HACK WINDOWS 8.1 NOW!

WebUser Issue 362

10 most important changes you can make

(just don't tell Microsoft) p54

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• Best software • New apps • Expert tips

STREAM ANYTHING TO ANY DEVICE

Play and open whatever you want wherever you are page 38



- ✓ From PC to phone & tablet
- ✓ Photos from camera to tablet
- ✓ Word docs to your TV

- Music from PC to phone
- Access your Desktop anywhere
- ✓ Live TV to your phone

PLUS

Record TV to your PC

Smartest ways to do it p58

Stop Chrome crashing
No, it's not just you!



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Cast a spell on your web stream

egular readers may have noticed that at Web User, we're big fans of the Chromecast, Google's clever (and cheap!) dongle that makes streaming web content to your TV a doddle. Although cynics claim you can get the same result by connecting your computer or tablet to your telly via an HDMI cable, we'd rather fork out for the Chromecast than have another trip hazard strewn across our living room floor.

Since the Chromecast launched last March, there's been a veritable streaming explosion, with more ways than ever now available to stream music, videos, games,

photos and documents around your home. In this issue's cover feature (page 38), we pick our favourite new ways to stream anything you want (and we mean anything) to any device.

The Chromecast may be a winner, but its elder sibling, the Chrome browser, has become a slow, crash-prone memory hog. Turn to page 46 for our advice on fixing the most common Chrome problems.

Robert Irvine

robert_irvine@dennis.co.uk #webuser



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STREAMANYTHING COVER

> Play and open whatever you want wherever you are

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Barry bemoans iPlayer restrictions

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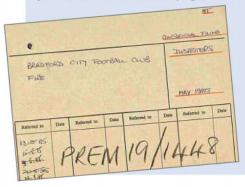




What's New Online

Read secret government files from the mid-1980s

he latest batch of government files has been released online by The National Archives, providing access to documents from 1985 and 1986. There's a lot to look at, and the search tool isn't particularly good, so the best way to start is by choosing a type of document in the 'Explore the files' box. For example, by clicking 'Prime Minister's office files - 1985', you'll be taken to another page



with headings that include Soviet Union, Economic policy, Argentina and National Health. In the Disasters section, you can read confidential information on the **Bradford City football** stadium fire, which killed 56 people in May 1985 (see image, left). To open a PDF of a document paper, you need to click its 'Catalogue reference' number.

You can also read about Michael Heseltine's resignation from the Cabinet following the Westland crisis; letters from Mary Whitehouse to Margaret Thatcher about the impact of "video nasties" on children; and an investigation into the leaking of information relating to the sinking of



the Argentine warship General Belgrano during the Falklands War.

For more insight into the files, listen to the podcast hosted by The National Archives' records specialists Mark Dunton and Simon Demissie (bit.ly/podcast362). bit.ly/files362

Listen to Spotify tracks from within Shazam

www.shazam.com

As well as relaunching its website, Shazam has updated its app with several new features, the best of which is Spotify integration. This allows iOS users (Android is due to follow soon) to listen to Spotify tracks from within Shazam, a similar service to the existing one for Rdio (www. rdio.com). There's also a new music player that lets you listen to the Shazam charts (see image), and you can get music news customised to your tastes. For more information, read the Shazam blog (bit.ly/ shaz362). The app is available for iOS (bit.ly/ shazios362) and Android (bit.ly/shazdroid362).



Edit photos using Instagram's new filters

bit.ly/insta362

Instagram has added five photo filters - named Slumber, Crema, Ludwig, Perpetua and Aden - its first new batch since introducing Mayfair and Willow in December 2012. The company says the new filters have been designed to take advantage of the vastly improved quality of cameras on phones, unlike the early filters which were intended to help users compensate for poor cameras.

Slumber creates a "dreamy" retro feel, says Instagram; Crema makes photos look "creamy, smooth"; Ludwig removes most of a

photo's colours and enhances the light; Perpetua replicates "the bluish, green, earthy look of nature"; and Aden (see screenshot) "achieves a unique pastel-y look" that works "great with portraits, even when there is a harsh light".

Click the link above to see examples of each on Instagram's blog, and install the app for iOS (bit.ly/ apple362) or Android (bit.ly/android362).

We highlight 10 of the most amazing and amusing things you can do on the web this fortnight

Use the new iPlayer Radio tablet app

bit.ly/iplayer362

Listening to the radio on your tablet has just become a lot easier, with the BBC launching its first iPlayer Radio app optimised for larger screens (it was previously designed for phones). Click the link above to go to the BBC Internet blog, where you'll find details of the app's new features and links to it on the Google, Amazon and iOS app stores.



Run Linux on your Chromebook



bit.lv/linux362

A new add-on called Crouton Integration lets Chromebook owners run Linux in a window, making it much easier to use than having to constantly switch between virtual terminals, as was the case before. You'll first need to enable Developer Mode on your Chromebook; type "put chromebook in Developer Mode" into Google and you'll see instructions explaining how to do this at the top of the search results. Next, read the post in the link below from Google's François Beaufort, which tells you how to run Linux on your Chromebook: bit.ly/ crouton362.

Explore 2014's best online maps

bit.ly/maps362

The map below, called Every Man Remembered, shows the burial place of UK and Commonwealth soldiers who died during World War One. Launched last July by the Royal British Legion, it's one of the best 100 online maps of 2014 according to Keir Clarke, who writes the excellent Maps Mania blog (googlemapsmania.blogspot.co .uk). His picks of the year include maps that capture the sounds of wildlife across the planet; recreate London as it was in the 1840s; and show what Earth looks like from the International Space Station.



