Protect learners and support their mental health with Hāpara

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Widespread remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic significantly shifted today's K-12 landscape. Classrooms are now increasingly digitized and more students are working 1:1 with devices than ever before. The flexibility technology offers can boost learning, making it easier for teachers to differentiate lessons for students, provide specific resources for individuals and personalize instruction.

However, if schools do not sufficiently prepare, learners may have the devices and technology in their hands but lack the tools and guidance to stay safe. For one, being online during the school day potentially exposes students to threats such as cyberbullying, inappropriate content and ads as well as online predators. Even schools with filters and monitoring tools in place still have incidents where learners access or are exposed to inappropriate or unsafe content online.

Secondly, online distractions can impact academic performance and outcomes for learners. Research shows that around 25 percent of elementary students' time in the classroom is spent distracted (Dept of Education research, 2018). Reduced long-term retention of material covered in class and poor exam scores have been directly linked to learners getting off task with personal devices in the postsecondary classroom (Glass and Kang, Dividing attention in the classroom, 2018).

Educators clearly have a responsibility to protect and guide students while they are learning online. Yet, measures employed to mitigate risks need to be balanced with a child's right to freedom of expression, access to information and privacy. Keeping children informed and engaged and empowering them with the skills to use the internet safely is a critical line of defense (Technical note, UNICEF and partners, 2020, pg. 3).

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Mitigating risks while arming learners with skills to stay safe and focused

Hāpara helps schools and districts around the U.S. and world keep learners safe in a way that makes student privacy and mental health a top priority. Hāpara provides schools with two tools that filter out unwanted, potentially dangerous and inappropriate content for students and help teachers provide supervision as they work online. Hāpara Highlights and Deledao ActiveScan, presented by Hāpara are both time-tested tools used by real educators in schools and districts worldwide to keep learners safe and focused. Both tools offer features and built-in flexibility seldom found in comparable available products.

Hāpara designs its products according to the tenant that to protect children online long-term, they need guidance to build their own digital citizenship skills. This includes the ability to keep themselves safe by forming their own internal filter.

An AI-based, contextual filter helps keep students safer

Most filters on the market do category-based filtering, meaning that to block inappropriate content, they first have to know that it exists and put it into a category. [Deledao ActiveScan, presented by Hāpara](#) includes this first level of defense, which is vital for blocking all ads and plugins that try to access student information. Hāpara goes beyond that with a highly-sensitive, contextual-based AI filter that analyzes and makes a real-time decision on everything that learners encounter online.

Running a common filter next to this web filter reveals the difference. Google is not usually blocked in schools but often inappropriate images are hidden in a page of search results. The AI in the web filter will detect and blur these images. Similarly, a student searching for "sports illustrated swim" with a standard filter would get multiple images of swimsuit-clad models. The web filter in contrast, immediately blurs those images upon sensing in real time that they are inappropriate. Detecting the same content on the majority of the page, the filter then blocks the entire page.

Students watching clips and attending video conferences are also protected. If something inappropriate appears on YouTube, the web filter will blur the video the duration the problematic content is visible, even if that is only a fraction of a second. In addition, students using Zoom or Google Meet within the browser are protected, which is invaluable to prevent "Zoom bombing."

With Deledao ActiveScan, presented by Hāpara, administrators can monitor web activity across their district. The Hāpara dashboard shows all websites blocked by the AI, issues detected in real time, images blocked for students while browsing, ads and plugins.

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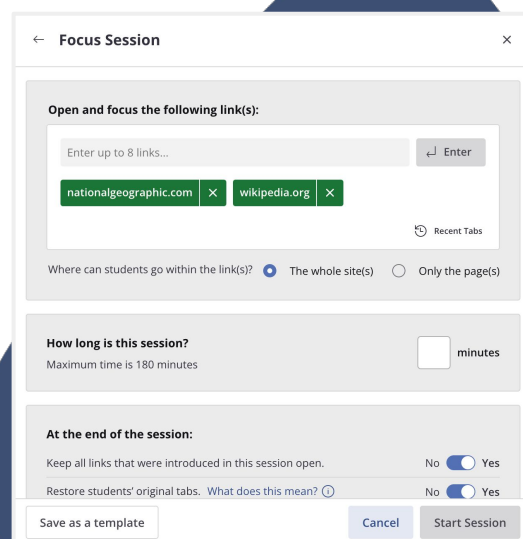# Highlights helps educators create a positive and safe academic climate

Most educators have a strong desire to protect and inspire their learners. However, although nearly 90% of teachers noted that they learned to use technology better in their teaching during remote instruction, many still find themselves a step behind students technology-wise (Klein, Edweek report, 2021). For other educators, clunky monitoring tools impede their efforts to address learners with empathy and respect. When learners feel policed on their devices, they tend to look for workarounds instead of seeing educators as allies in helping them develop skills to be safe and successful.

