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Protecting youth online: Family use of filtering and blocking software[☆]

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Abstract

Objective: This paper explores the characteristics associated with decisions to adopt or discontinue the use of filtering software, including a critical analysis of some explanations about why it is used or not used in households with children and adolescents.

Method: This study consisted of a national telephone survey of households in the United States with youth (10 and 17 years) who use the Internet regularly. Interviews were completed with one youth in the appropriate age group and a parent or caretaker.

Results: Thirty-three percent of parents reported using filtering or blocking software, with an additional 5% having discontinued its use within the past year. Parents were more likely to adopt filtering software if they had younger children (10–15 years), a high level of concern about exposure to sexual material on the Internet, more extensive knowledge of what their child did online, low trust in the child's ability to use the Internet responsibly, and if the child used America Online (AOL). Using the Internet for school assignments was associated with not having filtering software.

Conclusion: Findings suggest the need for (1) evaluation research of filter programs used in a real family context and (2) the development of a variety of strategies to prevent exposure to inappropriate material for youth of different ages. © 2005 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Keywords: Family; Filter; Internet; Online; Software; Youth

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Introduction

There is clear evidence that many children and adolescents who use the Internet are exposed to pornographic websites. In a national study of youth Internet users ages 10–17 years, Finkelhor, Mitchell, and Wolak (2000) found that one in four had viewed sexual material they did not want to see in the previous year. Another study found that almost one-third of youth in this age group with computers at home had seen a pornographic website, by accident or on purpose (The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, 2000), and a study of 13–17 year olds found 25% had visited websites with sexual content (Websense, 1999). How this exposure impacts youth has not been studied at length, largely due to ethical considerations, but the advent of the Internet has opened this topic to more study. Findings from youth reporting unwanted exposure to pornography on the Internet reveal that 23% were very or extremely upset by the exposure (Finkelhor et al., 2000). Faced with these numbers, parents, educators, and other professionals are trying to identify ways to prevent or limit exposure to inappropriate material online.

Filtering and blocking software is one of the most frequently touted prevention devices. There are several different kinds of software tools available to families (GetNetWise.com, 2001). “Time-Limiting” software allows parents to set limits on how much time or at what time a child can use the computer or Internet. “Filtering and Blocking” software limits access to some sites, words, and/or images. “Outgoing Content Blocking” regulates the content leaving the computer to prevent children from revealing personal information, such as names, addresses and telephone numbers, to people they do not know. “Kid-Oriented Search Engines” work like regular search engines but also provide special features to screen out inappropriate material. Finally, “Monitoring Tool” software informs adults about children’s online activity by recording the addresses of visited websites or displaying warning messages to children if they visit inappropriate websites, without necessarily limiting access. Some software incorporates several of these features.

Although filtering and blocking software programs are advertised as preventing youth from encountering pornographic and other inappropriate sexual material online, research findings suggest that many families do not use this software (Finkelhor et al., 2000; Lebo, 2000). There are several possible explanations of why some families adopt these tools and others do not.

First, filtering software may not work well within the dynamics of many families for several reasons. Many parents may prefer more active methods of parental monitoring, like direct supervision, inquiry and communication. Children, especially older adolescents, may object to Internet restrictions. Parents may be unwilling to provoke conflicts with youth. Also, parents may not believe that Internet pornography is a serious risk to their children, and, therefore do not see a need to install software.

Second, parents may be skeptical about the effectiveness of filtering software. These programs have been shown to allow inappropriate material through and to block legitimate content (Consumer Reports, 2001). Third, a generational divide may exist in some families about computers and the Internet (Roper Starch Worldwide, 1999; The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, 2000). A lack of comfort and understanding of computers and the Internet could play a role in decision-making about whether or not to use filtering software.

In this exploratory paper, we take a first look at characteristics associated with decisions to adopt or discontinue the use of filtering software, and we critique some explanations about why it is used or not used in households with children and adolescents.