Make presentations with Microsoft's PowerPoint alternative

sway.com

Launched in October as an invite-only preview, Sway is now available to anyone with a Microsoft account. It's a web-based tool for creating simple presentations, like PowerPoint but easier to use and with fewer confusing options. Read more in Microsoft's Office blog: bit.ly/sway362.



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@NSPCC

News from the charity about its latest campaigns and money raised

The web host's official account, with SEO and digital marketing tips

@Reuters

Breaking stories from the news agency and links to photos of major events

See lyrics in Google Search

Google is adding song lyrics to its search results page, starting with classics such as Stairway to Heaven. You can currently only see them if your Google language settings are on 'US English', but they should be available worldwide soon.

Chat live during YouTube streams

bit.ly/tube362

You can now post comments during live YouTube streams on your phone and tablet, a feature previously available only on the browser version. It appears in version 6.0 of the Android app - just click the Live Chat button at the bottom.

Join Mark Zuckerberg's book group

bit.ly/books362

The Facebook founder has created the group A Year Of Books after promising to read a new title every fortnight in 2015. He set himself the goal after asking his 31 million followers for a new challenge.

Need to Know

Netflix stops viewers using VPNs to bypass TV restrictions

What happened?

Video-streaming service Netflix lets subscribers watch as many TV shows and movies as they want, but each country's copyright restrictions impose a limit on what's available. To get around this, many users turn to proxies and VPNs (virtual private networks) so they can, for example, watch a show that's available in the US but not in the UK.

That could be set to change, as reports suggest Netflix has found a way to circumvent these tools. Piracy news site TorrentFreak noted that some of the methods which let you change the country from which you're accessing Netflix no longer appear to work. Furthermore, VPN company TorGuard claimed a sharp increase in the number of problems reported by users trying to access Netflix - a first for

Netflix said it has made "no change" to how it deals with VPN and proxy services, but it does block proxy addresses once it realises one is being used to disquise a subscriber's true location. This means it's unclear if the latest round of blocks falls under Netflix's existing policy, is an extension to how the company usually deals with circumvention technologies or is merely the result of a coincidental set of faults in certain services.





while VPNs act as a virtual tunnel,

Netflix and other streaming sites are required by the companies from which they license shows and films to try to block circumvention techniques. However, it's very easy for a proxy site to add a new IP address and make small changes to services, so dedicated "VPN pirates" have little difficulty in getting access to any content they want to watch.

How will it affect you?

If you use a proxy or VPN to access overseas versions of Netflix, watch out: it may stop working soon. The most popular circumvention tools will invariably be the first to be targeted by streaming services such as Netflix, so you may find you have to

switch your proxy or VPN. However, the companies providing proxy and VPN services want to keep you as a subscriber, so they are bound to update their tools to get around the latest blocks.

That said, if Netflix gets more aggressive with its blocking, then trying to bypass the restrictions may start to become more effort than it's worth which is surely the end result Netflix and the TV and film companies are hoping for. It's worth noting that the use of such tools to change your digital location isn't strictly banned by Netflix's terms of use. It does say you may view content "primarily" from the country you registered your account, and warns that the availability of programmes and films will vary by location. It also warns that Netflix will "use technologies to verify your geographic location".

What do we think?

It's frustrating to pay £6.99 a month and not be able to watch a programme you know is available to other users of the same service, purely because a licensing agreement hasn't been signed for your country. It's no wonder people turn to circumvention tools to get around these blocks, just as they used to download illegally because legal options weren't available.

The best way to stop people using proxies is to have as many programmes shared as possible across all the different countries' content libraries. Having borders on the web makes little sense in our increasingly globalised world.

What we think of this fortnight's top tech news stories and rumours, and how they affect you

Apple offers 14-day returns on iTunes buys

What happened?

Apple is letting iTunes users who live in the EU return paid-for items such as apps and songs after 14 days, without having to give a reason. European laws for online sales currently give web shoppers a "right of withdrawal", but allow companies to refuse refunds once an app has been used or a song listened to. Apple's new rules mean buyers can "return" digital goods, even after they've been used. This has led to complaints from some developers that users will play a game or listen to an album for two weeks for free. Google Play users have long had the ability to get free refunds on downloads, but only for two hours after purchase.

How will it affect you?

If you've ever accidentally bought the wrong track or downloaded a paid-for app only to realise a free alternative is just as good, you'll be happy to see Apple giving more power to iTunes shoppers. It also

means you can try an app for longer and get your money back if it's not up to scratch. It may seem like a feature that's open to abuse, but getting a refund isn't as simple as clicking a button. To get your money back, you'll need to contact Apple and use its 'Report a Problem' facility to provide the name of the item and when it was bought, along with your name and address.

What do we think?

It's easy to understand why developers may not like this rule change, because some customers are bound to try to exploit it, even if Apple does make us jump through a few hoops to get a refund. We're always happy to see digital companies making it easier to shop online, though it's hard to see why anyone needs 14 days to listen to a music track. On the other hand, it makes it easier to try an app for a longer period at no risk. Developers will hopefully respond by creating better software and games.



Microsoft may ditch Internet Explorer in Windows 10

What happened?

It's been reported that Microsoft is developing a new browser to replace Internet Explorer. Codenamed Spartan, it will be a completely new build with a more lightweight look and feel, similar to Google's Chrome and Mozilla's Firefox. However, it will still use IE's combination of Microsoft's Chakra JavaScript Engine and Trident rendering engine instead of WebKit, which is used by many other browsers.

Windows 10 will still come with Internet Explorer 11 for backwards compatibility, reports suggest. More details are expected to be revealed at the end of January.