Educators who have switched to Hāpara Highlights after using other monitoring tools on the market share that the product's design provides several ways to help their students develop an inner compass around internet safety and build self-awareness. It gives teachers the ability to modify how they monitor and over time reduce controls based on each individual student's needs. Ultimately, this leads to the ability for learners to monitor themselves inside and outside the classroom, a key component of digital citizenship that is vital when they enter a new environment with a different set of restrictions and norms such as college or the workforce.

Building digital citizenship through gradual release of responsibility

Hāpara Highlights includes features like Freeze Tabs, guided browsing, messaging and grouping. These key functions are designed with varying degrees of access to promote supervised self-monitoring and a gradual release of responsibility as learners mature and develop digital citizenship skills.

Within each feature, educators can increase or decrease the autonomy they allow individuals or groups of students. When learners are younger, many teachers keep them in a Focus Browse session, where they can only go to a few chosen websites. Here, an educator can decide to provide access to an entire site or select pages. For example, a teacher could keep learners focused on specific websites, like a Newsela article or a Quizlet activity. As students learn to navigate the internet safely, that teacher can provide opportunities for them to exercise their own agency by using whole sites and eventually picking their own news articles.

Teachers can gradually release more responsibility to students, letting them regulate themselves and where they go. Of course, there is always the ability to close a tab if they end up somewhere inappropriate. Over time, this method can help students develop digital citizenship skills.
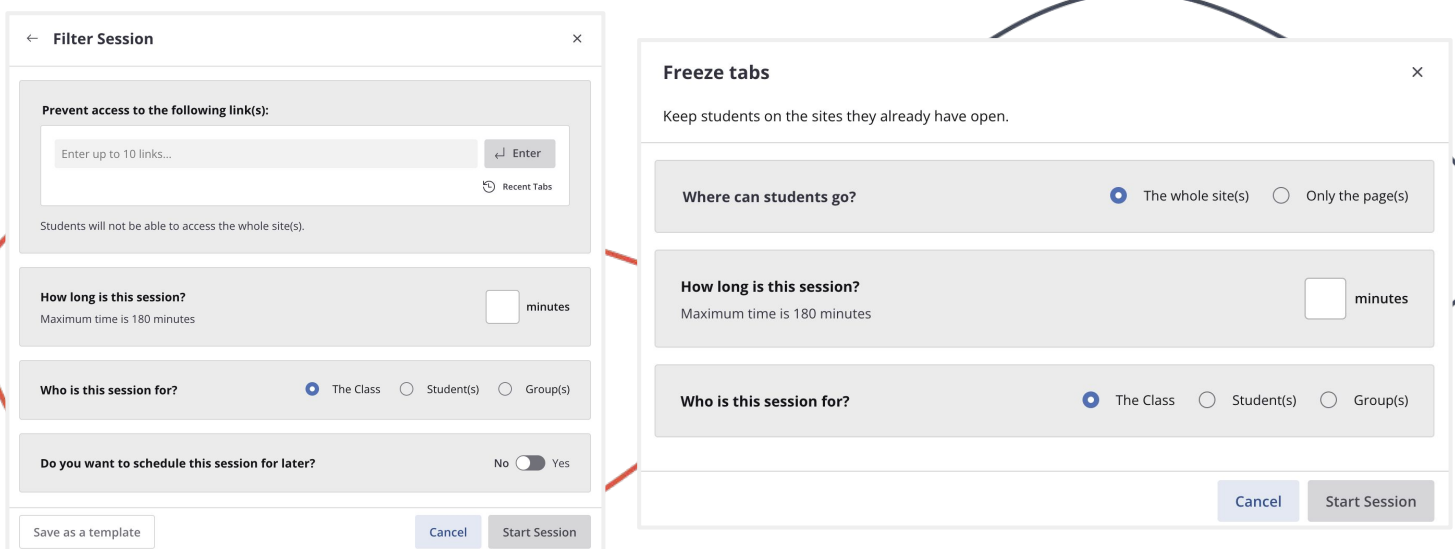
Freeze Tabs keeps learners on-task and safe

Freeze Tabs, Hāpara's newest feature, keeps learners on the sites that they already have open. Once every student has opened up their Google Classroom assignment and the resources they need to complete that assignment, the teacher can freeze their tabs for a certain time period and students can't go to off-task sites or anywhere unsafe.

