

TAKE CONTROL *of* DIGITAL DEVICES *to* **PROTECT YOUR CHILD**



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DISCLAIMER:

Some of the techniques in this document involve changing the way your device works. You should always back up your device before installing new software or making any changes to your settings.

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The two most important apps

Trust and Supervision

The two best apps for keeping your children safe are supervision and trust. I would suggest that while your children are young, you should insist that they keep their iPad, computer and other digital devices in family spaces, where you can keep an eye on them, and not in their bedroom. Encourage them also to tell you if they see anything on their device which they feel uncomfortable about - and make it very clear that they won't get in trouble for showing it to you.

Resist the temptation to give in to their requests to sign up for age-inappropriate web services like Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram and WhatsApp. Each of these sites have terms of service which state that children under 13 are not to use the site.

While trust and supervision are the most important tools in your toolkit, it's quite possible for children to inadvertently stumble upon things that they cannot un-see, or to follow their natural curiosity into the elephant graveyard (like Simba



and Nala in the Lion King).

There are tools we can use to protect our children from those pit-falls. The following pages are offered to present some options that you may like to consider. Some are free, others have a cost.

I think of these tools the way I think about pool fencing. They go a long way to helping keep our children safe, but they are no substitute for supervision and trust.

Limiting options on the iPad

Restrictions

The iPad itself has a built-in parental control feature called “Restrictions”. You can find it by going to Settings > General > Restrictions.

In there you can allow or disallow certain apps including Safari, the camera and iTunes Store. You can also choose ratings for Music, Podcasts, News, Apps, Websites and TV Shows.

You will need to choose a password for Restrictions. Choose one that is different to the device password. That way your child can still log into the iPad itself to use it, but won’t be able to log into the Restrictions to change the settings.