How will it affect you?

If the reports are correct, desktop PCs, laptops and tablets running Windows 10 will come with two separate browsers: the standard Internet Explorer 11 and the new Spartan. On Windows 8 devices, you can already download Firefox and Chrome on the desktop, but they aren't available as "Modern-style apps" from the Windows Store. Spartan could give users another option when using Windows via the Start tile interface.

It's also been rumoured that Spartan will be built to

run on Android and iOS.

What do we think?

Internet Explorer has enjoyed several improvements in recent years, but it still feels old-fashioned compared with Firefox and Chrome. We'll reserve our judgement until Spartan is released, but we're pleased to hear Microsoft is updating its browser.

Although IE is much better than it used to be, many users still shun it simply because of its tarnished reputation, so a fresh name is a wise move. It's also great news for less web-savvy Windows users who simply use the default browser they're supplied with because they don't know how to switch to a more modern one.



Intel's new processors extend

laptop battery life

What happened?

Intel unveiled its updated line of processors at the Las Vegas technology show CES in early January, promising that laptops running them will be available within the next month. The fifth-generation Core i3, i5 and i7 models (bit.ly/intel362) are based on the new Broadwell processor technology, the sucessor to Haswell.

Intel works to a 'tick-tock' release cycle: with 'tocks', the company redesigns the architecture of its processors, and with 'ticks', it shrinks them. The aim of all 'ticks' is to make processors use power more efficiently.

Broadwell is a 'tick'. so while there are performance boosts and new features. the major improvements should be in battery life. For example, a Broadwell chip uses only 0.2 watts when idle, which is much better than its predecessor's 0.4 watts. However, the power demands of a processor are only a small part of what drains a laptop's battery, with the main culprit being its screen, so the time between charges on your device may not significantly improve if you use Broadwell.

How will it affect you?

If you have bought a computer within

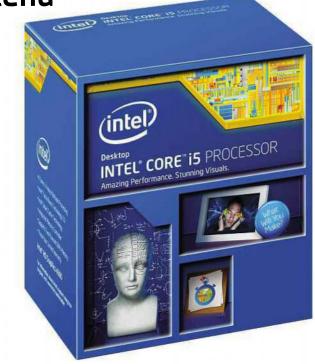
the past six months, it won't be noticeably slower than the models that will run these new processors. However, as Intel often points out, most of us don't upgrade our PCs every 12 months, but every few years. Indeed, the company says there are around 600 million PCs in use worldwide that are more than four years old. Any model running Intel's new processors will be much faster than these old computers, and should offer double the battery life. If your PC is showing signs of age,

you should consider replacing it soon.

What do we think?

Intel is no longer delivering huge leaps in performance with each processor release, but that's not a problem because most laptops and desktop PCs are already far more powerful than an average user demands; gradual progress is sufficient, even if it doesn't sound particularly exciting.

And, because it's not a major stepchange in benefits and features between Broadwell and its predecessor, Haswell, it means that computers built on the latter processor still perform well. Therefore, when the new lineup of Broadwell-based, fifth-generation Core i3, i5 and i7 laptops hit the shelves in the next few weeks, you'll probably be able to buy a Haswell laptop at a discount and barely notice the difference.



FIRST LOOK

Bush MyTablet 8 bit.ly/mytablet8

Argos released an 8-inch Windows tablet costing £99.99 just before Christmas. The Bush MyTablet 8 runs the full x86 version of Windows 8.1 and, although its specifications are only basic, some of its bundled extras make the package reasonable value for money.

The tablet's 8-inch IPS display has a resolution of 1280 x 800, which equates to a low pixel density of 189ppi. Powered by a 1.8 GHz quadcore processor, it offers a reasonable 32GB of storage, along with MicroSDHC expansion. However, there's only 1GB of RAM - the minimum requirement for Windows 8.1 systems - and its single USB 3.0



port limits the number of peripherals you can connect to the tablet (unless they are Bluetooth-compatible). There is an HDMI output, but with such a low-spec processor and graphics card, the device might struggle to power some external displays. The MyTablet's quoted six-hour battery life is also rather disappointing when compared to other compact iOS and Android tablets.

if fairly standard for Windows devices.

The Windows app store still has far fewer apps than the iTunes or Google Play stores, but MyTablet can run Desktop apps such as Microsoft Office and comes with a year's free subscription to Office 365 Personal, which is worth £60 in its own right. This lets you use Office on one PC as well as the

tablet, and it also comes with 1TB of OneDrive storage space and 60 minutes of Skype calls every month. So if you're already considering buying a subscription to Office, you can get the MyTablet thrown in for just £40 extra. If, however, you're not bothered about Office, then Tesco's similarly sized Hudl 2 is still the best-value budget tablet available.



WHAT'S THE RUMOUR

Will Android 5.1 be released in February?

Details about the next version of Android 5.0 (Lollipop) have reportedly leaked online, along with a rumoured release date of February.

The news of the update, apparently named Android 5.1, comes from website AndroidPit (bit.ly/ apit362), which cites two unnamed Google

sources. The update will hit Nexus devices first, as is the norm, and will hopefully remedy some of the ongoing problems with the operating system. Some of these were fixed by the 5.0.1 and 5.0.2 updates, which arrived in December, but many users reported a huge loss of memory when installing

AndroidPit's sources say that 5.1 will fix problems with battery and memory management, notifications, Wi-Fi and the 'OK Google' voice command. It will also add Silent Mode, which was absent from Android 5.0, leaving many users annoyed and baffled.

If you're looking for a new Android device, and want to try the latest version of the operating system, you should consider buying the Nexus 9 tablet or the Nexus 6 smartphone.