Method

Data sampling

The Youth Internet Safety Survey (YISS) was based on a two-stage probability sample, resulting in a nationally representative group of young regular Internet users ($N = 1,501$) (Finkelhor et al., 2000). The research was approved and supervised by the University of New Hampshire's Human Subjects Committee and conformed to the rules mandated by research projects funded by the Department of Justice. Funding for this study was provided by the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children.

Phone numbers were derived from the Second National Incidence Study of Missing, Abducted, Run-away, and Thrownaway Children (NISMAART 2). NISMAART 2 was a nationally representative telephone survey, conducted by the Institute for Survey Research at Temple University (Sedlak, Finkelhor, Hammer, & Schultz, 2002). Households that were identified as having at least one child between 9 and 17 years during the NISMAART 2 adult screening process were flagged for possible YISS selection. In total, 6,594 phone numbers were forwarded to YISS investigators.

All phone numbers received by YISS from NISMAART 2 were dialed and successful contact was made with 3,446 households by the end of the survey period. Seventy-five percent of those households contacted completed the eligibility screen, 72% of which were identified as eligible for YISS participation. Finally, 82% ($N = 1,501$) of eligible households completed both the adult and youth surveys (Finkelhor et al., 2000). Characteristics of eligible, non-participants were not available for comparison.

Methods in YISS data collection

Schulman, Ronca, and Bucuvals, Inc. (SRBI), a national survey research firm, conducted interviews via telephone. Upon reaching a household, interviewers requested to speak with an adult, and the presence of a child in the household meeting inclusion criteria was confirmed. The adult who was most familiar with the child's Internet use was then interviewed after providing informed consent. At the close of the parent survey, the interviewer asked if the child could also participate; confidentiality was assured, and the adult was informed that questions would be asked about "sexual material your child may have seen," and would receive \$10 for his or her time. In households where there was more than one youth in the appropriate age range who used the Internet, the one who used the Internet the most often was chosen to participate in the study. The youth interview was scheduled at the convenience of the child, when he or she felt able to talk freely and confidentially. Confidentiality was assured, and young people were told that they could skip any question if desired. Youth participants were mailed Internet safety-related brochures and \$10 upon completion of the survey. Addresses gathered for this purpose were not used for any other reason in the study and were kept separate from data results. Verbal consent from both adult and child were required for the youth interviews. The average youth interview lasted between 15 and 20 minutes. The adult survey lasted an average of 10 minutes.

Study population

The YISS was conducted between the fall of 1999 and the spring of 2000 in an effort to quantify and detail youth experiences on the Internet, specifically reporting online harassment, unwanted sexual solicitation, and unwanted exposure to sexual material (Finkelhor et al., 2000). Participants were regular

Internet users who had used the Internet at least once a month for the past 6 months from any location, and one caregiver in the household self identified as the one most knowledgeable about the youth's Internet practices (69.1% female). This broad definition of "regular Internet use" was used to ensure a wide range of Internet use behaviors, from relatively low use to high use. Location of Internet access was similarly wide-ranging, and included home, school, library, another person's house, or any other point of access.

The demographic characteristics of the youth and their households are shown in Table 1. The youth ranged between the ages of 10 and 17 ($M = 14.14$, $SD = 1.96$). Forty-seven percent of respondents were female, and more than three quarters (77%) self-identified as non-Hispanic White. Highly educated, highly prosperous families and White individuals were over-represented in the YISS sample compared to the national average (US Census Bureau, 2002), but they were reflective of the typical Internet household at the time of data collection (National Public Radio et al., 2000; UCLA Center for Communication Policy, 2001).

Measures

Parents in households with Internet access were asked if there were "any filters or blocks on the computer your child uses to access the Internet to keep your child from going to certain websites or other places?" Several independent variables were initially examined to determine their relationship with the dependent variable (i.e., filtering and blocking software use), with non-significant variables excluded from the final analyses. All independent variable items were created by the authors' research center for use in youth-related studies. Information about specific items and scores are available from the authors.