Guide Browsing tools offer shelter for learners

In Hāpara Highlights, educators can create Guide Browsing sessions for learners, with the option to "focus" or "filter" their browsing. A Focus session would allow a teacher to enter up to 10 different websites and open them for learners on their devices. If students navigate away from one of the focus websites, they will get redirected so the are not able to access unsafe websites.

A Filter session is a teacher-level restriction that can block up to 50 websites during the set time frame. Educators often use Filter sessions to restrict access to YouTube or another school-approved site with good educational resources when students need support staying focused during a challenging task such as researching and writing an essay.

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Tools built to support student mental health and privacy

Student surveillance in general brings up privacy as well as equity concerns. Practices such as 24/7 device monitoring disproportionately impact students from families that lack the economic means to purchase devices and potentially stifle student learning, research and self-expression (Center for Democracy and Technology, Sustained Surveillance, 2022, pg. 2).

Policing what students do online can backfire, breaking down the teacher-student relationship. Students may feel they are in a less nurturing, comfortable learning environment. Surveillance can interfere with the trust and cooperation learning requires by creating barriers among students, teachers and officials and casting schools in a negative light in students' eyes. Students may become secretive or more fearful of voicing their opinions in class (Tucker and Vance, Education Leaders' Report, 2016, pg. 8).

Hāpara is deeply concerned about student privacy and proactive in guiding its school and district customers in the ethical use of its tools. This includes only monitoring during instructional time and while students are on the school network. The company does not support the idea that constant surveillance keeps children safe. Instead it creates tools that help facilitate a positive learning environment and healthy relationship building.

Hāpara Highlights is designed for communication versus control. For example, many of the monitoring tools available promote constant closing of tabs on students that result in games of cat and mouse or whack-a-mole. This often fosters more feelings of frustration than the monitoring solution alone, whereas Highlights offers teachers different ways to encourage students, remind them what on-task behavior looks like and positively guide those who need step-by-step support.

Building empathy and resilience using the Highlights messaging feature

The messaging feature in Highlights is a rapport-building tool. It gives teachers the ability to send a message that appears directly on the student's device without opening up the email. Educators can send messages to an entire class, groups of learners or a specific student.

Often, teachers send messages to give learners a chance to self-correct, instead of immediately closing an inappropriate tab. From the admin console schools can set Highlights so teachers closing a tab need to tell students the reason. Many educators send affirming messages, commending positive things they see students doing to demonstrate emotional support.
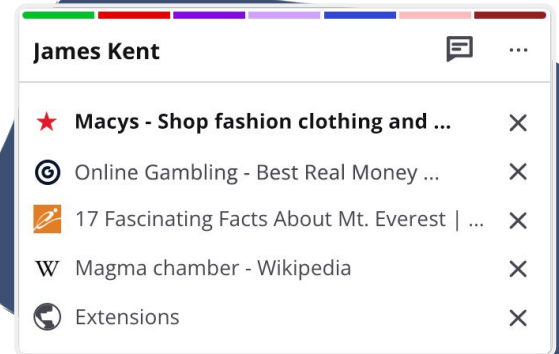
Fifth grade math and science teacher, Tyrone Frierson, shares that for the child watching animé on YouTube instead of working on math, he will write an empathetic message like,

> 66 *I used to be your age, too. And if I had this technology, I would probably be doing the same thing, but I need you to get your work done."*

He lets students know that messages are confidential, but after a given number of warnings, he'll notify parents (Hāpara Leadership blog).

Some educators group frequently off-task learners together, making it easier to put them into a more controlled learning environment and take them out as they prove themselves.