If you've already got an Android device running KitKat 4.4.4, the chances are it will be upgradeable to Lollipop.



However, getting the update will take time because most manufacturers need to add their own customisations and then wait for their network partners to deploy the software. This means it's likely you won't see Lollipop on your device until much later this year.

.....

LIKELIHOOD RATING **JJJJ**

This update may seem a little early, but it's justifiable, given the number of problems that need fixing. It also follows the pattern of recent updates: the first update to Android 4.4 KitKat came just a month after it was released, while Android 4.3 Jelly Bean received its first update only nine weeks after its release.

WEBOMETER

WE LIKE...

Three announces free roaming in Spain and NZ

From 1 April, Spain and New Zealand will be included in Three's list of Feel At Home nations, meaning customers can call, text and use the internet from those countries at no extra cost.

New Nokia phone battery lasts 30 davs

Microsoft has unveiled the Nokia 215, a \$29 (£19) phone that lasts a month between charges (bit.ly/ nokia362). The company describes it as "the perfect second phone".



WE DON'T LIKE...

E-readers damage 'sleep and health'

A team from Harvard Medical School has shown that illuminated e-readers could be disrupting our sleep patterns. Tests showed that production of melatonin was reduced by the devices' blue light, making it harder for

us to fall asleep and reducing the amount of deep sleep we have.

Most dark web traffic is to child abuse sites

A six-month study has shown that although sites containing images of child abuse represent only 2 per cent of the hidden websites online at any given time, they account for more than 80 per cent of traffic to sites using Tor's hidden-services technology.



What's new on Kickstarter

Our favourite new project on the crowd-funding site

bit.ly/jack362 | From £3

Jack is a device that lets you stream your guitar wirelessly to any amp in real time to produce studio-quality sound. There's no need for a router or internet connection, so you can use it



Stay Safe Online

News about the latest threats and advice from security experts

SECURITY ALERT! | What's been bothering us this fortnight

Work-at-home scams on the rise



Security firm Bitdefender has warned that more LinkedIn users will be affected by work-athome scams in 2015.

These social-engineering attacks promise job opportunities that inevitably turn out to be too good to be true, often tricking victims into parting with confidential information in the process. Bitdefender advises users to be wary of poorly filled out profiles as well as dubious recruiters. bit.ly/linkedin362

Facebook hit by privacy notice hoax

According to security expert Graham Cluley, Facebook users have been unwittingly spreading a hoax

message regarding user privacy. The message states that by simply re-posting its content, the social network will be legally forbidden from using any of your posts or information without your permission. But because all users must agree to the site's privacy policy and terms and conditions when they set up an account, re-posting the status will have no impact on the way Facebook uses your data.

bit.ly/facebook362

used by Moonpig's

Moonpig security flaw leaves 3 million customers at risk

A security hole affecting greetings-card website Moonpig has remained unpatched for 17 months, leaving its 3 million users' details exposed to attackers. The flaw, which exists in the application programming interface (API)

mobile apps to communicate with its server, was privately reported to the firm by developer Paul Price in August 2013. However, because Moonpig had made no efforts to patch the vulnerability, Price decided to announce it publicly.

bit.ly/moonpig362

Android to become target of more attacks

Security firm BullGuard has predicted that there will be a rise in attacks on mobile devices in 2015. It warns that Android will be the main target because of its popularity, with attackers hoping to steal users' personal data. As well as an increase in mobile ransomware, the company says that we'll see more traditional attack methods, such as phishing, emerging on mobile platforms. bit.ly/mobile362

Security Helpdesk | Your questions answered by security specialists

THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT: **Danvers Baillieu, Chief Operating Officer at VPN Hide Mv Ass** (www.hidemyass.com)



Isn't using a VPN (Virtual Private Network) to watch American television against the law of that country? Haydn Morrison, Twitter

No. using a VPN is entirely legal in the US, as it is in every other country in the world. Some US TV sites state in their terms and conditions of use that you must be physically located in the US when watching their content, so you would be in breach if you were accessing the site from outside the US (see Netflix news story, page 8). However, this is a private legal matter between you and the website rather than a breach of US laws.

Does HideMyAss regularly change or expand the servers it uses in

different countries? James Holloway, Twitter

add around 20 new



moonpig.com

servers, as well as one or two new countries (at least, we will until we have the entire globe covered). We also monitor the performance of our existing servers, most of which are rented, and if we find they are underperforming or causing problems, then we find alternative providers who can offer a better service for our customers.

Can any VPN offer 100-per-cent protection against hackers? Tom Swift, Facebook

A VPN offers excellent protection against certain types of hacks, namely those that involve data being intercepted, and it is a vital part of any security toolkit. Some VPN protocols (such as OpenVPN) are widely considered unbreakable, whereas others (such as PPTP) are vulnerable. Of course, there are other ways to get hacked, via Trojans and viruses, so it is still important to use a good anti-virus program and keep it updated.

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Best New Websites

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RELAUNCH

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www.deviantart.com

DeviantArt, billed as the world's largest art gallery, has been given a facelift that includes a new logo. Its intuitive new layout has sections such as What's Hot and Daily Deviations, which showcase paintings, sculptures, digital and pixel art, films and anime. The news and features sections highlight notable work from the DeviantArt community, and artists can brush up on their skills with the site's wonderful tutorials, while members often post insightful or inspiring critiques beneath the images. It's easy to lose yourself in this site, especially given that more than 160,000 new images are said to be added daily.