Demographics. Youth-reported age was dichotomized at 10–15 years versus 16–17 years because of the increased level of independence afforded to most adolescents around the age of 16 due to acquiring a driver's license and getting jobs. Race was dichotomized as White versus all other. Household income was categorized at one standard deviation above the mean (\$75,000 and higher) versus lower.

High positive parent-child relationship is a constructed variable developed from a factor analysis loading of the following parent-child relationship items: How well does the parent and child get along; how often does the parent and child have fun together; how often would the child discuss sadness or being troubled with the parent; and how often does the child think the parent trusts her/him? The parent-child relationship items were asked of both the parent and youth, thus two separate variables resulted. Those scores with a composite value one standard deviation above the mean or higher were coded as having this characteristic while the rest were coded as zero.

High conflict parent-child relationship is a constructed variable developed from a factor analysis loading of the following parent-child relationship items: How often does the parent nag the child; how often does the parent take away the child's privileges; and how often does the parent yell at the child? The parent-child relationship items were asked of both the parent and child, thus two separate variables resulted. Those scores with a composite value one standard deviation above the mean or higher were coded as having this characteristic while the rest were coded as zero.

High and low Internet use are two constructed variables derived from a factor analysis loading of several items: high experience with the Internet (4 or 5 on a scale of 1–5), high importance of the Internet in the child's life (4 or 5 on a scale of 1–5), spending four or more days online in a typical week, and spending two or more hours online in a typical day. Youth with a composite value one standard deviation

Table 1
Demographic characteristics of youth living in households with Internet access ($N = 1,049$)

Characteristic	% Youth in households with internet access
Sex	
Male	53
Female	47
Age	
10	4
11	8
12	10
13	13
14	17
15	18
16	17
17	13
Race	
Non-Hispanic White	77
African American	7
American Indian or Alaskan Native	2
Asian	3
Hispanic White	2
Other	7
Don't know/refused	2
Youth lives with single parent	15
Highest level of education completed in household	
Less than high school	1
High school graduate	15
Some college education	21
College graduate	35
Post college degree	28
Annual household income	
Less than \$20,000	3
\$20,000 to \$50,000	33
More than \$50,000 to \$75,000	26
More than \$75,000	30
Community environment	
Small town	25
Suburb of large city	26
Rural area	18
Large town (pop. 25,000 to 100,000)	15
Large city (pop. > 100,000)	15

above the mean or higher were considered high Internet users while those with a value of zero on the composite were low Internet users.

High online risk behavior is a constructed variable derived from a factor analysis loading of the following dichotomous variables pertaining to behavior online: posting personal information, making rude

or nasty comments, playing a joke on or annoying someone, harassing or embarrassing someone, talking about sex with someone the youth never met in person, and going to x-rated sites on purpose. Youth with a composite value two standard deviations above the mean or higher were considered high online risk takers.

High delinquency is a constructed variable derived from a factor analysis loading of variables from several items measuring conventional delinquency (beating up someone on purpose, being picked up by the police, banging up something that didn't belong to you on purpose, and/or taking something that didn't belong to you); and from substance use items (using alcohol four or more time/week and/or using illicit drugs). In order to tap into youth reporting particularly high levels of these characteristics, those with a composite value one standard deviation above the mean were coded as having this characteristic while the rest were coded as zero.

Troubled is a constructed variable derived from a factor analysis loading of negative life event items (death in the family, moving to a new home, parents being divorced or separated, and/or a parent losing a job); from physical and sexual assault items; and items measuring depression (five or more depression symptoms in the past month). Those with a composite value two standard deviations above the mean or higher were coded as having this characteristic while the rest were coded as zero.