Restrictions | **Already installed** | **\$free**



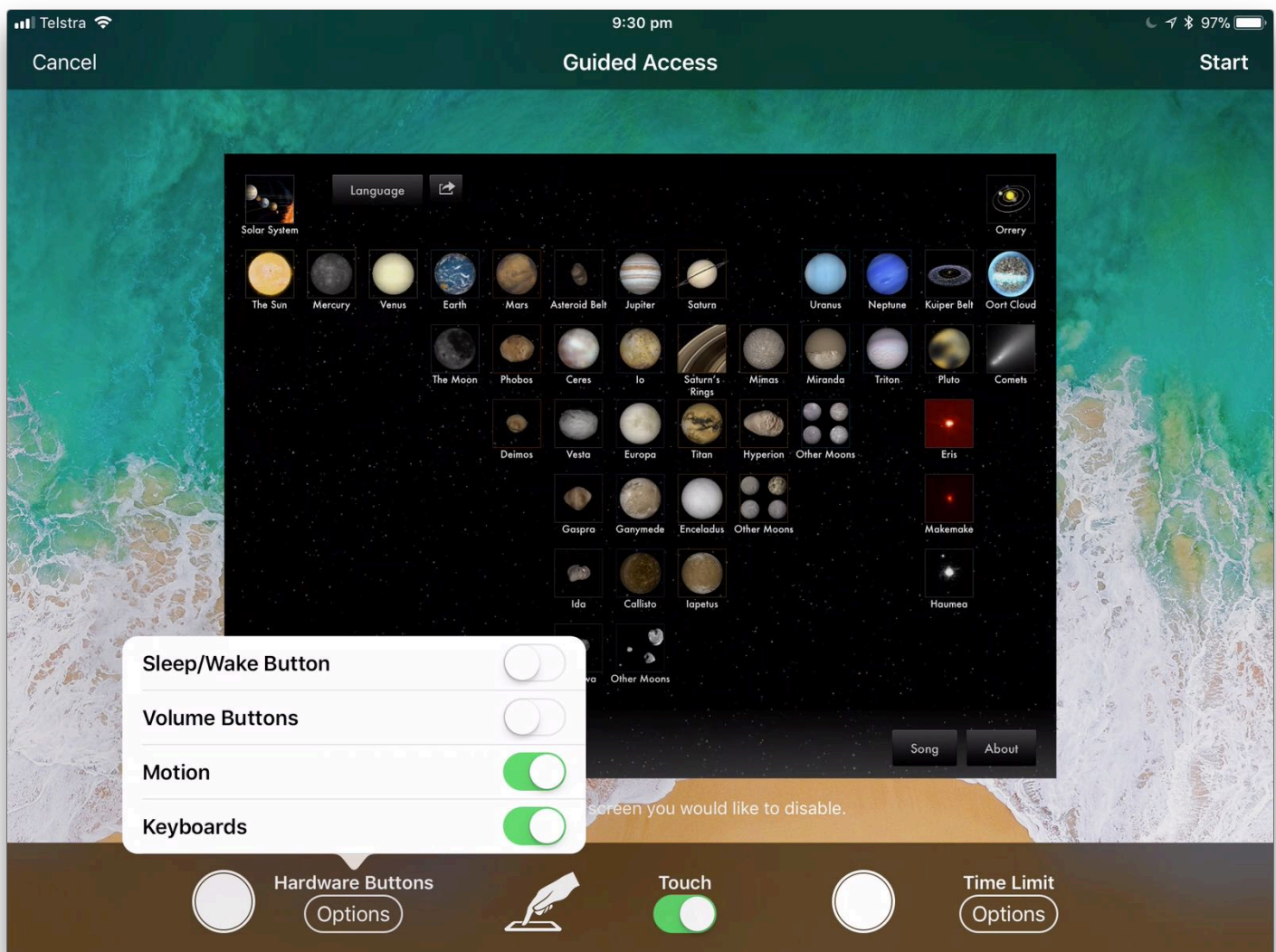
Locking the iPad Down

Guided Access

The iPad has a very useful setting that lots of people don't know about. It's called Guided Access. You have to enable it by going to Settings > General > Accessibility > Guided Access. There you will have to set a password for Guided Access. You don't want this to be the same password as the one that unlocks the device.

Once you have enabled Guided Access, when your child is in an app that he is meant to be using, you can tripple-click the home button, and enable a time limit for Guided Access, disable the physical buttons on the iPad (so he can't leave the app), disable touch, or keyboard, even draw circles on areas of the screen that you don't want your child to interact with.