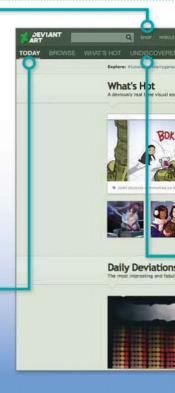
Our rating







CRITIQUE Members critique others' work and rate pieces for quality





Signature from Thomas Cook

bit.ly/thomas362

If you dream of a luxury getaway, Thomas Cook's new site for its high-end Signature brand has a selection of tips to make the dream a reality. Searching can be slow, but the site breaks holidays down into simple sections, from Europe and the USA to the Middle East, Caribbean and Asia, giving you a preview of the experiences you may encounter and an indication of the best prices. Information is well presented, with clear images, flight details and room types listed alongside a box showing details of everything that's included. You can filter results by price, ratings, board or destination. Booking is simple - once you have found a destination, there are just two extra steps.

Our rating





COMPUTERS

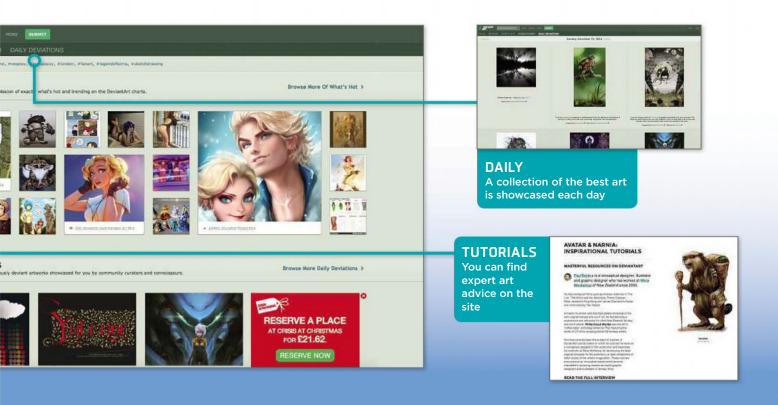
Microsoft Surface

bit.ly/microsoft362

Remember the old "I'm a Mac. I'm a PC" adverts? It seems the war between Microsoft and Apple is far from over. Microsoft's new website for the Surface Pro 3 details how MacBook owners can make the switch to Windows, with basic information about how to get started with Microsoft's OS and information about how to move content over. It even explains how the machine works well with the iPhone. The site is useful and comprehensive, and numerous annotated photos illustrate exactly how the Surface Pro 3's functions are performed.



We review this fortnight's best new and relaunched websites and rate them for content, design and features





The Voice

bit.ly/voice362

With The X Factor and Strictly having come to an end, the BBC's singing talent contest, The Voice, is back to fill the void in our lives. The show's relaunched site includes clips and news, as well as links to the iPlayer so you never have to miss an episode. You can meet the judges (or at least read about them) and take a sneak look behind the scenes via a series of photos and videos. With tweets, a retrospective look back at series three and related links, it's the perfect accompaniment to the show. And if you've never watched it, perhaps this site will persuade you to take a look.

Our rating





FILM

Days Until Episode VII daysuntilepisodevii.com

Star Wars fans are counting down the days until the new movie - The Force Awakens - is released on 18 December, and so is this unofficial website - literally. It's an incredibly simple concept: a timer shows in real time the number of days, hours, minutes, seconds and milliseconds before the next instalment is unleashed. To keep fans coming back in the absence of any substantial content, there is a daily piece of artwork (don't worry if you miss a day because there's an archive). Hopefully, some videos, news and other Star Wars delights will be added as the release date approaches.

Our rating





EDUCATION

Ofsted bit.ly/ofsted362

Ofsted's website has been swallowed up by the mammoth, catch-all Gov.uk portal, although the transfer currently seems to be a work in progress. The idea is to make it easier for people to find information about schools and colleges, but the site has yet to fully integrate all its services. Finding an inspection report for a school takes you to the old site (reports.ofsted.gov.uk) and, if you previously subscribed to Ofsted alerts, you'll need to resubscribe. There's no Ofsted link from the homepage of Gov.uk yet, either. Hopefully, these problems will be addressed as time goes on.





Best New Websites



SHOPPING

Richmond Classics

www.richmondclassics.com

This revamped clothing website provides customers with a better view of the products on sale. Each item has a Quick View option, a description and clear pricing as well as recommended products to go with each item. It is also easy to find what you want, with intuitive navigation that dispenses with previous categories such as Fashion Pharmacy, Outlet and A-Z Designers in favour of simpler sections such as Sale and Brands. The Blogs category takes up room in the main navigation bar, despite there being only two or three posts each month, but there is good online engagement, thanks to the Live Chat function.

Our rating

.....





TRAVEL

Visit Exmoor

www.visit-exmoor.co.uk

Visit Exmoor is a masterclass in how a destination site can be both informative and inspirational. Aside from a clean, clear design with well-shot images, bold headlines and colourful boxes to catch the attention, this packed site has a brilliant approach to searches. Results are shown on an interactive map, helping you get your bearings, and listings can be saved for later. The result is an easily navigable site with which to plan a visit, and view events and attractions while looking for places to stay. Sure, the blog isn't as regularly updated as we'd like (and the YouTube channel looks neglected) but we're mightily impressed.

Our rating





RELIGION

Catholic Herald

www.catholicherald.co.uk

It's all change for the Catholic Herald, with the publishers taking the newspaper in a fresh direction by reformatting it as a magazine. Its new website takes a clean, two-column approach to displaying its content, presenting each article with a headline, image, date and introduction; just enough to whet your appetite. Some of the articles are taken from the magazine while others are exclusive to the site, and the comments system encourages some spirited debates. One article about clerical child sex abuse generated more than 100 comments in a matter of hours, and there's also a handy list of the most popular items.

