

Using a Digital Nanny on the Web

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Net-Blocking Software to Curb Bad Online Habits



It's shameful, but we're all guilty of it: **Wasteful web surfing.**

How many times have you sat at the computer - with every intention of working - only to fritter the day away on the Internet?

For some of us, **digital distractions** include online shopping or looking at YouTube.

For others, it's visiting social networking sites like **Facebook and Twitter.**

Whichever online vice you prefer, take comfort in knowing there is help to get you back on the straight and narrow.

Enter **RescueTime** and **LeechBlock.**

These applications, also called **NET-BLOCKING SOFTWARE**, really mean business. In a nutshell, they are designed to block various parts of the Internet so that when your mind strays, you're stopped from giving into your unproductive ways.

First, **RescueTime.**

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RescueTime works by keeping track of everything that happens on your computer, and then reports your habits in a series of charts and graphs.

Tech writer [Farhad Manjoo](#) recently gave RescueTime a whirl and says he found the app to be incredibly "illuminating."

"I learned, for instance, that during a typical month I spend more than 70 hours surfing the web, much of it on news and social networking sites," writes Manjoo.

By comparison, Manjoo found that he spent half as much time in Microsoft Word.

Now, if you are already aware of your bad online habits and just need some good old-fashion help taming them, then **LeechBlock** may be the best medicine.

LeechBlock is a **free add-on for Firefox** and functions like a stern nanny. Users tell the program which Web sites to keep away from them at certain times of the day, and at the appointed hour you have chosen, **LeechBlock** will stop you cold.

LeechBlock is also quite flexible as it **lets users block different sites at different times of the day**. Or, users can set a maximum daily or hourly limit for certain sites.

Certainly, there is no way to tell whether these "digital nannies" will help you kick your bad online habits once and for all. The mind is a restless place - even for the most seasoned professional. But these net-blocking software applications can be helpful in getting you to *at least consider* how you waste time on the Internet.

Now, if only these apps could help tame our email inbox too.

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