When browsing the Internet, users may encounter a filter. Filters are programs that remove or block certain items from being displayed. Four widely used Internet filters are anti-spam programs, web filters, phishing filters, and pop-up blockers.

An anti-spam program is a filtering program that attempts to remove spam before it reaches an Inbox or forum. Spam is an unsolicited email message or posting sent to many recipients or forums at once. The content of spam ranges from selling a product or service, to promoting a business opportunity, to advertising offensive material. Spam also may contain links or attachments that contain malware. If an email program does not filter spam, many anti-spam programs are available at no cost on the web (Clark).

Web filtering software is a program that restricts access to certain material on the web. Some restrict access to specific websites; others filter websites that use certain words or phrases. Many businesses use web filtering software to limit employee’s web access (Finch and Redder). Some schools, libraries, and parents use this software to restrict access to minors.

A phishing filter is a program that warns or blocks users from potentially fraudulent or suspicious websites. Phishing is a scam in which a perpetrator sends an official looking email message that attempts to obtain someone’s personal and/or financial information. Some phishing messages ask people to reply with their information; others direct them to a phony website or a pop-up window that looks like a legitimate website, which then collects their information (Lane). Some browsers include phishing filters.

A pop-up blocker is a filtering program that stops popup ads from displaying on webpages. A pop-up ad is an Internet advertisement that suddenly appears in a new window on top of a webpage. Many browsers include a pop-up blocker. People also can download pop-up blockers from the web at no cost (Finch and Redder).

A filter’s primary function is to remove or block information from being displayed. Four main types of Internet filters are anti-spam programs, web filters, phishing filters, and pop-up blockers. Many people use these filters to improve their Internet experience.

Works Cited