Our rating





www.letsgotothecountry.co.uk

www.ietsgototilecouliti y.co.uk

If you enjoy filling your lungs with fresh air, you will adore how easy it is to find rural accommodation, pubs, tourist attractions and events using this website. Managed by Farm Stay UK, it has been developed using public finding and the money hasn't been wasted. There are late deals, special offers and a handy accommodation search facility, as well as ideas for rural activities and farm holidays. Each suggestion includes a list of suitable B&Bs. It's a shame that you can't book all accommodation online and that you need to call some B&Bs to check availability, but that's the only 'old-fashioned' aspect to the site, which is otherwise modern and inviting.

Our rating





BUSINESS

The UK Mag

www.theukmag.co.uk

Set up to promote British business, The UK Mag is very much in its early days. There's little content as yet, but some promise: the site looks great and the (free) listings it's attracted so far are clear and concise (albeit very Oxford-centric). However, the site has poor navigation - the Directory section is a jumble of businesses nestled together, including a childminding service, a coffee shop and an estate agent. At the top of the screen, a huge block shows various sections to help filter the content, but this approach is all very 1990s. With some sections containing nothing, the site needs to build up fast if it wants to attract visitors.







CHARITY

Marie Curie

www.mariecurie.org.uk

The charity that cares for people with terminal illnesses has relaunched its site with a more streamlined design and clearer information. It has advice about what to do if you or someone you know has been diagnosed with a terminal illness, and you can remember a loved one by sharing a photo and message on the Picture Wall. It's also easier to support Marie Curie by making a donation online.

AFriendlyPoll

afriendlypoll.com

This Pinterest-style site invites you to vote in online polls that have been posted by other users. These cover all manner of topics, from food and entertainment to technology and politics, and you can sign up for free to create your own. People who enjoy voting in polls will find plenty here to keep them entertained.

FURNITURE

Speedy Dreamers

www.speedydreamers.co.uk

This rather niche site sells racing-car beds for kids that make the prospect of bedtime more fun. There are six models to choose from, including a stylish Speedster Ventura in Red, at just under £600 with free UK delivery. The cars are impressively realistic and are made from strong, scratch-resistant thermoplastic. Any young motoring fan will be racing to get to bed early.

HEALTH

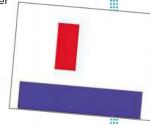
Online Pharmacy UK

onlinepharmacyuk.co.uk

Claiming to combine old-fashioned service with e-commerce, this site sells a variety of health and beauty products at reasonable prices. It's easy to browse, letting you filter products by brand and price, and also provides a private prescription service. Check out the Clearance section for savings of up to 33 per cent on essential household items such as soap.

Uncover the secret of Webdriver Torso

What is Webdriver Torso and why does it keep posting bizarre, short videos on YouTube? These videos are nearly all 11 seconds long and consist



of nothing more than shots of red and blue rectangles. It's all very strange until you discover that Google is behind the mystery and when you type webdriver torso into the search engine, the Google logo is transformed into the shapes seen in the videos. So what does it all mean? According to Wikipedia (bit.ly/torso362), the videos are thought to be made to test YouTube video quality, which is less interesting than the speculation that they contain spy messages or communications from aliens.

Build a Better Site

Specialist tips, top tools and practical help

Top Tips of the Fortnight

Typecast goes free

Typecast (typecast.com) has changed from a 14-day trial into a completely unlimited free service. The tool lets you try a range of web-friendly fonts, and arrange and style them as you like using simple menus and sliders. When you're satisfied with the results, you can export the CSS straight into your own website, to make designing great-looking, readable pages much simpler.



Embed Google Panoramas and Streetviews

It's been possible to embed Google maps into websites for a



while, but you couldn't previously start with Street View or Panorama. Fortunately, Google recently added this feature. From your chosen view, click the settings cog and select 'Share or embed image'. Click the 'Embed image' tab, select the size you want (from Small, Medium, Large or 'Custom size'), then copy the link into your web page.

Deal of the Fortnight

Compila (www.compila.com) is offering 20 per cent off its usual prices, with the cheapest annual Starter package down from £16.79 to £13.42 per year.

Web-building Helpdesk

THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT: Richard Stevenson, spokesperson for 1&1 Internet (www.landl.co.uk)



I have a small website. What's the best way for me to compete against big companies?

Gary Farthing, via email

There are lots of things you could do. It's worth registering misspellings of your domains and making sure your content includes as many of your keywords as possible. Use our new ListLocal service (bit.ly/local362) to update your details with online directories. Featuring your site on popular marketplaces such as eBay and Amazon not only increases sales but also adds a level of trustworthiness, as can a fast and friendly interface, especially if it adapts well to mobile devices. Offering free delivery is also worth considering, because it can make you 10-20 per cent more likely to clinch an order.



MINI WORKSHOP | Use WordPress's brand new theme

Twenty Fifteen WordPress theme: bit.ly/wptwen326 | 🕒 10 mins | Any WordPress

WordPress 4.1 comes with the latest Twenty Fifteen theme, which has a good selection of new features and advanced options. Here, we're using it on WordPress.com but it's also available to self-hosted sites



Install the theme on your site and click Appearance, then Customize. You can choose from a range of colour schemes, I drop an image or colour into the background, insert a header image (this should be vertical because it sits in the sidebar) and add widgets to the left column. Click the mobile icons I to preview it on different devices.