Guided Access | Already installed | \$free

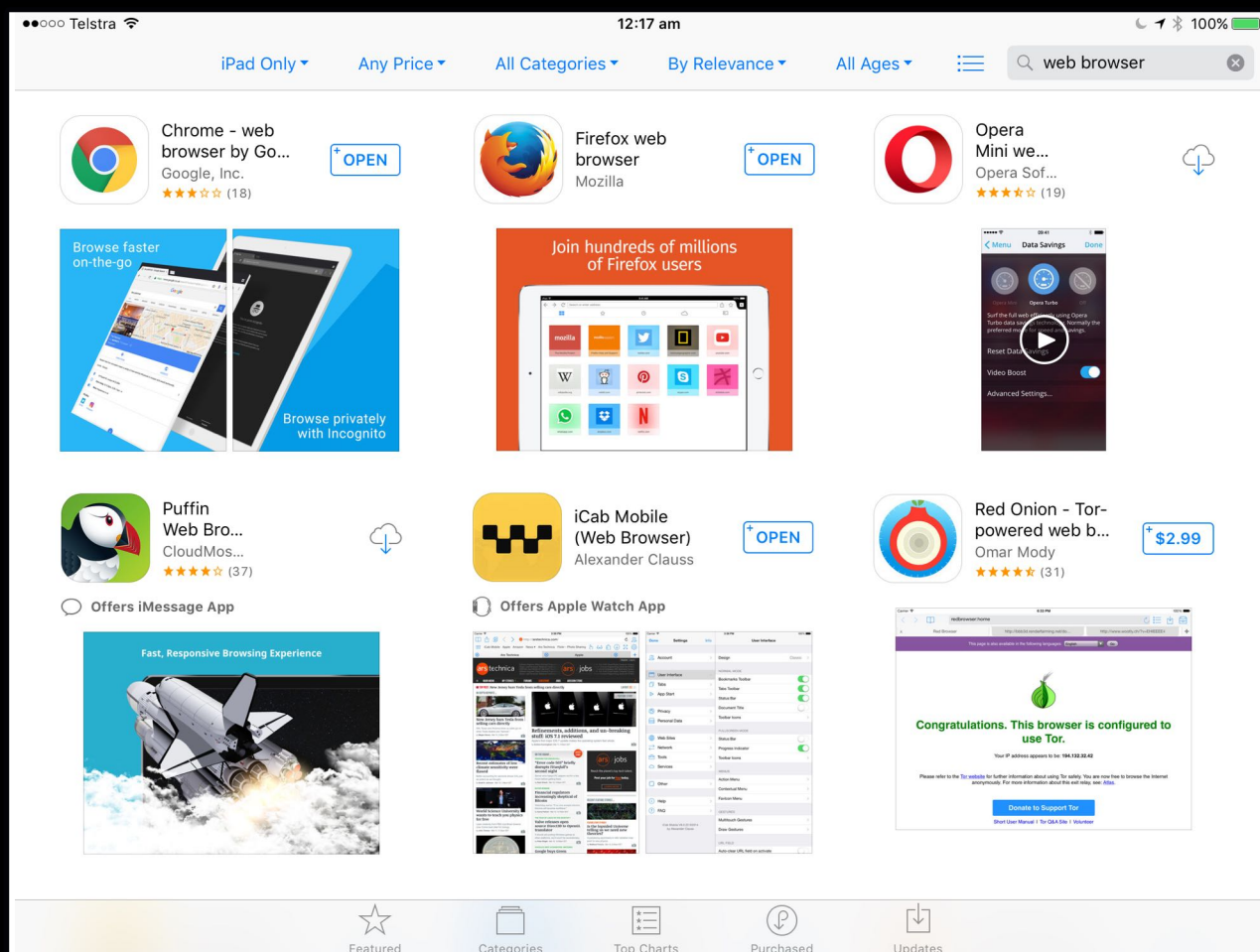


Beware of third party browsers

Browsers

The iPad comes with Safari as the default web browser. There are many other browsers available on the app store, including Chrome and Firefox. These are good browsers, but you should be aware that the parental controls you set in Restrictions only apply to Apple's own browser - Safari. If you allow your child to install (say) Chrome, they will have unlimited access to the internet, irrespective of any age-appropriate content limitations you may have set.

My advice is to insist that your child only uses Safari, disallow the downloading of apps from the app store in Restrictions. The only downside is that when your child wants to download an app, you will need to enter the Restrictions password.



