

Xfinity/Comcast users. Be wary... About two to three years ago Xfinity rolled out a Firmware Update to their gateways. A gateway is a modem and router in one device that grants access from one's ISP to your home and then to your network devices. Most just call it a router and it is, but it is also the modem that one connects to their LAN line. Back in the day, one needed both devices. Some still use two devices for this purpose. Most businesses do. Advanced computer users, networking gurus, gamers use two devices. These days most family homes do not. A **modem** is what talks directly to your Internet Service Provider — it converts the signal from your cable, fiber, or phone line into a data stream that allows your home network access to the internet. Usually, the modem will allow one device to connect to the internet via a network cable. A **router** is what takes that single point of data and spreads it around to other ports or your Wi-Fi interface inside the device to connect all your devices — phones, laptops, TVs, and such to the internet. A **gateway** is both of those in one device — a modem and router combined. It's convenient, but limiting, because you lose the ability to deeply control how traffic moves between the internet and your home devices.

Anyways, this firmware update, in Layman's terms, terminated the functionality of the device's built-in GUI's (*Graphical User Interface*) to control traffic from specific websites one typed into the list. Basically, one would go to their default gateway address (*192.168.0.1*, [10.0.0.1](#) or *192.168.1.1*) there are many different ones or one could customize the address range. The device will assign one on its own if you do not alter the default configuration process. You would go to this address the same way you would type in a website, which is just an internal user interface for the gateway. One can configure your network, configure all sorts of settings there. Much you can still do. What I wanted to do specifically was simple. Use the built-in parental controls to block all traffic from the list of websites at the bottom to my network and only allowing **“trusted”** devices access to these websites. If you do not want your kids watching content that could literally rot their brain, you, as the parent should be able to dictate that. Which in most contracts, you can. However, Xfinity has made it increasingly more complicated. They stripped this functionality away so one, us, would be forced to use their very clunky and stripped-down app for control. Do not believe them that this is the best and most preferred way to secure your network. It does nothing of the sort. All this does is make you create a profile for your kid and one can shut off the internet access to said device or devices at will. This is not the same as Parental Controls. It's just an on/off switch to internet access.

That is not one in the same thing as saying; *“I want website ABC123.xyz to be blocked on all devices except approved devices.”*

We want access to everything except for a handful of devices that would block ABC_website.com or YXZ.tv. We do not want any young kids accessing content we deem as unsuitable for children. There are a few workarounds, but those cost money and also loss of functionality from the gateway itself. The other solutions are for network administrators with advanced networking experience. The only reason I am sharing this is many people, friends, family use Xfinity/Comcast. We do. I have a brand-new fiber setup with over 300/mbps for about \$64/month. It's a great deal for the service. However, these limitations should absolutely be addressed. I thought I would tell you all my story here and also display the list of web addresses, that if you are worried about what your kid can access, one may want to think about that first, before last when choosing an ISP and how you want the internet setup in your home.

If you have any technical questions, I would be glad to answer them. This sort of information isn't exactly for public consumption. In fact, my rep at Xfinity didn't know this stuff and I was educating them on their own systems, interfaces and what the controls actually do, don't do, laughing out loud. Yet, I called them for support, ha. I just really needed them to confirm what I had already researched and knew from my own trial and error of factory resetting my gateway, re-setting up my LAN/WI-FI network, along with all my extenders

and my other access point in the attic. I probably worked on this for seven hours of time I really needed to dedicate on other things waiting for me to be worked on. After doing all this, and explaining DHCP to someone reading off a script, I finally hit the truth: **Xfinity only supports one real solution—Bridge Mode**. Putting the XB7 in Bridge Mode turns it into a big dumb modem. It basically shuts off router functionality and just treats the device as a modem. The term “**big dumb modem**” explains it well. It passes your public IP straight through to whatever router you plug in next. That’s it—no Wi-Fi, no parental controls, no clunky mobile app pretending to manage anything. From there, you can use your own router to block domains, filter MAC/IPs, or build access lists like a proper network should allow.

But here’s the catch: Comcast’s ecosystem is built to discourage that kind of independence. Anything outside their supported hardware means you’re on your own. Their engineers can configure third-party routers, sure—but the price tag is ridiculous, and their “**approved list**” shrinks every year. If you replace the XB7 entirely, you’ll probably lose some streaming performance. Adding a second router to handle packet routing can shave 5-10% off your throughput. My 300 mbps fiber line still runs well, but the extra hop can lower QoS for video services. So yes, Bridge Mode works—but it’s a compromise. You get control back at the cost of a little speed and zero official support. Comcast designed it that way. Simplicity for them equals restriction for you. For most people, that’s the end of the road. For those of us who actually understand networking, it’s one of the only viable paths left.