Click Menus 1 to add a menu to the left column. Create a menu under the Edit Menus tab by adding elements to Pages, Links and Categories, 2 and give it a Menu Name. 3 Click Manage Locations 4 and select the new menu next to Primary Menu. You can add menu descriptions - click Screen Options then Description 5 to activate the option.



To use the built-in social icons, go to the menu section and add a new menu to the Secondary Menu option.

Fill it with links to social profiles and the icons will be created automatically.

Note that featured images always appear above posts, 2 so try to make them landscape. The ideal image size to fit the theme is 825 x 510 pixels.





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We test and compare the latest products

Windows 8.1 laptops

Andy Shaw looks at five Windows 8.1 laptops to suit a range of budgets

aptops have adapted over the years to the many and varied needs of computer users, and Windows 8.1 laptops come in all shapes and sizes. Here, we've reviewed five models available for a range of prices to find the ideal option for any budget, whether you're looking for something cheap, slim and light to work on while you're out and about; or you want a heavy-duty laptop to play the latest games. Three of them even convert into tablets.

HOW WE TESTED

We put all the laptops through their paces using our Windows benchmark suite, which gives an overall score based on a series of tests including office tasks, image editing and video encoding. We also ran a demo of a 3D game, Dirt Showdown, to test each laptop's gaming ability. Lastly, we tested the battery power, recording the length of time it took to drain completely from a full charge.

Asus Transformer Book Flip TP300LA | £449.95 | www.johnlewis.com

FEATURES $\bigstar \star \star \star \star \star$ Performance $\star \star \star \star \star \star \star$ Ease of use $\star \star \star \star \star \star$ Value for money $\star \star \star \star \star \star$

As its name suggests, the Transformer Book Flip TP300LA has a convertible design. In laptop mode, it's reminiscent of an Apple MacBook Pro, with a metallic silver chassis that's cool to the touch, but its big bonus feature is that you can bend the screen back to turn it into a tablet.

The keyboard, touchscreen and touchpad are all responsive and comfortable to work with, and although the mouse buttons are built into the touchpad, clicking, dragging and gestures worked perfectly. The keyboard, which deactivates when the screen is moved to the tablet position, is well proportioned with a normal-sized Enter key. At 1.75kg, it's reasonably light for a laptop but makes for a heavy and bulky tablet.

The Flip performed well in our tests, with an overall 2D benchmark score of 37. Only the Silver Award-winning Chillblast Akira bettered its performance, but at £150 more, we'd expect it to.

Our games test also put the Flip in second place behind the Akira, with Dirt Showdown running at a playable but noticeably jittery 17fps (frames per second). Games enthusiasts will need to spend more on a better specified computer, but for standard Windows tasks, the Flip is perfectly sufficient.

Its best performance in our tests was for its battery life, which is superb. Going from a full charge to empty took a mammoth 11 hours and 21 minutes, which was the longest of all the laptops reviewed in this test.

Start AWARD

We found the screen a little disappointing but it's no worse than average for a laptop of this

price. Our calibration test measured 70.3 per cent of the range of colours in the sRGB palette, which would be disappointing in a standard monitor but isn't bad for a touchscreen laptop. Its contrast was worse, with a ratio of just 268:1, so blacks come out looking a bit grey - we measured its darkest setting to be 0.68cd/m².

VERDICT

This touchscreen laptop is like two products in one, folding over to become a chunky tablet. We like its elegant design and found that the keyboard. touchpad and touchscreen were all comfortable to use and responsive. It's well built and excelled in our performance tests, with a battery life that trounced its rivals. The screen isn't brilliant but it's about right for the price, and the laptop as a whole puts more expensive PCs to shame.





Chillblast Akira | £599.99

www.chillblast.com

EATURES ★★★☆ PERFORMANCE ★★★☆

EASE OF USE ★★★☆ VALUE FOR MONEY ★★☆☆

There's a significant leap in price between our Gold Award-winner and the Chillblast Akira, but if you want a boost in performance and a better screen, you'll just have to pay for it.

The Akira came top in both our 2D and 3D tests, and its overall 2D Windows performance benchmark score of 49 put it significantly ahead of the other PCs in this group. It also proved itself very capable at playing games, running Dirt Showdown at a frame rate of 53.7fps, at a resolution of 1,280 x 720 pixels and with the graphics quality set to High. An entertainment laptop of this calibre needs a good screen, and the Akira doesn't disappoint. It covers 89.3 per cent of sRGB, has a high contrast of 1,217:1 and a low black level of 0.26cd/m². The powerful components take their toll on the battery, though, which only lasted for a meagre four



VERDICT



The Chillblast Akira performed excellently, especially in our gaming test, which is often a challenge for laptops. However, it comes with a hefty £600 price tag and all its impressive speed had a huge impact on its battery life.

hours and 41 minutes in our test, the lowest in this group.

Asus Transformer Book T200TA

£345.76 | www.cclonline.com

FEATURES ★★★☆ PERFORMANCE ★★★☆☆ EASE OF USE ★★★☆☆ VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★☆

WebUse **BRONZE AWAR**L

If the T300LA appears to have taken its inspiration from the MacBook Pro, the T200TA's tapered lines owe more than a passing nod to the MacBook Air. This laptop also converts into a large 11.6in tablet, but you can unclip the screen from the keyboard dock so it's less

bulky. The dock has a 500GB hard drive but this isn't accessible when detached from the device, though the tablet section has a 32GB SSD built-in.

The T200TA didn't perform as well in our 2D and 3D tests as the more expensive laptops reviewed in this Group Test, although it did better than the bargain-priced Acer Aspire E3-111. However, it didn't manage to run our 3D game test at all, so we wouldn't recommend it for anything more demanding than basic Windows tasks. Battery life was good, and kept going for eight hours and 21 minutes, putting it second in our test.

