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Your device wasn't designed with your best interests in mind—it was crafted using persuasive design, a strategy that leverages psychology to keep you engaged. Tech companies hire psychologists and behavioral scientists to maximize your screen time. They flood you with notifications—updates, messages, comments—knowing you'll feel compelled to check. They serve up content tailored to your interests, appealing to your curiosity and impulses. It's a system designed to keep you hooked.

TAG provides tools—filters, distraction deterrents, and more—that empower you to take control of your tech instead of letting it control you. You decide how to engage with technology, instead of the technology deciding for you. You set the terms—what content you see, when to check your phone, and when to step away.

Without the right tools, you're at the mercy of those who designed your device. Schedule your consultation today, and put yourself back in the driver's seat.



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COME VISIT US! CURRENT HOURS: SUNDAY THROUGH THURSDAY - 8-9:30PM | DAYTIME HOURS AVAILABLE BY APPOINTMENT ONLY

Think a Flip is Safe?



There's a common misconception that if a phone isn't a smartphone, it can't access the internet. The fact is, your basic non-smartphone likely comes equipped with a built-in, unfiltered internet browser and the capability to connect to Wi-Fi. Surprisingly, some basic phones, including flip phones, not only allow internet browsing but also feature built-in apps like YouTube, WhatsApp, and Facebook.

Navigating these internet apps on a basic phone may be a bit cumbersome, but it's definitely doable. Albeit a bit more challenging to reach and less enticing than on a high-speed, side-swiping, touch-screen smartphone, the internet's full array of distractions and uncensored content is accessible on the device. While the limited accessibility might deter some users, a determined individual, especially a curious child with a healthy dose of innocence or mischief, can easily overcome this obstacle.

Even more concerning is that some flip phones aren't really basic phones at all. Take the **CAT S22 phone**, for example. At first glance, it looks like a simple flip phone, but in reality, it's a full Android smartphone with a touchscreen that can download almost any app, just like a standard smartphone! One reviewer even described it as "a unique device that blurs the line between smartphone and flip phone."



If you're choosing a flip phone to limit internet access, either for yourself or your child, make sure it's genuinely a flip phone and not a smartphone in disguise.

TAG Baltimore offers a solution to install an internet block on many basic phones, though not all of them. Before bringing a basic phone to TAG, ensure the exact model number matches one on our basic phone list. Visit tagbaltimore.org/devices for the latest list, along with additional lists and information.

Tech Triumphs

As Told to Rebbetzin Sara Gross

I know I should have time limits on my kids' computer usage, but I find it hard to be consistent. Once in a while, I get strict and set limits, but after a bit, we fall back into a bad pattern of long turns on the computer. Mind you, we do have filters, and the internet is shut off most of the time, but I don't love how long they spend playing games on it.

We went to visit family for a few weeks before school began, and I realized something wonderful. At my relatives' homes, the kids had no computer time because there simply wasn't one to play on. Slowly but surely, my kids got better at playing games and making their own fun. It was delightful to see them filling their time with wholesome activities. My daughters were more social with their cousins, and my sons got more into playing outside.

When we finally went home, they didn't go straight to the computer like they used to. The wholesome activities continued, and I was thrilled. Now I try to keep a better eye on computer time and also work on playing games with them to keep them off the computer. Now that we've had a taste of freedom from technology, I am holding onto it for dear life.



This triumph is not really about me. I still have my smartphone and am not ready to make personal changes yet, though I probably should. My fellow carpool mother is the one who conquered here.

We've been carpooling together for two years, and our main chats were on WhatsApp. Everything was going as smoothly as carpools can go in Baltimore until this year when she asked our group to switch to texting so she could get rid of WhatsApp.