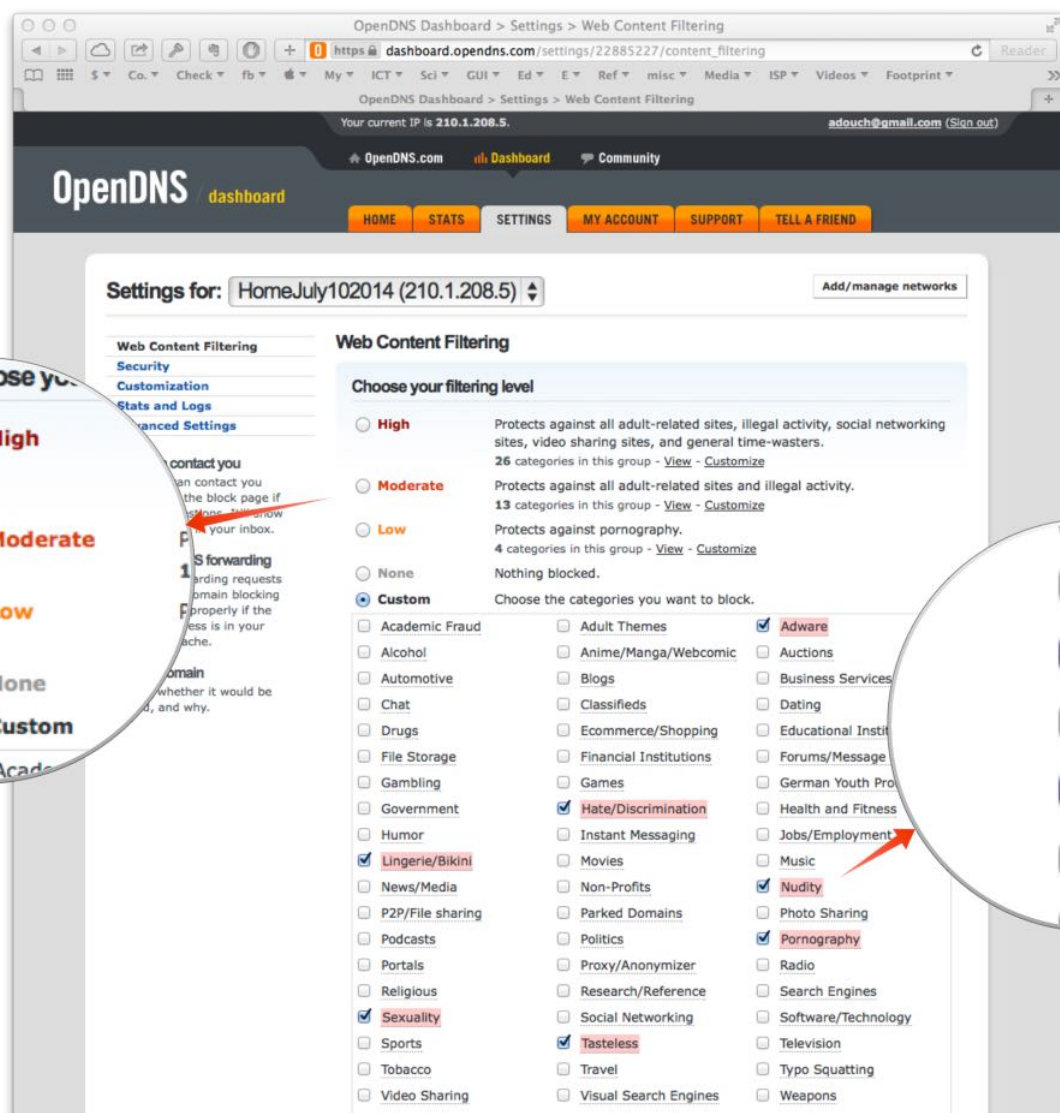
Change the phone book

Open DNS

When you sign up with an ISP (Telstra, iiNet, Optus, Internode, etc) they give you free use of their DNS server. A DNS server is like a phone book. When you type www.andrewdouch.com.au the DNS server looks up that website name and converts it to a number (an “IP address”) and “dials” it for you.

You don’t however, have to use the DNS server provided by your ISP. You can change to use any DNS server you like. OpenDNS provides a free DNS server that you can use, which also protects any device connected to your Wi-Fi network from malware, phishing sites and allows you to filter the internet. In other words you can block certain types of websites for any device in your home. It’s not fool-proof - but it’s pretty good!

It’s quite easy to set up too. Head to their website, sign up for a free account and they walk you through setting it up on your network.



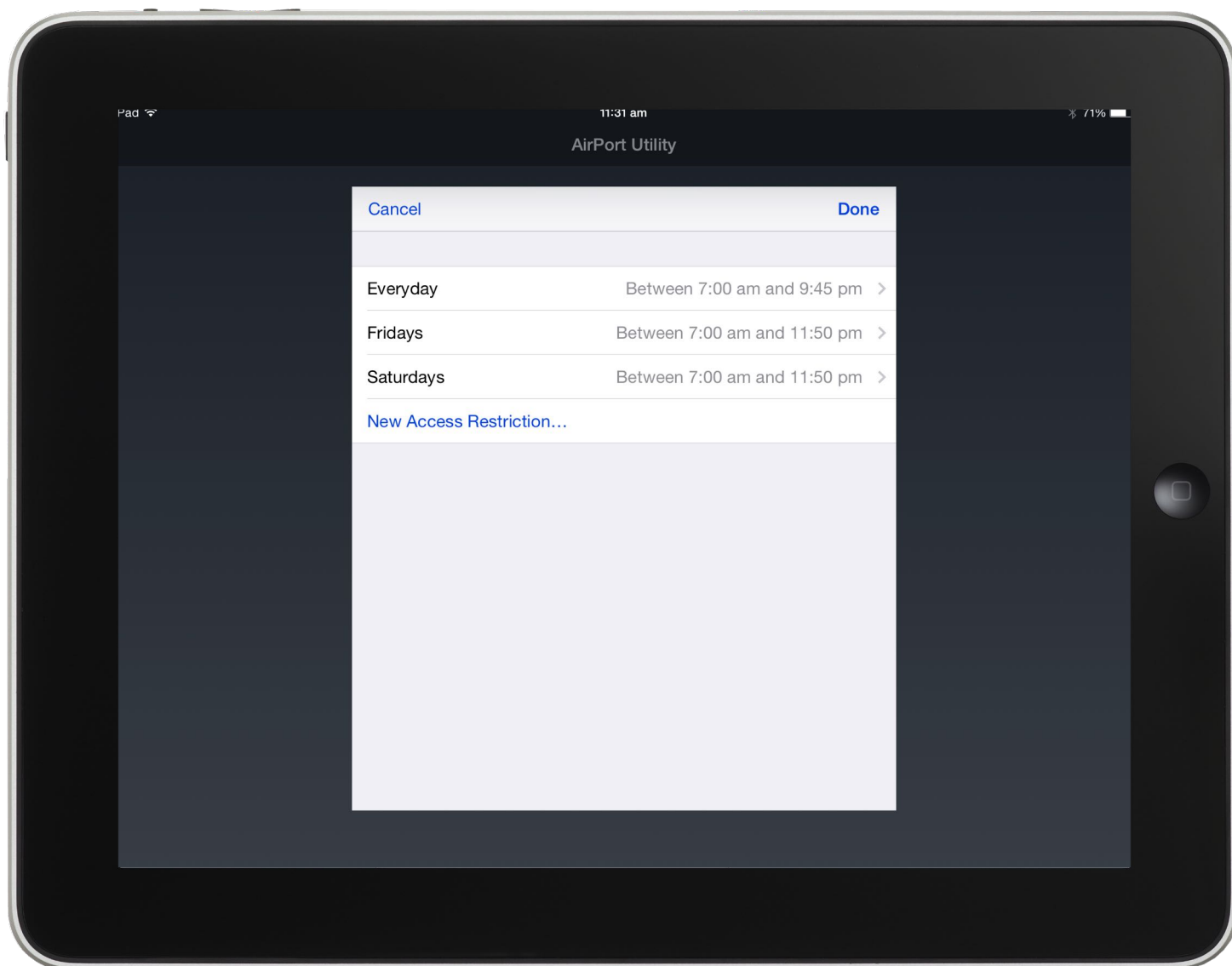
OpenDNS | <https://www.opendns.com/home-internet-security/> | \$free