Self-esteem can easily fall for learners when they know what they are striving for long-term but are easily distracted or can't control compulsive impulses with technology. Educator Adelee Penner uses Highlights to help bring awareness to her high school students around engaging in impulsive activities such as gambling and shopping online during class. The tool has helped open communication, so these learners reach out to her for support in helping them build resilience in the face of habits they want to change (Hāpara Teachers blog 2022).

Holding learners accountable while protecting their privacy

Documenting student behavior online is another sensitive issue from a privacy standpoint. Suppose a student makes an inappropriate, unsafe or off-task action that needs to be addressed. Highlights' Snaps feature allows educators to document what the learners are doing on their devices, email themselves a copy to share and get support for that student from a parent, administrator or guidance counselor. To protect student privacy, educators can only save Snaps for a week. This encourages appropriate and timely action while preventing teachers from logging long-term student browsing on their devices.

Along with designing its tools that promote communication, support and resource sharing, Hāpara provides ongoing professional development for educators based on its ethical foundational principles. The company maintains a comprehensive security program described in its privacy policy which often exceeds the level of privacy provided in the 12 commitments Hāpara has made as a signatory on the Student Privacy Pledge. Hāpara's Privacy Toolkit summarizes key aspects of its policy.

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Responding to learners' masked pleas for help

Students' off-task behavior and online risk-taking disguise their cries for attention and help. Today's learners in need of support often express themselves in the digital environment they have grown up in. Hāpara tools can serve as lifelines for learners in trouble.

Deledao ActiveScan, presented by Hāpara offers a student wellness add-on. Balancing privacy with protection, it detects online behaviors indicative of potential problems. For example, the AI can pick up on a student searching something about self-harm or content suggesting bullying in an email and alert the school. The tech administrator can designate a counselor or another person to respond to wellness alerts. The related activities that triggered the alert are viewable and the actions taken in response, such as notes, an investigation or interventions taken.

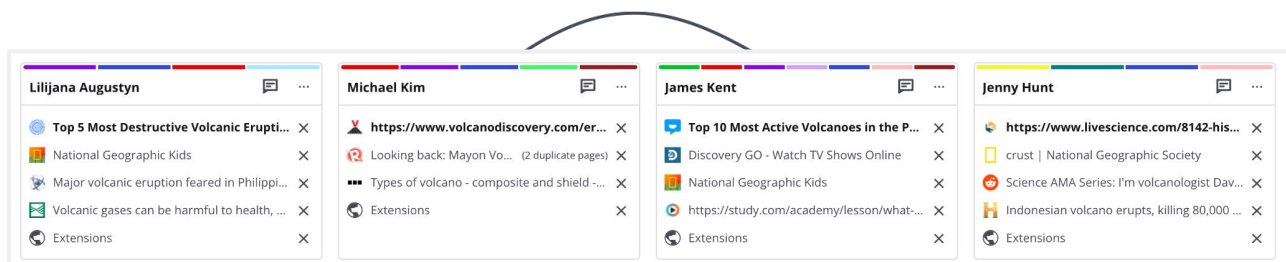# Built-in flexibility and options help schools adapt tools to their specific needs

The flexibility of Hāpara's instructional suite makes the tools adaptable to teachers' unique styles of instruction and comfort level with technology. Deledao ActiveScan, presented by Hāpara can be set to allow educators to unblock sites on a case-by-case basis, often used to reward a student who finishes schoolwork.

However, a district can also customize what a teacher is able to unblock for students or select categories that require additional approval from the administrator team to unblock. Access to a topic that may be otherwise blocked can be unblocked for an entire Google organizational unit, for example in the case of a class project.

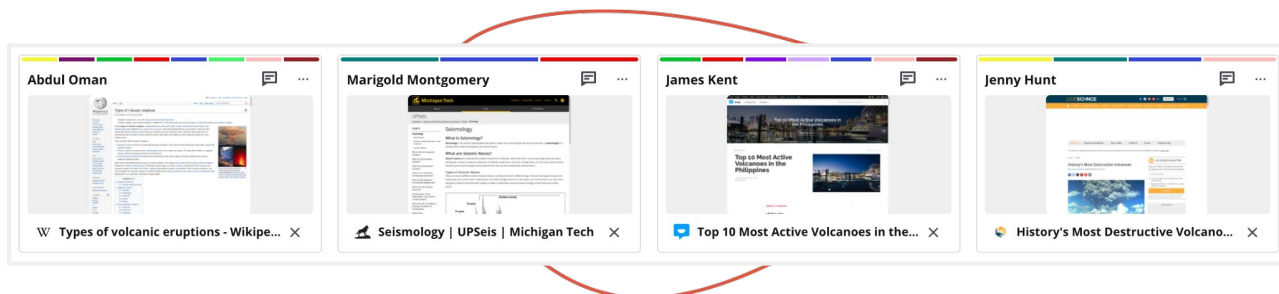## Multiple views help teachers provide feedback on student activity

