. The web filtering capabilities can be customized to fit a library's needs, allowing them to block different categories of web content or specific sites.

Washoe County Library System uses:

**Cisco OpenDNS Family Shield.** <https://www.opendns.com/setupguide/#familyshield>

Family Shield is **free for library use** as they do not use the product to make money (Government and Non-Profits have that option).

The service connects with Envisionware, a software product that manages Internet sessions on computers. A guest pass or sign-on with a child card will automatically trigger Envisionware to activate the Family Shield filter without staff intervention. Adult users have a toggle option where they can turn the filter off without staff intervention. Contact the Washoe Co Library for information on their experience, Jeff Scott, Director, [jscott@washoecounty.us](mailto:jscott@washoecounty.us), 775.327.8340

Here is a list of the top web filters as reported by [TrustRadius](#):



### [Cisco Umbrella](#)

21 Ratings

Cisco now offers OpenDNS Umbrella Web Filtering. Cisco acquired OpenDNS in August 2015 and rebranded the product as Cisco

Umbrella.

- [Reviews \(13\)](#)
- [Alternatives](#)
- [Compare Cisco Umbrella](#)



### [Barracuda Web Filter](#)

18 Ratings

California-based Barracuda Networks offers a web content filtering solution.

- [Reviews \(4\)](#)
- [Alternatives](#)
- [Compare Barracuda Web Filter](#)



## [Untangle NG Firewall](#)

10 Ratings

Untangle in San Jose, California offers NG Firewall, a firewall platform with network performance monitoring and web content filtering features.

- [Reviews \(3\)](#)
- [Alternatives](#)
- [Compare Untangle NG Firewall](#)



## [Forcepoint URL Filtering](#)

6 Ratings

Austin-based Websense offers Web Filter & Security, a web content filtering product.

- [Reviews \(3\)](#)
- [Alternatives](#)
- [Compare Forcepoint URL Filtering](#)



## [FortiGuard Web Filtering Service](#)

6 Ratings

Fortinet headquartered in Sunnyvale, California offers the FortiGuard Web Filtering Service, a web content filter. (Henderson District Libraries use this.)

- [Reviews \(1\)](#)
- [Alternatives](#)
- [Compare FortiGuard Web Filtering Service](#)



## Smoothwall SWG

2 Ratings

Smoothwall SWG is the web security gateway and content filtering from UK company Smoothwall.

- [Reviews \(1\)](#)
- [Alternatives](#)
- [Compare Smoothwall SWG](#)



## ContentProtect

1 Rating

ContentWatch in Salt Lake City, Utah offers ContentProtect, a web content filtering solution.

- [Reviews \(1\)](#)
- [Alternatives](#)
- [Compare ContentProtect](#)



## Sophos Web Content Filtering

5 Ratings

UK headquartered Sophos offers web content filtering.

- [Reviews \(1\)](#)
- [Alternatives](#)
- [Compare Sophos Web Content Filtering](#)



## [GoGuardian Admin](#)

1 Rating

GoGuardian Admin is a web content filtering solution from education software company GoGuardian in Los Angeles, provide web filtering on-campus and off-campus filtering.

- [Reviews \(1\)](#)
- [Alternatives](#)
- [Compare GoGuardian Admin](#)



## [Trustwave Web Content Filtering](#)

We don't have enough ratings and reviews to provide an overall score.

Chicago-based Trustwave offers web content filtering, via its acquisition of M86 Security (March, 2012).

- [Trustwave Web Content Filtering Alternatives](#)



## [EdgeWave Web Content Filtering](#)

We don't have enough ratings and reviews to provide an overall score.

EdgeWave in San Diego, California (formerly St. Bernard Software), offers web content filtering.

- [EdgeWave Web Content Filtering Alternatives](#)



## McAfee Web Protection

6 Ratings

McAfee offers web content filtering via McAfee Web Protection, a cloud or on-premise software solution.

- [McAfee Web Protection Alternatives](#)



## SonicWall Web Content Filtering Client (CFC)

7 Ratings

The SonicWall Web Content Client (CFC) compares requested sites against its database of web sites to provide configurable content filtering.

- [SonicWall Web Content Filtering Client \(CFC\) Alternatives](#)

## **CIPA or Filtering Questions:**

- Nevada State E-Rate Team, [nevada@e-ratecentral.com](mailto:nevada@e-ratecentral.com)
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- Norma Fowler at the Nevada State Library, 775-684-3407 or [nfowler@admin.nv.gov](mailto:nfowler@admin.nv.gov)

