

CHECKING FOR COVERED TRACKS

A big part of helping those who struggle with internet pornography is to provide a strong, consistent accountability. This requires the ability to monitor their internet activities. A good filtering and accountability software package is, of course, an excellent start.

However, there's nothing like the human touch. The challenge comes when the struggling individual is a very skilled computer user who knows how to eliminate evidence of sinful online activity. Several men who possess this kind of skill have helped compile the simple, step-by-step list in this article.¹ It is intended to equip the person who lacks technical savvy to uncover the telltale signs of "covered tracks."



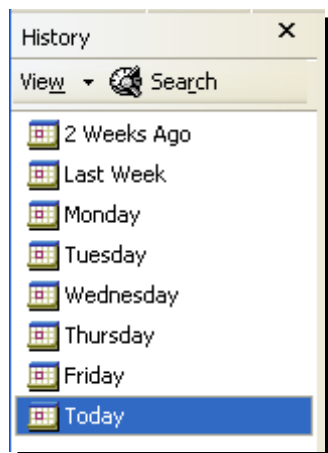
One last word of caution when performing these tasks:

1. Make sure your motives are right before you begin. Are you trying to help the other person for God's glory and their good ... or are you trying to "catch" them to prove your suspicions?
2. Make sure you have all the facts before acting on what you may find. If you do uncover possible evidence, go first to the person in private. Show them what you found and tell them how you found it ... and go from there. Remember to keep a humble attitude (Gal. 6:1-5)!

A. CHECK THE HISTORY TRAIL & ADDRESS BAR DROPDOWN

1. Steps

- Click **Start**, then click **All Programs**, and then click **Internet Explorer**
- On the toolbar, click the **History** button.



The History bar appears, containing links for Web sites and pages visited in previous days and weeks.

In the History bar, click a week or day, click a Web site folder to display individual pages, and then click the page icon to display the Web page.

To sort or search, click the arrow next to the **View** button at the top of the History bar. You can sort by: Date, Site, Most Visited, and Order Visited Today.

¹ The instructions are for PC users in general and those using a Microsoft Windows XP operating system in particular. Browser-specific steps are for Internet Explorer. There will be minor variations for different PC operating systems or browsers. If the instructions are not clear to you, check the "Help" functions or find someone in the church to help tailor these steps to your specific computer setup.

- The address bar has a pull down to show a history of all addresses typed directly into the address window.

2. Interpreting the results

The most obvious use of the history list and address bar dropdown is to scan the contents for inappropriate websites or searches.

However, an intermediate-level user can easily clear the contents of the history list and address bar, leaving an absence of information that should be present. When performing this procedure, check to see if all or portions of the history listing are blank when internet activity was *known* to have occurred. Evidence of this nature *may* implicate someone attempting to hide web activity.

Note: You can change the number of days that pages are saved in the History list. The more days you specify, the more disk space is used on your computer to save that information.

B. CHECK FOR ADDED SOFTWARE

1. Required preparation

Once a computer has been “cleaned up” (see *COUNSELOR’S CHECKLIST FOR CLEANING UP*), it is important to periodically monitor for new software installations. As early as possible, you need to create a “master” list of all *approved* software on the computer.

- Click **Start**, and then click **Control Panel**.
- Click **Add or Remove Programs**.

The resulting window is a listing of all software installed on your computer.

You need to save this listing – the simplest way is to just write the names of the programs down while a more skilled user can transfer screen captures to a document. Either way, make sure the list is printed out and stored as a hard copy, preferably signed and dated to prevent someone changing the “master” list.

2. Steps

Repeat the steps above and compare the listing to the “master” list to identify any new software that has been installed.

3. Interpreting the results

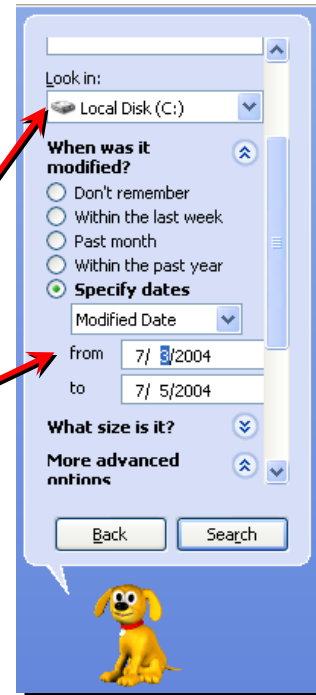
In particular, you are looking for software that can assist someone in downloading pornography, like:

- Additional ISPs (e.g., Juno, AOL, People PC, Arilion, Earthlink, MSN, etc.)
- Peer-to-Peer software (Napster, Kazaa, iMesh, eDonkey, Gnutella, Morpheus, LimeWire, G2, Overnet, Grokster, etc.)
- Other “tunneling” software designed to defeat filters

C. CHECK FILES RECENTLY MODIFIED

1. Steps

- Click **Start**, and then click **Search**.
- Click **All files and folders**.
 - If you do not see **All files and folders**,
 - a. Click **Change preferences**.
 - b. Click **Change files and folders search behavior**.
 - c. Click **Standard**, and then click **OK**.
 - d. Click **All files and folders**.
- Click **When was it modified?**
- Make sure to search the entire hard drive.
- Specify the time period to search.
- Click **Search**.



2. Interpreting the results

Once a computer has been “cleaned up” (see *COUNSELOR’S CHECKLIST FOR CLEANING UP*), it is important to periodically monitor new software installations or downloaded files. In particular, you are looking for:

- a. Software that can assist someone in downloading pornography
 - Additional ISPs (e.g., Juno, AOL, People PC, Arilion, Earthlink, MSN, etc.)
 - Peer-to-Peer software (BitTorrent, Napster, Kazaa, iMesh, eDonkey, Gnutella, Morpheus, LimeWire, G2, Overnet, Grokster, etc.)
 - Other “tunneling” software designed to defeat filters
- b. New files that are images or movies. These files usually have extensions like: .jpg, .jpeg, .jfif, .jpe, .png, .bmp, .gif, .dib, .rle, .bmz, .gfa, .emz, .wmz, .pcz, .pcd, .pcx, .emf, .wmf, .mpg, .avi, .cda, .asf, .asx, .ivf, .m1v, .m3u, .mp2, .mp2v, .mpa, .mpe, .mpeg, .mpv2, .snd, .wax, .wm, .wma, .wmp, etc.

The search results are going to include a number of items. These will include files regularly modified by the system that you can ignore. As you scan the list from the search, look for new folders containing lots of new or modified files (as would be the case for newly installed software). Also look for image and movie files.