Highlights provides teachers multiple ways to view their classroom and use its features depending on classroom situation, school system setup and personal teaching style.

In the Browser Tabs view, educators get a birds' eye view of their entire class and all of the tabs that each student has open on their device. This feature prevents learners from switching to an off task site when their teacher turns around.

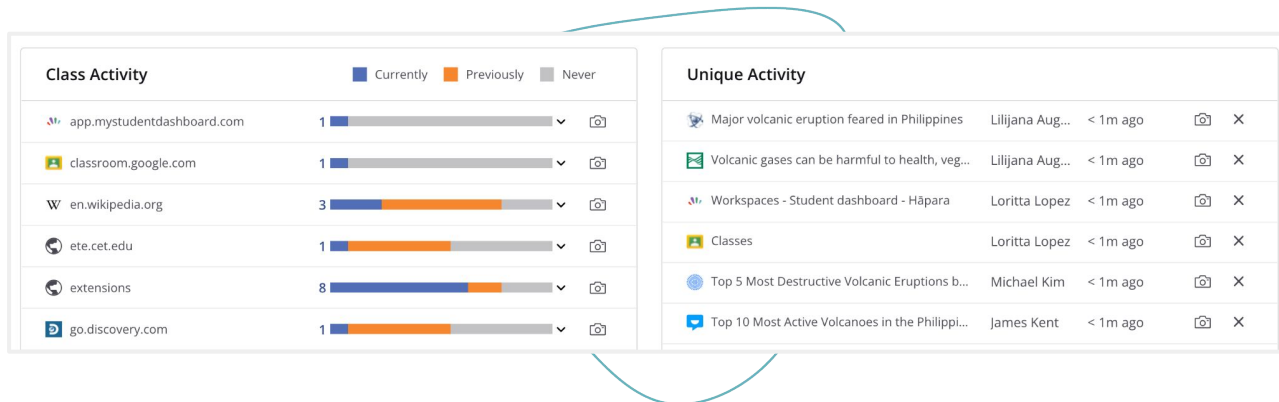| Lilijana Augustyn	Michael Kim	James Kent	Jenny Hunt
Top 5 Most Destructive Volcanic Erupti... ×	https://www.volcanodiscovery.com/er... ×	Top 10 Most Active Volcanoes in the P... ×	https://www.livescience.com/8142-his... ×
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The Current Screens tab allows educators to open an expanded student tile and view the student's screen as they navigate around the web. The Activity Viewer is a whole class summary of all the websites that everyone in a class has open. In this view, a teacher can see who is currently on a particular website, who visited it during the session, and who has not yet gone to it. This tool can help educators identify and support learners who haven't begun an assignment or might need help getting started.

The last panel of the Activity Viewer shows unique behavior, websites that only one student is on, which can be very helpful for identifying outlying behavior. Built into Highlights are several ways to address a given situation. Teachers can take a snap to document that activity, send a message to that student, close tabs, use Freeze Tabs, or start a Focus or Filter session for that specific student.

Multiple options solution to serve each unique district

Each school community is distinct. A tool that is one-size-fits-all can never be expected to effectively serve every district across the country. Hāpara's adaptability and rich set of features affords district leaders multiple options for setting up these tools to best meet the particular needs of their learners and educators.

Whether students are learning in a 1:1 classroom or remotely, Hāpara provides districts an ethically-managed approach to ensure that all students are focused on learning in a safe environment. As importantly, Hāpara tools help educators arm learners with strong digital citizenship skills that accompany them as they navigate the world beyond the classroom, including higher education, the workplace and their personal lives.

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Want to learn more about how the Hāpara Instructional Suite can transform student safety and learning in your school district? Schedule a demo with one of our team members.

[Contact us](#)