

There are many dangers in allowing your employees to access the internet. By controlling their online activity you are reducing the risks. **By Craig Hinton**

**W**hile it would be nice to think that everyone who has internet access in the workplace uses it to improve productivity and increase efficiency, we all know that

this is far from the truth. Unlimited and unrestricted access can cause all manner of problems. Companies need to exercise a degree of control over their employees' internet

usage, and thankfully a number of vendors have recognized this and have produced products which allow internet security policies to be enforced.

## SurfControl Web Filter

<b>Version</b>	4.2
<b>Supplier</b>	SurfControl plc
<b>Price</b>	\$16 (500 users)
<b>Contact</b>	www.surfcontrol.com

**S**urfControl has long been a name in internet security, with its CyberPatrol product one of the best known applications for home use, and its Web Filter application is an excellent business tool for micro-managing users' access to the internet.

SurfControl Web Filter is designed to allow different users or groups different degrees of access to the internet. At the most basic level, there is a list of URLs, updated daily, which no user can access. This is completely customizable, but the supplied list, with 40 categories, should be sufficient for most companies.

Rather than waving a big stick at anyone who dares to surf outside permitted sites, SurfControl Web Filter allows you to decide the severity of the warning you show users when they stray. A sports site can provoke a mild telling off, while a hard-core porn site can be reported to the administrator and leave the user with a very firm reminder that such sites are not



allowed at work.

SurfControl Web Filter also offers extremely fine-tuned bandwidth control. You can set it so that users are allowed to download large files or streaming media from specific types of sites at particular times – or not download at all, of course.

To ensure the best use of the product, care must be taken as to where in the network it is placed. Ideally, it should be installed as close to the network edge as possible, otherwise there is a danger that it will be unable to see all the traffic that passes through from the internet. Installation is very simple, and configuration is performed through the Rules Administrator window, which is a well-thought-out GUI that enables you to set access rules with the minimum of fuss.

All monitoring is carried out via the monitor window; this shows all users and the sites that they are visiting or attempting to visit. One very useful aspect of this is that you can drill down into the list, which means that you don't have to constantly run reports.

The level of granularity offered by this product makes it one of the most powerful tools in this Group Test. It is perfect for business environments that permit a limited amount of 'free range' internet access but still want to ensure that misuse doesn't occur.

### SC MAGAZINE RATING

Features	★★★★★
Ease of use	★★★★★
Performance	★★★★★
Documentation	★★★★★
Support	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★★
<b>OVERALL RATING</b>	<b>★★★★★</b>

**FOR** Management of internet access at both a user level and a page level.

**AGAINST** None.

**VERDICT** Offering control over internet access at a user and page level, this is the perfect product for companies that have an employee base that requires different levels of access.



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