Analysis

Bivariate. Since little is known about youth and their behavior concerning use of the Internet, several areas were explored for their potential relationship with filtering software use. Variables fell into five broad areas, (1) demographic characteristics (e.g., age, gender, socioeconomic status), (2) youth Internet use and online behavior (e.g., how often they go online, what they use the Internet for), (3) youth conventional behavioral characteristics (e.g., delinquency, substance use, troubled), (4) parent-child relationship (i.e., positive interactions and conflict), and (5) parents' use of, knowledge, and concern about the Internet. A series of Pearson χ^2 tests and odds ratio estimates were used to compare the above variables between parents who said they used filtering or blocking software in their household with those who did not. The criteria for significance was set at .01 to control familywise error, which is a commonly used procedure for taking into account the probability of making one or more Type I errors due to multiple comparisons with the same set of data (Keppel, 1991). Variables found to be significant at the bivariate level were included in the multivariate analysis.

Multivariate. Hierarchical logistic regression was used to examine the association of variables significant at the bivariate level with household use of filtering or blocking software. All variables found to be significant at the bivariate level were controlled for in the multivariate analysis.

Results

Filtering/blocking software use

Thirty-three percent of parents in homes with Internet access reported using filtering or blocking software on the computer their child used most often at the time of the interview. Also, the great majority of parents (84%) felt adults should be extremely concerned about youth exposure to sexual material on the Internet.

Who uses filtering and blocking software?

Parents who had younger children (10–15 years) were more likely to use filtering and blocking software. (See Table 2 for the significant bivariate relationships and Table 3 for the results of the regression analysis.) Other demographic characteristics (parent and youth gender, race, and household income) were not related to filter use.

Some aspects of youth Internet use and behavior were also related to using filtering software. Youth who stated that America Online was their service provider were more likely to use filtering and blocking software. Youth who reported using the Internet for school assignments were less likely to have filters on their computers. Other variables describing types and extent of youth Internet use (i.e., amount of use, and using the Internet for e-mail and chat rooms for example), as well as youth reports of risky Internet use like talking to strangers online and giving out private information, were not related to filter use.

In terms of conventional characteristics and behaviors, youth who considered themselves above average students were less likely to have filters on their computers, but this was significant at the bivariate level only. Other variables describing conventional characteristics and behaviors of youth, such as delinquent behavior and being troubled were not related to filter use.

Table 2
Significant rates of household filtering software by sub-group characteristics ($N = 1,049$)

Characteristic	(<i>n</i>)	% Filter use	Relative risk ratio	95% Confidence ratio
Demographics (parent report)				
Youth age				
10–15 years	(738)	36.9		
16–17 years	(311)	22.8	.5***	.4–.7
Parent knowledge and concern (parent report)				
Parent is extremely concerned about youth exposure to sexual material [†]				
Yes	(852)	35.8		
No	(197)	19.3	2.3***	1.6–3.4
Parent has low trust child will use Internet responsibly				
Yes	(178)	40.4		
No	(870)	31.0	1.5**	1.1–2.1
Youth internet usage (youth report)				
Uses Internet for school assignments				
Yes	(889)	30.7		
No	(160)	43.8	.6***	.4–.8
Uses AOL				
Yes	(483)	41.6		
No	(566)	25.1	2.1***	1.6–2.8
Youth offline characteristics and behavior (youth report)				
Above average student				
Yes	(488)	28.7		
No	(555)	36.2	.7**	.5–.9

** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .001$.

Table 3

Logistic regression of characteristics related to parental decision to use filtering/blocking software

Characteristic	Parental filter use	
	Odds ratio	95% Confidence interval
Demographic		
Youth 16–17 years	.5***	.4–.7
Youth internet usage		
School assignments	.7**	.4–.9
AOL use	2.3***	1.7–3.0
Parent knowledge and concern		
Extremely concerned about youth exposure to sexual material online	2.2***	1.5–3.3
Low trust in what youth does online	1.7**	1.1–2.4
High knowledge of what youth does online	1.6*	1.1–2.3
–2 Log likelihood	1165.67	
χ^2 (6)	86.38***	
Cox & Snell R^2	.08	
Nagelkerke R^2	.12	

* $p < .05$.** $p < .01$.*** $p < .001$.