Take control of your Wi-Fi Network

Router-level Control

Most modern routers (and even ones that are not so modern) have the ability to allow and disallow access to your home Wi-Fi network based on time. For example, you can allow your child's iPad to connect to Wi-Fi between 7 AM and 7 PM - but not after that.

Depending on the brand and model of router you have, it may be called “timed access control” or something similar. It should be fairly trivial, once you have logged into your router's configuration page, to find the tab that allows you to nominate specific devices and limit their access to the network at particular times.



If you are in the market for a new Wi-Fi router, consider the Eero mesh router system. They are not cheap, but your Wi-Fi coverage and speed will likely improve and they provide a \$99/year option called Eero Plus which allows content filtering. It is a simple, if not inexpensive option. Getting set up with Eero will set you back between US\$200 - \$500 (plus a \$99 subscription to Eero Plus).

One of the original filters - and one of the best

Net Nanny

Net Nanny has been around for a long time and they are still one of the best internet filters for home users. It provides parental controls, web filtering, time management, and alerts and reporting (so you can see what your kids have been doing online). It is very full-featured.

This option is similar to using OpenDNS but much more user friendly. Unlike OpenDNS it's not free, but it's not very expensive either, at least compared to the value of what you are protecting. The price varies depending on how many devices you are using it with and what platform they are running. The prices are all listed on the front page of their website.



