

E-Safety: Computers and Laptops

Operating System Parental Controls

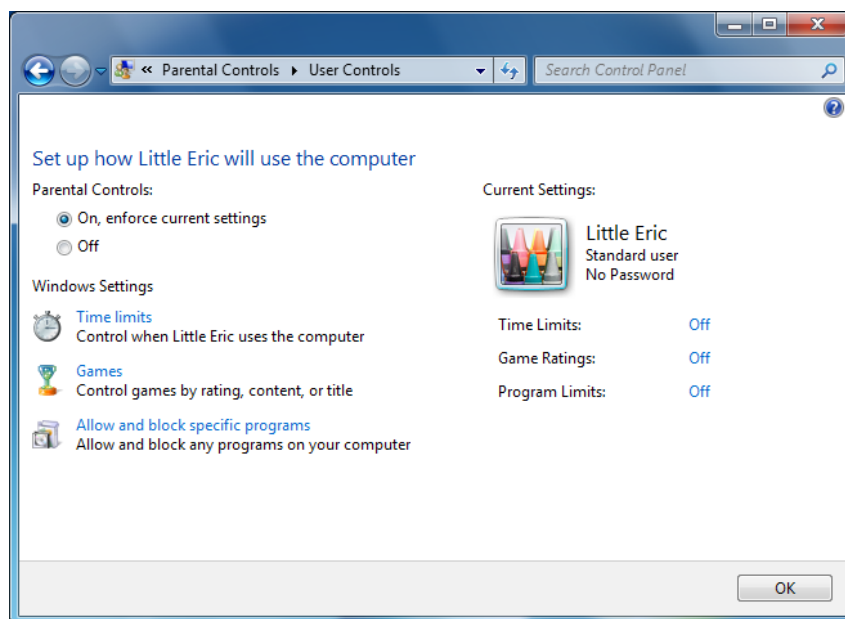
Windows and Mac OS X (Apple Macs) each have built in features that allow you to restrict the access times, software available to individual accounts on the machine and also whether the user can install programs for themselves. If you set up unique user accounts on the device for everyone who uses the computer in your home that means you can exercise quite a large degree of control over everyone who uses the computer in your home.

Microsoft Windows

Parent Controls are available on Vista, 7 and 8. Users of Vista and 7 will need to download Windows Essentials from the Microsoft website first. To turn on parental controls in Windows you will need to follow these steps:

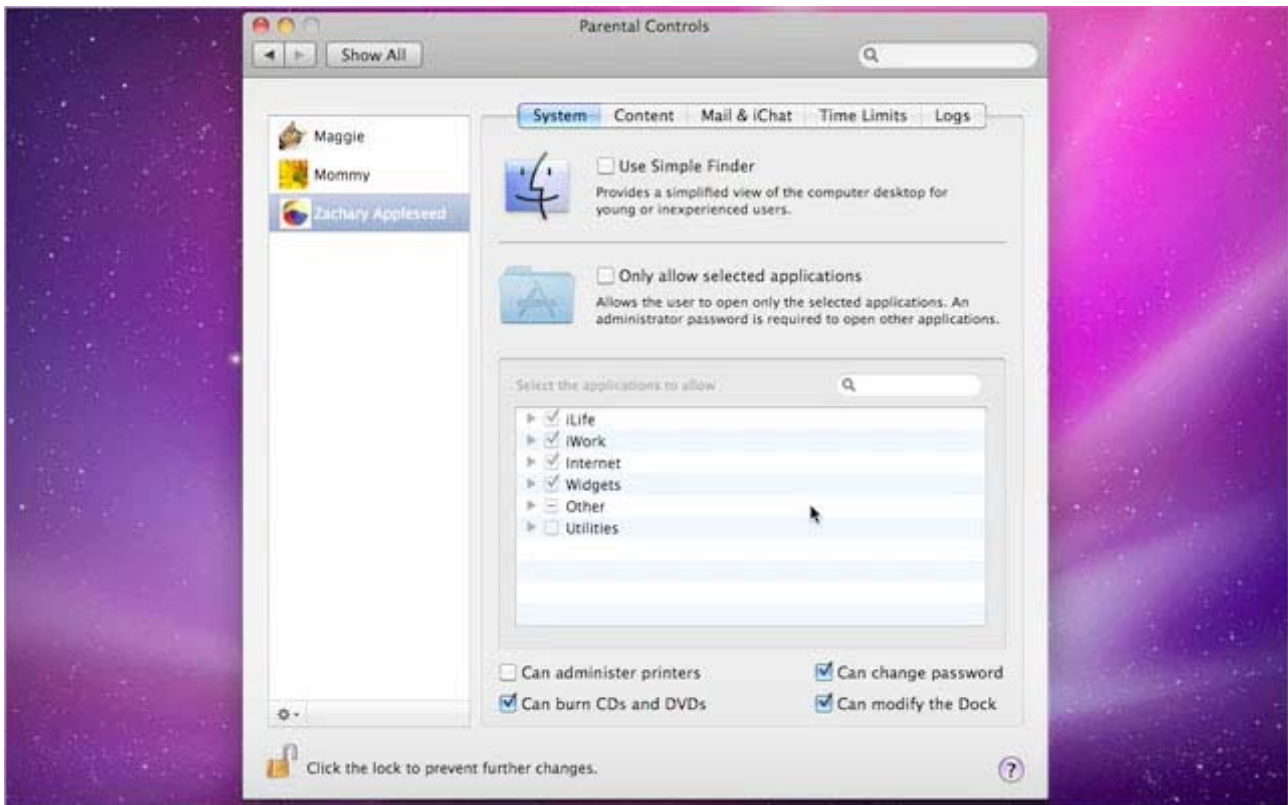
- Go to Control Panel
- User Accounts and Family Safety
- Set up parental controls for any user
- Enter the administrator password
- Select the account you want to set Parental Controls for, or create a new account