Parents' use of, knowledge, and concern about the Internet were related to filter use in some instances. Those parents with an extreme degree of concern over youth exposure to sexual material, a low degree of trust that a child would use the Internet responsibly and a high degree of knowledge about what a child did online were more likely to use filtering and blocking software. Variables describing parental use of and degree of experience with the Internet were not related to filter use (i.e., amount of time spent online, parent using the Internet for work, school, and personal use, and experience and importance of the Internet to the parent).

Households that discontinued filtering software use

Five percent of the parents who reported no current use of filtering or blocking software said they had used it in the past year and had discontinued its use. A series of bivariate correlations revealed that discontinuation of use (compared with current use) was associated with having older youth (16–17 years) ($r = .11, p < .05$); female youth ($r = .11, p < .05$); high parental experience with the Internet ($r = .10, p < .05$); youth who used the Internet for school assignments ($r = .10, p < .05$), to buy or check prices ($r = .13, p < .01$), or to connect to message boards or newsgroups ($r = .10, p < .05$); troubled youth ($r = .10, p < .05$); and youth with high Internet use ($r = .11, p < .05$). Discontinuation was also associated with parents knowing less about what their children did online ($r = -.10, p < .05$) and having less concern about youth exposure to sexual material online ($r = -.18, p < .001$). Although some of these r values are relatively low, they are useful in beginning to understand some of the dynamics related to discontinuation of filtering software and thus, can help in the development of further research in this understudied area.

Discussion

While the great majority of parents (84%) felt adults should be extremely concerned about youth exposure to sexual material on the Internet, a minority of parents (33%) reported using some type of filtering or blocking software on the household computer at the time they were interviewed. Another 5% of parents had used filtering software in the past year, but had discontinued its use by the time of the interview. Since filtering software is one of the recommended avenues for preventing youth exposure to inappropriate sexual material online, it is important to understand why families are using or not using these software programs. Some of our findings allow a critique of the previously offered explanations for decisions about filtering software use, while also suggesting some additional explanations.

Family dynamics

Several of our findings address whether parent-child conflicts and youth claims to autonomy play a role in the adoption of filtering or blocking software. Families were more likely to have filtering or blocking software when parents reported low trust in the youth's ability to use the Internet responsibly and high knowledge about what they did online. The majority of families, adopters and non-adopters, did report trusting their children, but the association between trust and adoption suggests the use of the software as a method of parental control. That parents were more likely to use filtering software when they knew a lot about what their children were doing online, suggests they disapproved of what they knew. However, delinquent behavior outside the Internet or risky practices on the Internet by youth, based on youth reports, was not associated with filtering use. Also, discontinuation of filtering software in the past year was associated with having troubled youth and youth who had high levels of Internet use, suggesting that conflict and other dynamics among family members may play some role in the decision to use, or not use, this software. Youth age was a factor in both the adoption and discontinuation of filtering or blocking software. Families of older youth were less likely to adopt and more likely to discontinue its use. Parents may wish to recognize the greater autonomy and capability of older youth, or older youth may object more strenuously and effectively to the use of such constraints.

Some parents may not adopt filtering software because they may not believe that exposure to pornography on the Internet poses much risk to their children. Our findings suggest some support for this view. Extreme concern about youth exposure to sexual material on the Internet was associated with the adoption of filtering software, and discontinuation was related to having less concern. However, the overwhelming majority of parents (84%) reported being extremely concerned about youth exposure to sexual material, with an additional 9% reporting being "very concerned." Thus, there is incongruity between expressed concern and software use. One explanation is social desirability. Parents do not want to come across as being bad parents; thus, the level of concern in the sample could be over-represented. Another explanation is that concern is high for most parents, but this concern works together with other factors, resulting in lower use of filtering software overall.

Another reason parents may not see a need to utilize filtering software could be that they feel that they are better equipped to serve as the "filter" to their child's computer use. The majority of parents (whether they used filtering software or not) did report having a variety of different household rules and monitoring techniques (Finkelhor et al., 2000). Further, parents who reported using filtering software were more likely to report having household rules and engaging in monitoring behaviors, suggesting that

filters are often used in combination with other prevention techniques. Clearly, more work in this area is needed before conclusions can be drawn.