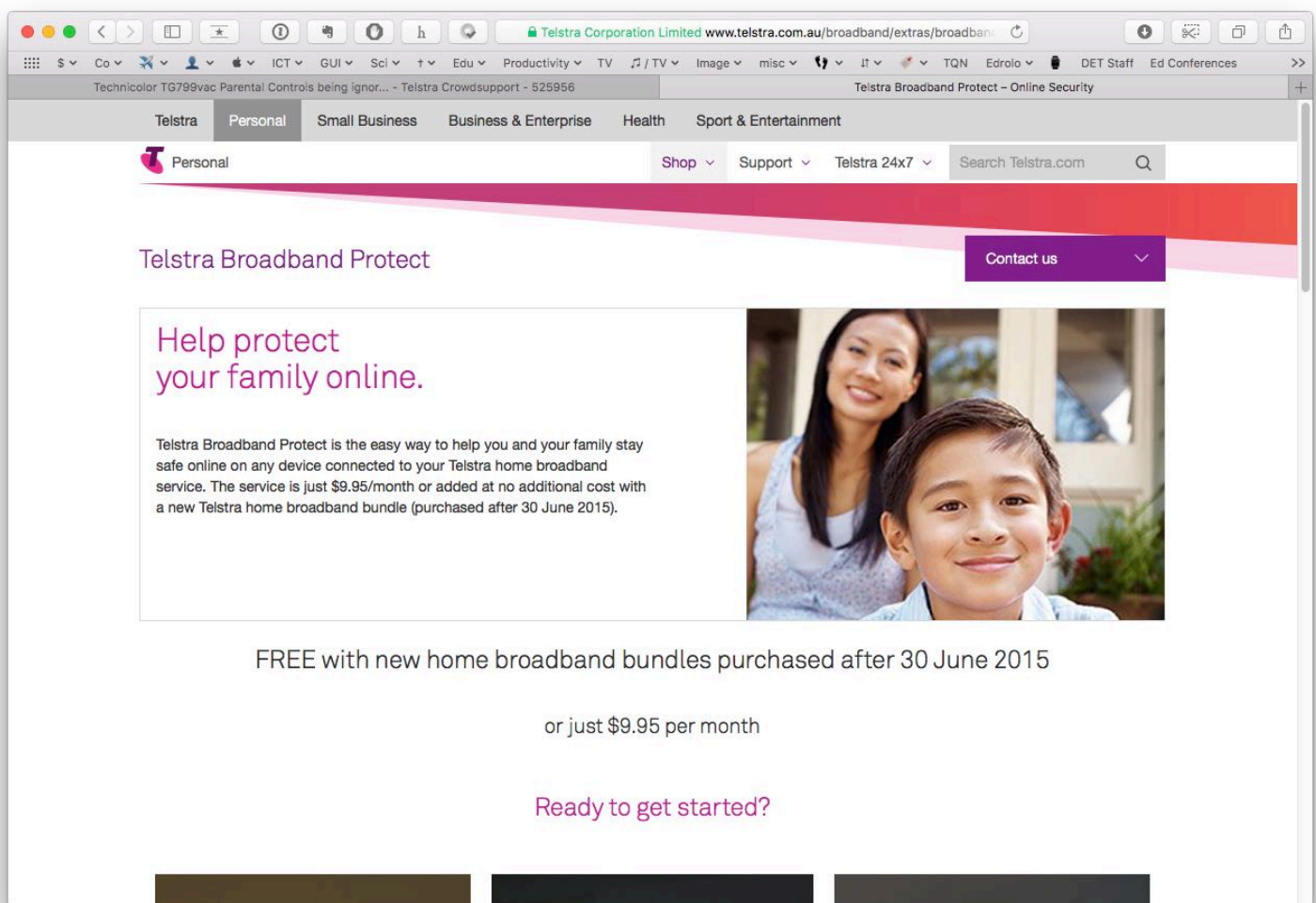
Net Nanny | <https://www.netnanny.com> | Various pricing plans

Consider switching ISPs

Telstra

If you have a broadband plan with Telstra (and if you joined after 30th June 2015) they offer a free internet filter which is excellent and really, really easy. In fact you don't have to do anything but log into your account and enable it!

If you joined Telstra prior to June 2015, it costs \$9.95 per month, a price comparable to using Net Nanny. You do have to be a Telstra customer to use it, however.