Microsoft's Parental Controls also offer a further feature called Family Safety. This offers internet filters, allows you to block specific websites and monitor the internet activity of individual users on the machine. Here is a screenshot of the Parental Controls screen in Windows 7:



Apple Mac OS X

In OS X 10.5 and 10.6, open the Apple menu in the top-left corner and go to System Preferences. From within the System section, open Parental Controls. In more recent versions of OS X, accounts with parental controls must be set as a 'managed with parental controls' account. If you haven't created one of these accounts, Mac OS will guide you through the process of creating such an account. On the next page is a screenshot of the Parental Controls screen:



Viruses

As well as keeping your family safe online, it is important to keep your computer safe too. There are countless thousands of viruses and other malicious programs in circulation. Many of these can infect your computer without you even realising anything has happened and often hide themselves within perfectly legitimate websites. Although Windows-based machines are much more susceptible to viruses than Apple, Linux and Android devices you should still be vigilant regardless of what kind of device you own.

Why To Avoid Torrenting Sites

One of the most prominent sources of virus infestation are torrenting websites such as The Pirate Bay and Iso Hunt. Not only do these websites encourage the distribution of illegal software, music and film downloads but more often than not, the files downloaded from these sites are infested with viruses. It is best to avoid these websites altogether.

Ransomware

The latest trend in viruses is what is known as “ransomware”. The most common form of “ransomware” is a hoax screen informing you that a police force has seized control of your computer because you did something illegal and you need to pay an amount of money to unlock your machine. This is absolutely not true. Your computer was probably infected when visiting a perfectly legitimate website that had been infected with a file that spread the virus payload to anyone viewing it.

Never attempt to make a payment in one of these scams. If your computer becomes infected with a virus like this, a package such as the free-to-download Malwarebytes will remove it. A more sinister new strain of ransomware is gaining notoriety. This form of ransomware will encrypt all the data on your computer, making it very difficult to ever get your files back. Here is a screenshot of a typical ransomware screen. It is not endorsed by any of the authorities or companies mentioned:



Always Update Your Computer and The Software You Use

Viruses like this illustrate why it is essential to make sure your computer's operating system and software update themselves regularly. Virus writers exploit flaws in software to achieve their results. Software companies release regular updates to counter the latest threats.

Anti-Virus Software

Another essential tool in the defence of your computer is anti-virus software. There are lots of commercial packages on the market but there are also some excellent free anti-virus programs. If your computer doesn't have any anti-virus software installed, Avast Anti-virus can be downloaded free of charge and offers a good level of protection.

Additional Links

<http://www.avast.com>

<https://www.malwarebytes.org/>