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Many business owners and managers are concerned, and rightly so, about appropriate Internet use by their employees. After all, the Internet makes it remarkably easy and convenient to spend time conducting personal business or just looking for a little entertaining distraction rather than spending productive time in the office.

Use of web filters is a technique commonly used for controlling a computer userâ€™s access to the Internet. Whether youâ€™re a business owner attempting to restrict which Internet sites your employees have access to or a parent trying to keep your child from viewing inappropriate web content, Internet filtering has become an increasingly popular means of determining what Internet sites people can view on their computer monitors.

While this method may be helpful to parents dealing with children â€œsurfingâ€• the Internet, it is perhaps just as commonly used in business environments. In fact, many large-scale companies throughout the U.S. employ this method as a means of controlling which Internet sites their employees can access. Unfortunately, filtering content is not an effective technique in an office environment simply because itâ€™s all too common to filter out not only the undesirable sites, but the acceptable ones (and even the necessary ones) as well.

If youâ€™re a business owner or manager and are worried about your employees wasting precious business hours by conducting personal business online or visiting inappropriate websites, filtering only resolves a small part of the problem. While web filters may make it difficult for employees to access some inappropriate sites, it certainly wonâ€™t encourage them to work any harder. And it also wonâ€™t keep them from finding distractions elsewhere. If your employees have smart phones (as an ever-increasing number of people do nowadays), theyâ€™ll still have access to whatever sites theyâ€™re interested in, including social media sites like Facebook and others. And even if an employee doesnâ€™t have a smart phone (unlikely, but possible), sheâ€™ll still be able to find plenty of other distractions that will prevent her from being productive if she desires to do so.

The Answer is Measurement

The key to keeping your employees as productive as possible doesnâ€™t lie in limiting their Internet access or trying to control their every move in the workplace. Instead, the answer lies in measuring their productivity. Rather than focusing on the negative, why not focus on the positive? Internet filtering addresses a negative behavior, but measuring productivity focuses on the positiveâ€”and desiredâ€”behavior.

The key to measurement is employing an advanced tool that can categorize employeesâ€™ behavior while working at their computers. Thatâ€™s the only truly effective means of determining how productive your employees are and resolving the problem once and for all.

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