Telstra | <https://www.telstra.com> | free with Telstra broadband

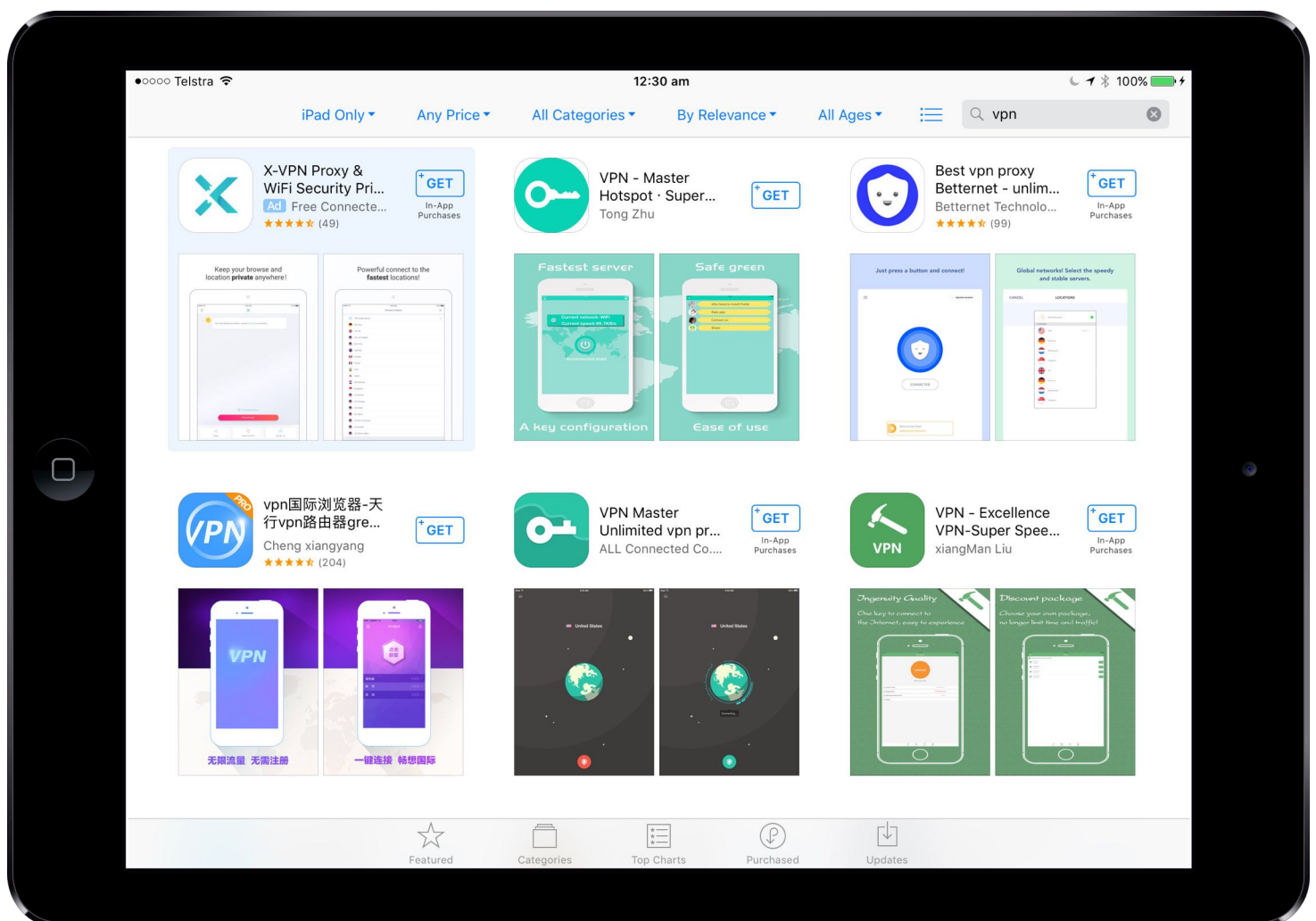
Beware of the back door!

VPN

VPN (Virtual Private Network) software has a legitimate purpose. If you are using public Wi-Fi such as in a café or hotel, it is very wise to use a VPN to protect your internet traffic. A VPN encrypts everything you do on your device, and sends it encrypted to a VPN server somewhere else in the world which decrypts it and forwards it on to where you sent it. This means that if someone nearby is using malicious software such as WireShark, they can't 'sniff' your traffic - keeping you secure.

I can't think of any reason kids would need VPN software though! Many kids use VPN software to get around the internet filters that their parents have installed. OpenDNS, Net Nanny - even Telstra's web filters will not be able to protect your child if s/he uses a VPN, because the VPN prevents the internet filter from being able to tell what kind of site your child is accessing.

My advice is to enable Restrictions on your child's iPad, and disallow downloading of apps. This is a little inconvenient of course, but it means your child will not be able to get around the other restrictions you have put in place.



A great solution!

Curbi

Curbi takes a different approach to device management. Instead of filtering the internet and setting timed access controls on your router, Curbi does it on the device, but you can manage it online.

Curbi allows you to set bed times, block adult content and block certain categories on a per-device basis. You can create a set of rules that the device will follow. For example, you might disable all games during school hours, and disable the internet after bed time - or you could disable the device completely after bed time.

There is a free account, but it's very limited and a bit frustrating, in that when you turn blocking off, all the apps on the device are rearranged into alphabetical order! If you plan to use Curbi at all, I would suggest choosing the full premium package, plus internet filter. This will cost \$7 per month, per device. As well as giving you much more flexibility regarding what apps you block, it allows you to simply disable internet access - avoiding the app-rearrangement annoyance.

In order to use Curbi, you install the Curbi app on your child's iPad. Of course the child *could* uninstall the app, to prevent your rules from working, but Curbi does send you an email to tell you that this has happened if it does. The better alternative, is to use Restrictions on the iPad to prevent your child from deleting apps.

www.curbi.com

curbi - free parental controls for Android and Apple mobile devices

HOME PRICING SUPPORT MORE... LOG IN SIGN UP NOW

Keeping mobile devices locked, blocked and safe for your child.

