

## What is YouTube for Schools?

Google's *YouTube for Schools* is a gateway feature that was created to allow school networks access to free educational video content while maintaining control over the content by blocking the rest of the YouTube domain.

Educators and administrators with a *YouTube for Schools* account have access to the entire *YouTube EDU* library—a sub-section of the YouTube domain that contains thousands of videos, including those developed by well-known partners, such as the Smithsonian Institution and PBS. *YouTube EDU* videos are rated by Google/YouTube and the educational community.

**NOTE:** Regular YouTube video features, including comments, are disabled in order to provide greater focus on content.

Before *YouTube for Schools*, a school had two (2) basic choices:

- either allow the entire YouTube domain (potentially allowing inappropriate content to be viewed), or
- not allow any of the YouTube domain (blocking useful supplemental educational material).

Most schools, realizing the potentially harmful aspects of YouTube in a school environment, have chosen to not allow YouTube. After becoming aware of the missed business opportunity, Google created the *YouTube for Schools* network feature, which allows schools to control the content that students are allowed to access, as well as the *YouTube EDU* sub-section.

## How YouTube for Schools works

After signing up for *YouTube for Schools*, the school is given a unique code (string). *Signup is a 10-minute process—call us if you need assistance in signing up.* Administrators and teachers can then login to the *YouTube for Schools* account and set up content (from *YouTube EDU* and YouTube.com) on the school's channel (via playlists) that is allowed for student use.

End-users must enter a special address (URL) in their browser to access the school's *YouTube for Schools* account. This code must be appended to the YouTube URL to access the school's unique channel (Figure 1). Upon seeing this code, YouTube connects the user to the school's portal. Once the end-user is in the school's portal, content that has been previously approved on the school's channel. View Comsift's example YouTube channel: <http://www.youtube.com/Comsift>.

`http://youtube.com/?edufilter=ABCDEF1234567890abcdef`  
**FIGURE 1:** Example YouTube for Schools URL and unique ID



COMSIFTER 'D' SERIES

## How ComSifter® integrates with YouTube for Schools

Without an Internet content filter, the user could simply navigate away from the school's portal and access the entire YouTube domain (and harmful content). Users would be required to remember the unique code, as well as learn how to properly append it to the YouTube URL.

► **This is where the ComSifter® provides assistance.** The ComSifter® monitors all URLs using a robust URL intercept. When it sees a request for `youtube.com`, it has the ability to automatically append the school's unique code to the URL—thus redirecting the user to the school's portal. This ability serves two (2) purposes:

1. It removes the need for the user to remember or enter the school's unique code.
2. It prevents the user from accessing any YouTube content, other than the content that is in the school's portal.

## Can the school have more than one portal?

Yes. Google does not limit the number of portals that can be created. The only limitation is the capabilities of the Internet content filter. The ComSifter allows each of the eight (8) filters to redirect to a different portal. In practice, this could allow unique portals for each age group of the school.

## Why not use a free DNS service?

- Does not support, or has minimal support for *YouTube for Schools*
- Slow (always, not just with *YouTube for Schools*)
- Customization is limited or non-existent
- Requires control of administrator rights of the client computer (impossible with mobile devices)
- Complicated setup and management
- May require licensing

## YOUTUBE LINKS

YouTube for Schools (signup) — <http://www.youtube.com/schools>

YouTube EDU — <http://www.youtube.com/education>