Honestly, it is annoying to use regular messaging groups, and I felt myself grumble a bit when she asked. Then it hit me. Was I

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One of the newest iPhone and iPad features is the ability to hide apps so they can only be accessed with a passcode or other ID. This can be useful for parents who want to hide certain apps—like a browser or video streaming service—from children who borrow their phone. However, this feature also presents a challenge when it comes to monitoring a child's smartphone, as they may be using it to hide apps from you. While it's important to check your child's device periodically to ensure it's being used appropriately, there may be parts of the device you're not able to see.

Another concern, which is not new, is apps that disguise themselves as safe tools, like a calculator or journal, but actually serve as vaults for hiding other apps. These hidden apps could include an unfiltered browser or a movie streaming app.



Be wary of new downloads, even ones that look harmless, and take the time to verify that they are what they appear to be.

Lastly, the apps visible on a smartphone's home screen—or even across multiple screens—are not necessarily all the apps on the phone, even if some are not deliberately hidden. Apps may be organized into folders, or just not pinned to the home screen and only accessible through the full app library list. When monitoring your child's device, be sure to check the complete list of installed apps to get a clearer picture of what's actually on the device. If your child is using the iPhone's hidden apps feature, make sure you have the code to unlock and review those apps as well.

Tech Triumphs Continued

going to be the reason someone couldn't make the tech choices that she felt were necessary for her growth? How dare I grumble?

I heard many women say that they had all their carpool on WhatsApp and just couldn't make tech changes because they were stuck using it. If my friend felt that WhatsApp was too much of a distraction for her to use anymore, then I should applaud her and do whatever is in my power to help a friend.

I then happily switched to regular messaging and felt a little of my own triumph that I wanted to share.



- A 9th grader got a 24six device as a gift from his parents. After just one day, he handed it back, saying, "Thanks, but I'd rather not keep this—it's too addictive."
- After years of distraction, a busy mother finally blocked WhatsApp and declared, "Best day of my life!"
- An 80-something Bubbie blocked YouTube completely—because after watching Lassie, she'd end up watching The House of the Seven Gables, then The Wizard of Oz... and it never stopped!
- Every Friday, a boy visits his grandmother. She installed a filter on her phone and computer so her home would be safer—and his parents would have peace of mind.
- A rebbi from Eretz Yisroel received an unfiltered Artscroll Library iPad from his students. He blocked all internet apps, and after the filter was installed, he said, "Let's make a L'Chaim! If my Talmidim were here, they'd be dancing!"
- A local businessman needs a smartphone for work and shopping, so he enabled the 'skin painting' filter, which covers skin in images, letting him shop more safely.



TAG has joined with the kosher kiosk company *Outwork* to now offer internet kiosks, with filtered internet, to the community. Users register for an account and pay a nominal fee for time on the computer. Many families and students have already been using and benefiting from the service.

Current Kiosk Hours:

Monday - Thursday: 12 - 5PM

Sunday - Thursday: 8 - 9:30PM

Old Device Disposal

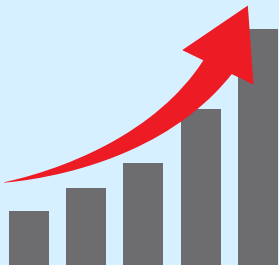
The TAG office now provides a secure and private service that benefits your home, TAG, and gives your old device a new life!

A local refurbishing company has partnered with TAG to repurpose used devices, and in return TAG receives a donation for each device.

Keeping old, unfiltered devices in your home is unsafe, especially with curious children around. If you're no longer using a device, bring it to TAG's drop box—just remember to reset it first.

DID YOU KNOW? Safecell now offers Phone and Waze Device Rentals at the TAG office!

Call or Email our office for availability



TAG Baltimore this past year by the numbers:

- 2,422 consultations
- 4,452 support emails researched and responded to
- 2,580 phone calls
- 6,989 hours of customer support
- 2,052 devices serviced — each impacting lives in our community

MANY THANKS TO OUR CORPORATE SPONSORS FOR THEIR SUPPORT OF TAG BALTIMORE AND THE TAGLINES PUBLICATION