Try curbi today! It's FREE, forever.

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Another great solution!

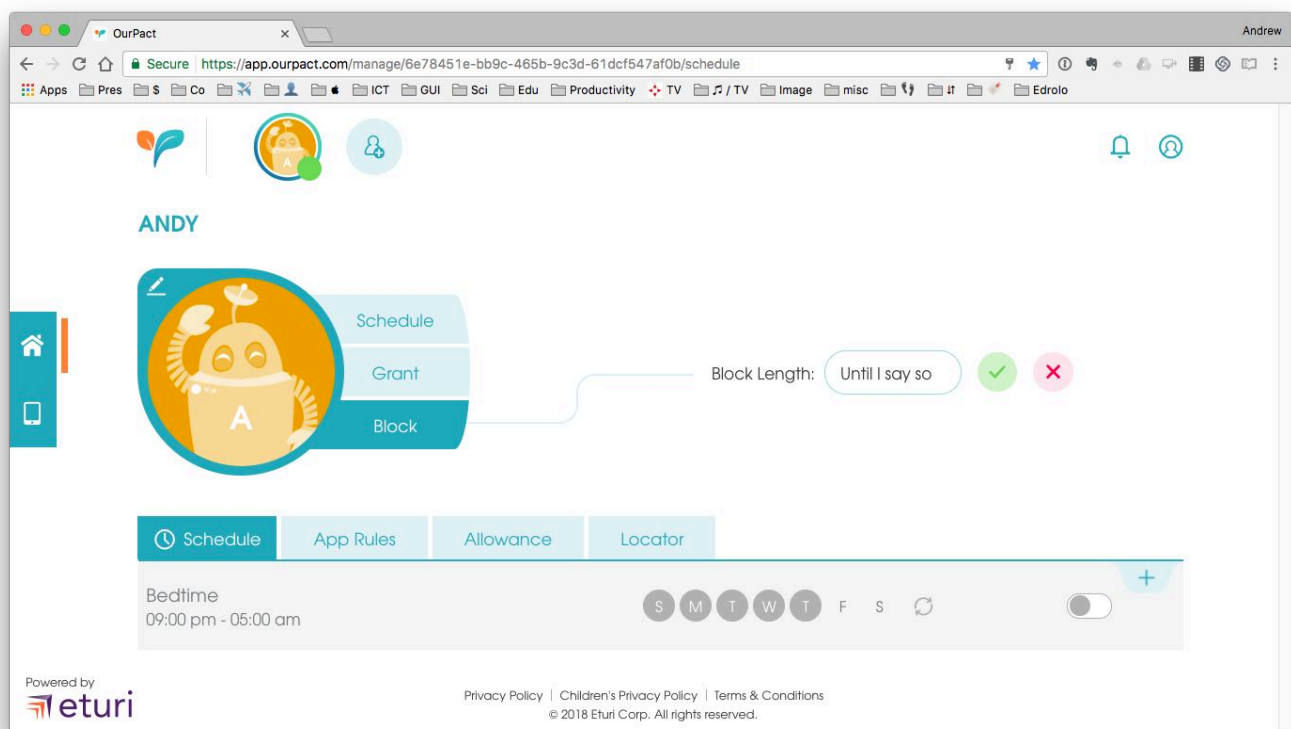
OurPact

OurPact is very similar to Curbi. Like Curbi there is a free app which allows you to hide all the apps on a single child's device on a schedule or manually. Also like Curbi, it is frustrating because when an iPad comes out of blocking, all the apps are arranged alphabetically (ie. messed up). I would not recommend it.

A (\$6.99 per month) premium account allows you to do a lot more. It allows you to block individual apps, certain types of app. It also allows you to manage up to 20 devices for the one price, making it cheaper than Curbi, if you have more than one child.

OurPact Premium has one other very compelling feature. It includes a feature called "App Organizer" Which allows you to preserve the location of apps so that when you turn blocking off, your child's apps are all where they were before you turned blocking on.

For this feature, I would rate it higher than Curbi if you have one child. If you have more than one child it is also much cheaper, since the \$7 monthly subscription covers all your childrens' devices, whereas with Curbi, you would need to pay that much for each device for the premium service.



NOTE: Like Curbi, OurPact works by installing a profile on your child's device. There is nothing to stop a savvy child from deleting that profile. Using a tool like Curbi, OurPact, or for that matter NetNanny or any other tool, is no substitute for being involved in your child's device use, and teaching him/her to be trustworthy.