

# “How to Hack Your Screen Time”: Exploring the Limits of Parental Controls for Smartphone Devices

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## Motivation

As children use more and more technology, smartphones and other mobile devices have introduced controls to help keep kids safe. We are seeking to enumerate what controls exist and their current limitations, i.e., bypasses around these controls.

These findings can be used to create practical guides that help families keep children safe while maintaining healthy access to technology.

## Research Questions

RQ1: What parental controls exist?

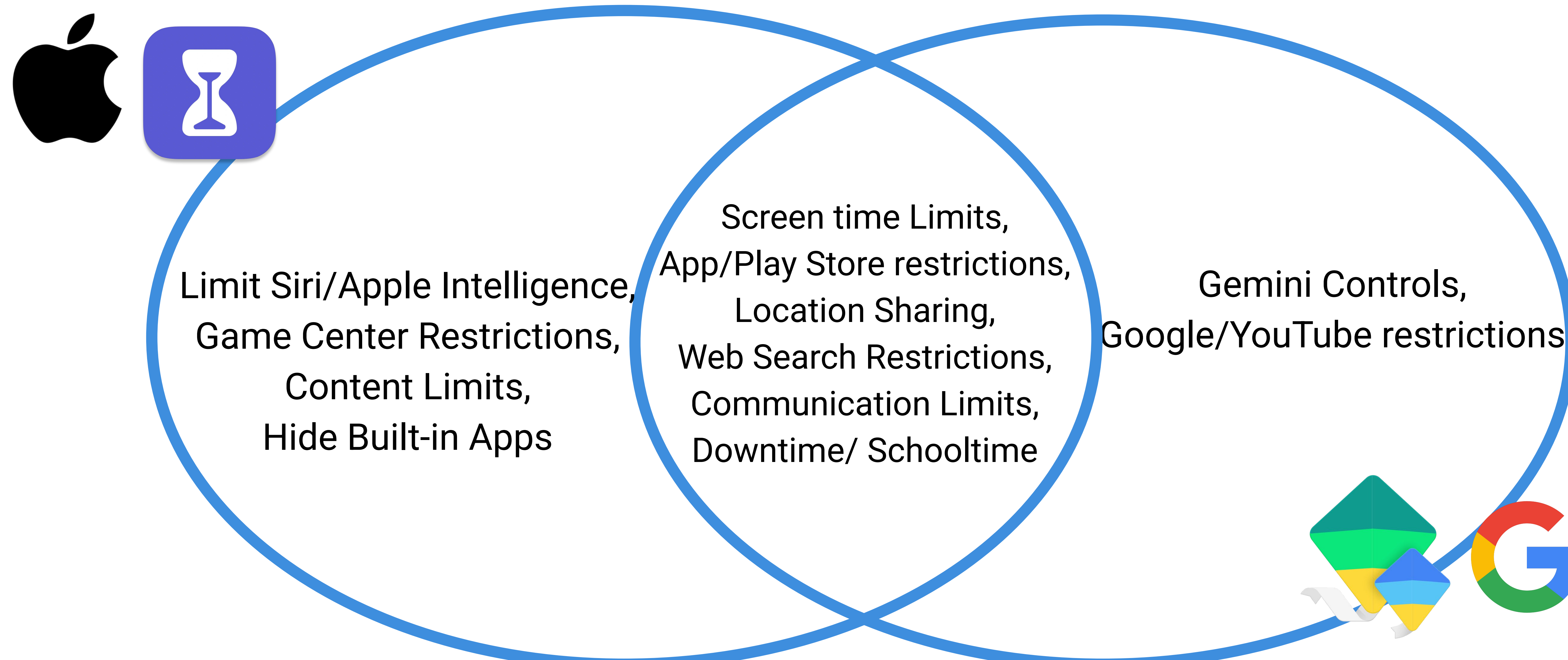
RQ2: What bypasses to these controls exist?

## Methods

1. Reading official documentation and articles from the companies to identify features
2. Social media searches, LLM asking, google searches, and manual review to identify control bypasses



## What Controls Exist?



## What Bypasses Exist?

We have found 21 bypasses for Apple devices and 15 bypasses for Google's Family Link. In initial testing, we have found one that works for each.

### Categories:

- Modifying device settings
  - Messaging through other apps
  - Alternative browser
  - Using Siri/Gemini
  - Using accessibility menu
- Confused Deputy