A simple Google search won’t work for this. Going back and forth with ChatGPT is also a dead end, as it wants to help you figure this out so bad it hallucinates false solutions. YouTube gave me several videos all using one’s phone through the app. Also, a dead end. Because my brain is wired a certain way, I needed a concrete answer to this, so I kept digging, and this was what I found out. The workarounds I found are more a pain in the dick than worth exploring and executing. Putting one’s XB7 in bridge mode is one popular method. Depending on the router you buy. This very well could fix the issue for you. If one wants to not lose bandwidth you’ll have to get a high-end router over your basic one and configure it correctly. However, it is 100% you will lose “**some**” bandwidth from doing this. It’s an extra hop. That won’t go unnoticed. One can mitigate that though through a good configuration setup on the router but it will be there. Maybe noticeable, maybe not. Xfinity doesn’t publish a list of “**approved routers**” for when you use the XB7 in bridge mode — they make the gateway the dumb modem and leave the router choice entirely up to you. You don’t even need Xfinity to do this. You can do this yourself but you should know what you are doing before you attempt this. What matters most is that your router can handle your speed tier (*300 Mbps in my case*), supports a gigabit WAN port (*or better if you upgrade*), and is stable. Plenty of routers from the likes of ASUS, TP-Link, Netgear, work just fine — the trick isn’t the brand, it’s the setup: disable the gateway’s router portion (*bridge mode*), plug your router into the correct LAN port, disable any leftover Wi-Fi on the gateway, and make sure your router’s WAN side is configured correctly.

Optional (But Painful) Workaround:

If you’re a glutton for computing punishment—or just happen to have a spare Raspberry Pi lying around—you *can* create a virtual router/firewall using something like **Pi-hole**, **OpenWRT**, or **IPFire**. It’ll let you intercept and route all DNS requests, block specific domains, and even log network behavior across your devices. The downside? It’s not for the faint of heart. You’ll be flashing images, setting static IPs, forwarding ports, editing config files, and praying you didn’t brick your Pi halfway through. And if you’re running gigabit fiber, the Pi’s CPU will likely bottleneck your throughput anyway. It works—but it’s the digital equivalent of hand-carving your own router from driftwood.

What is a Raspberry Pi?

Basically a palm-sized Linux computer that can act as a custom gateway between your network and the outside world. It looks like a small computer circuit board with some interfaces to plug a network cable in, mouse, keyboard and monitor. It connects to your existing Wi-Fi, hands out IPs, forwards traffic, and even hides your devices from the ISP. Think of it as building your own router from scratch. It works beautifully once it's running, but it's a project: installing Linux, editing config files, setting up DNS and DHCP by hand, and praying you didn't typo a single line of code. For tech tinkerers, it's fun. For everyone else, it's a weekend lost to command-line code purgatory. People buy these for all sorts of reasons. Those cable boxes that have everything movie/TV-wise is built with a modified Raspberry Pi. The retro video game emulator boxes, with 10,000 games loaded to them are made from Raspberry Pi. They are project machines for anyone that wants to learn practical computer solutions using virtual machines. They are cheap, very compatible to old and new technologies. They are just insanely hard to program and configure if you do not know the languages. Some of the other methods are just different variations from above. One can connect a physical firewall. A custom switch with access control list functionality. The Raspberry Pi solution pretty much includes all these solutions but from its own little board over a dedicated physical device. Control of your own network isn't totally gone — it's just buried under layers of **'convenience'** Comcast doesn't want you digging through. Your control has been severely hindered in any meaningful way. Until ISPs stop deciding what's **'best'** for us, Bridge Mode might be the last act of rebellion left to the home networker. After all that, if you *do* manage to take control of your network, here's a good starting list of sites worth blocking before you hand the Wi-Fi password back to your child.

I would love to sit down with someone from Xfinity/Comcast Corporate and have a conversation about how this was envisioned. Why it was implemented? How many customers have called to complain about this and why? Why Xfinity/Comcast would believe one or even many would not want to block a very specific website from being routed to the network while safe on other devices on the same network? This is a very basic function of a router. It's not even considered an advanced feature. It is in the basic menu, under the basic settings. There has to be some other underlying issue or service Xfinity/Comcast doesn't want its customers to easily dig through. I am all for automation when it makes sense. But it is bad enough Xfinity/Comcast's technical support lacks people that have technical knowledge. I am talking to the rep and she literally tells me she doesn't know much about tech outside her script. I have been into network administration as early as 2008 but into higher end computer operations since 2000. They have made it that you have to talk to their AI that can't even do that much just to get a rep on the phone. Dealing with an ISP is always like this.

Because if a company can decide what you can't block, that means your network doesn't belong to you. Which it doesn't and it totally should. And that's the real disconnect — the internet's ours, but the gate's still theirs...

Here's a list of web URL's one should block from their child if one has the ability to do this on their network configuration. If you message me about this, please be patient with my response. Thanks. Management, haha...

Blocked Websites

- youtube.com
- m.youtube.com
- youtu.be
- youtube-nocookie.com
- twitch.tv
- rumble.com
- clips.twitch.tv

- kick.com
- dailymotion.com
- bilibili.com
- odysee.com
- lbry.tv
- twitter.com
- x.com

- video.twimg.com
- reddit.com
- v.redd.it
- tiktok.com
- vm.tiktok.com
- discord.com
- cdn.discordapp.com

The XB7, in ALL its Glory
By David-Angelo Mineo
2,147 Words
10/19/2025