Suspicious about the utility of filtering and blocking software

Another possible barrier to filtering and blocking software adoption is that it may prevent youth from accessing educational information online. Our finding that using the Internet for school assignments was associated with not using filters and a higher likelihood of filter discontinuation may reflect both suspicion about the interference that filtering or blocking creates, and actual dissatisfaction with the barriers it imposes on youth doing educational searches.

At the same time, there is some evidence that filtering software prevents exposure to pornography to some extent. Youth (10–17 years) who reported that filtering programs were installed on their home computer also reported being somewhat less likely to experience unwanted exposure to sexual material on the Internet, implying that the software accomplishes one of its stated goals (Mitchell, Finkelhor, & Wolak, 2000). Richardson et al. (2002), suggest that it is the level of the blocking setting that has a greater impact than choice of software itself. They simulated adolescent Internet searching and found, at the least restrictive setting, the software blocked 1.4% of health information sites and 87% of pornography sites. The moderate setting blocked 5% of health information sites and 90% of pornography sites; while the most restrictive setting block a much larger number of health information sites (24%) and only increased pornography blocking to 91%.

Generational divide

It has been suggested that a generation gap exists between parents and children in terms of knowledge about computers and the Internet in particular, with children being more computer savvy. It also has been suggested that this lesser knowledge by parents could play a role in the lack of adoption of filtering software (Gallo, 1998). The current findings do not support this idea. Adoption of filtering software use was not associated with either high or low parental Internet use, parental knowledge of the Internet or parental education, or disparities in knowledge between children and parents. It is possible, however, that parental knowledge and use of the Internet does not equate with knowledge about computers, such as the ability to install software programs. Further study about this idea is needed before we can determine whether a generational divide truly exists.

Ease of access

Another barrier to filtering or blocking adoption may be access and cost. When families have to educate themselves about software options, purchase it, and install it on their equipment, some will inevitably balk. Possible empirical support for this problem can be found in the survey findings that the adoption of filter programs was higher among families of youth using AOL. AOL parental controls may be easy to adopt because they are automatically included with a subscription and presented as an option when activating the service. Although this finding needs to be examined further, it suggests a possible avenue for prevention efforts by service providers. With the large number of service providers available, there are certainly others that provide filtering or blocking options with subscriptions, but details about individual providers (other than AOL which dominated the market at the time of this study) are not likely to show up in a survey of this size.

Limitations

Although this study is one of the first to address issues surrounding the use (or lack of use) of filtering software in households, there are some inevitable limitations that need to be addressed. First, although we asked to speak with the parent who knew the most about their child's Internet use, it is possible that some of the interviewed parents were not the ones who knew the most about computers in general. Their answers may not have been fully informed. Second, parents also could have answered questions about home Internet safety based on a desire to appear to be good parents, suggested by the extremely high percentage of parents in the study who reported high levels of rules and monitoring. Third, the main goal of the Youth Internet Safety Survey was to gather information about youth experience with unwanted sexual material, sexual solicitation and harassment online, not to gather detailed information about home filtering software use. As a result, important information about the sequencing of events, such as whether software was adopted (or discontinued) before or after a negative online experience, is not available, as well as detailed information about filter use in general. Finally, use of filtering and blocking software is a highly political and sensitive topic. Understanding how this impacts a decision to use or not use this software was not addressed in the current study but is important to address in future work in this area.

Research needs

The findings of this study provide a first look into the use of filtering software in families, yet, they also point out the need for more research concerning the attitudes of parents and youth about using filtering and blocking software. Interviews should be conducted with all family members about their online behaviors, beliefs, and opinions about exposure to pornography and other inappropriate sexual material and prevention options. Second, evaluation research should be conducted on the use of different filtering programs in the context of actual family dynamics. Finally, studies based on experimental designs need to be developed examining households patterns of use before and after filtering software has been adopted.

