

Have you ever vacationed somewhere that has no Internet access? For many people, this is a pretty weird experience: no social media, emails, texts, or Netflix. The last time I had this foreign experience was on a camping trip with my son. It felt like life almost stopped. It's pretty hard to imagine our world today without the Internet. For most Americans, the Internet has fundamentally changed the way we work, live, and socialize. We have access to more information than any previous generation.

The challenge for us, as followers of Christ, is to use this amazing tool responsibly, and, more importantly, to train the next generation to do the same. There are many filtering and accountability options available today. However, the vast majority are focused on a single device or application. The recommendations made in this guide are intended to cover the most comprehensive approaches.

FILTERING VS. ACCOUNTABILITY

Sometimes these terms are interchanged or confused, but filtering and accountability are really two different things. Filtering is a process that restricts access to specific locations on the Internet, based on content. Accountability is reporting to someone else your online actions and behaviors. Both are important and should be a part of any Internet usage plan.

The most important concept to understand (especially for parents) is that responsible Internet usage is a choice. With an average of 140,000 new web pages added to the Internet every day, it is impossible for filters to always be current on the content of every site.

Accountability apps only work if you use them. The simplest way to get around an accountability app is to simply use a device without one (a friend's phone, library computer, work computer, etc.). The goal is not about locking down the Internet, but rather setting healthy boundaries and advocating the benefits of responsible Internet usage to our families and group members.

FILTERING

The good news about filters is that the best ones are free! We recommend that you use Google SafeSearch and OpenDNS.

SIGNING UP FOR GOOGLE SAFESearch:

- You will need a Google account. If you don't have one, visit <https://accounts.google.com/SignUp>
- Log in to your Google account and visit <http://www.google.com/preferences>
- Turn on SafeSearch

SIGNING UP FOR OPENDNS:

- Go to <https://www.opendns.com/home-internet-security/>
- Under the Parental Controls, select "Get Started" and follow the account set-up instructions

ACCOUNTABILITY FOR THOSE WHO STRUGGLE

For those who are currently struggling with sexual addiction, we recommend using CovenantEyes (CE). It is important to note that CE doesn't support Chromebook devices and that iPhones and iPads must be correctly configured with the help of an accountability partner. The main feature for those struggling is the detail of the accountability report. Basic plans with CE start at \$9.99/month.

To get started, go to puredesire.org/resources. Be sure to use the promo code "puredesire" to get your first month free and help support Pure Desire.

ACCOUNTABILITY FOR FAMILIES

For families, we recommend Accountable2You (AU). Although the accountability reporting is not as comprehensive as CE, AU does log all web and app data. The main feature for families that AU offers is coverage on all devices (Mac, PC, Chromebook, Linux, iOS, and Android). Basic plans with CE start at \$4.99/month.

To get started, go to puredesire.org/resources. Be sure to use our affiliate link to help support Pure Desire.