Implications

This exploratory study is the first of its kind to examine characteristics relating to the decisions of families to adopt filtering and blocking software. Therefore, findings from this paper are useful in developing some suggestions for families who have children and adolescents using the Internet. First, it is clear from this paper that alternative prevention means are important. Only a minority of parents in this study used this software and those who did often used additional prevention measures. Second, the dynamics of the family as a whole need to be taken into account before any specific means of prevention is recommended since it is likely that the most effective strategies will vary depending on such things as the age of the children, Internet knowledge of the parents, and the relationships among family members.

Conclusion

Most households with youth Internet users do not use filtering or blocking software. Lack of use is associated with having older youth and youth who use the Internet for school assignments. Households who used filtering software were more likely to use America Online, an Internet Service Provider that

gives filtering software with subscriptions to its service, and contain parents with extreme concern about youth exposure to pornography, along with low trust and high knowledge about what their children do online. These findings suggest that the decision to use filtering software is complex, with consideration for the characteristics and needs of both parents and youth important in this decision-making process.

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Résumé

Objectif: Cet article étudie les données qui conduisent à adopter ou à cesser d'utiliser un logiciel de filtrage, avec une analyse critique de quelques explications du pourquoi on l'utilise ou pas dans des familles avec enfants et adolescents.

Méthode: Cette étude a comporté une enquête téléphonique nationale aux Etats-unis à l'intérieur de familles avec jeunes de 10 à 17 ans utilisant régulièrement Internet. Des entretiens ont été réalisés avec un jeune du groupe d'âge approprié et un parent ou une personne responsable.

Résultats: Trente-trois pour cent des parents ont déclaré utiliser un logiciel de filtrage ou de blocage, 5% en avaient cessé l'utilisation au cours de l'année passée. Les parents étaient d'autant portés à adopter un logiciel de filtrage qu'ils avaient des enfants jeunes (10–15 ans), qu'il avaient un souci important du risque de rencontre de sujets sexuels sur Internet, une connaissance approfondie de ce que leur enfant faisait sur Internet, et peu de confiance dans la capacité de leur enfant à utiliser Internet de façon responsable et si leur enfant utilisait America Onlie (AOL). L'utilisation de Internet pour des tâches scolaires était en relation avec une non utilisation d'un logiciel de filtrage;

Conclusion: Les constatations suggèrent le besoin (1) d'une recherche qualitative des programmes de filtrage utilisé dans un vrai contexte familial (2) d'un développement de stratégies diverses pour empêcher que des jeunes d'âge différents soient exposés à des sujets inadaptes.

Resumen

Objetivo: El artículo explora las posibilidades asociadas con las decisiones para adoptar el uso de filtros en internet, incluyendo un análisis crítico de algunas explicaciones acerca de porqué es o no utilizado en hogares con niños y adolescentes.

Método: El estudio consistió en una encuesta telefónica nacional de hogares de Estados Unidos con jóvenes (10 a 17 años) que utilizan Internet de manera regular. Las entrevistas fueron cumplimentadas por un joven de la edad apropiada y un padre o cuidador.

Resultados: El 33% de los padres notificaron la utilización de software de filtros o bloqueo y un 5% lo utilizó de manera discontinua dentro del pasado año. Los padres eran más proclives a adoptar software de filtros si tenían hijos más jóvenes (10 a 15 años), un alto nivel de preocupación sobre la exposición a material sexual en Internet, un conocimiento más extenso de lo que su hijo hizo en las sesiones Online, baja confianza en la habilidad del niño para utilizar responsablemente Internet y si el niño utilizó American Online (AOL). La utilización de Internet para cuestiones escolares estaba asociada con el hecho de no disponer de software de filtro.

Conclusioens: Los hallazgos sugieren la necesidad de (1) investigaciones que evalúen los programas informáticos de filtro utilizados en el contexto familiar real y (2) el desarrollo de estrategias para prevenir la exposición a material inapropiado para jóvenes de diferentes edades.