VERDICT



The Asus Transformer Book T200TA operates very well as both a laptop and a tablet, and costs a lot less than buying two separate devices. The 11.6in screen is much larger than most tablets, but it has a great battery life.

Dell Inspiron 13 7000 | £649

www.dell.co.uk | overall ★★★★☆

The Dell Inspiron 13 700 is the most expensive laptop in this group, but it still fell behind our Gold and Silver Award-winners in our performance tests, and the battery didn't last as long as either Asus model. On the plus side, it has a large, good-quality 13.3in touchscreen and a solid build. Like the Asus Book Flip, the screen rotates right around and back on

Acer Aspire E3-111 | £244.17

itself, so it can be held like a giant tablet.

www.saverstore.com | overall ★★★☆☆

The Acer Aspire E3-111 didn't make much of an impact on our performance tests, providing the lowest overall 2D benchmark score (14) and failing to run our 3D game test. The battery was disappointing, too, though at five hours and 31 minutes it outlasted the Chillblast Akira. However, it's the cheapest laptop in this group and while it

doesn't have the touchscreen or tablet functions of the other models, it fits the bill if all you're after is a slim, light, affordable, netbook-like Windows laptop.

TEST-RESULTS CHARTS 2D performance Chillblast Akira Asus Transformer Book Flip TP300LA Dell Inspiron 13 7000 Book T200TA Acer Aspire E3-111 30 40 Benchmark score 3D performance Chillblast Akira Asus Transformer Book Flip TP300LA Dell Inspiron 13 7000 Asus Transformer Book T200TA Acer Aspire E3-111 Frames per second Battery life (hours) Asus Transformer Book Flip TP300LA Asus Transformer Book T200TA Dell Inspiron 13 7000 Acer Aspire E3-111 Chillblast Akira Hours



Group Test Windows 8.1 laptops

		AWARU	AWARU		
	Asus Transformer Book Flip TP300LA	Chillblast Akira	Asus Transformer Book T200TA	Dell Inspiron 13 7000	Acer Aspire E3-111
WEBSITE	www.asus.com/uk	www.chillblast.com	www.asus.com/uk	www.dell.co.uk	www.acer.co.uk
PRICE	£449.95	£599.99	£345.76	£649	£244.17
BUY FROM	www.johnlewis.com	www.chillblast.com	www.cclonline.com	www.dell.co.uk	www.saverstore.com
PROCESSOR	Dual-core 1.9GHz Intel Core i3-4030U	Dual-core 2.5GHz Intel Core i3-4100M	Quad-core 1.46GHz Intel Atom Z3775	Dual-core 1.7GHz Intel Core i5-4210U	Dual-core 2.16GHz Intel Celeron N2830
MEMORY	4GB	4GB	2GB	8GB	4GB
MEMORY SLOTS (FREE)	2 (1)	2 (1)	Memory inaccessbile	1(0)	2 (1)
MAX MEMORY	12GB	16GB	2GB	8GB	8GB
SOUND	Realtek HD Audio (3.5mm headset port)	Realtek HD Audio (3.5mm headphone and microphone ports)	Realtek HD Audio (3.5mm headset port)	Realtek HD Audio (3.5mm headset port)	Realtek HD Audio
POINTING DEVICE	Touchpad	Touchpad	Touchpad	Touchpad, stylus	Touchpad
SCREEN SIZE	13.3in	14in	11.6in	13.3in	11.6in
SCREEN RESOLUTION	1,366 x 768 pixels	1,920 x 1,080 pixels	1,366 x 768 pixels	1,920 x 1,080 pixels	1,366 x 768 pixels
GRAPHICS ADAPTER	Intel HD Graphics 4400	2GB Nvidia GeForce GTX 850M	Intel HD Graphics	Intel HD Graphics 4400	Intel HD Graphics
GRAPHICS OUTPUTS	HDMI	HDMI, VGA	Micro HDMI	HDMI	HDMI
GRAPHICS MEMORY	Shared	2GB	Shared	Shared	Shared
TOTAL STORAGE	500GB hard drive	500GB hybrid hard drive (8GB SSD cache)	32GB SSD (tablet), 500GB hard drive (dock)	500GB hybrid hard drive (8GB SSD cache)	500GB hard drive
OPTICAL DRIVE	None	None	None	None	None
USB PORTS	2 x USB 3, 1 x USB 2	2 x USB 3, 1 x USB 2	1x Micro USB (tablet); 1x USB 3, 1x USB 2 (dock)	2 x USB 3, 1 x USB 2	1x USB 3, 2 x USB 2
BLUET00TH	√	√	1	✓	1
NETWORKING	802.11ac Wi-Fi	802.11n Wi-Fi, Gigabit Ethernet	802.11n Wi-Fi (tablet), Fast Ethernet (dock)	802.11ac Wi-Fi	802.11n Wi-Fi, Gigabit Ethernet
MEMORY-CARD READER	SDHC	SDXC	microSD (up to 64GB)	SD	SDXC
OPERATING SYSTEM	Windows 8.1	Windows 8.1	Windows 8.1	Windows 8.1	Windows 8.1
RESTORE OPTION	Restore partition	Restore partition	Restore partition	Restore partition	Restore partition
SIZE	326 x 232 x 22mm	339 x 239 x 29mm	305 x 200 x 26mm	330 x 222 x 19.4mm	291 x 211 x 21.1mm
WEIGHT	1.75kg	1.85kg	0.78kg (tablet), 1.54kg (combined with dock)	1.7kg	1.3kg
WARRANTY	One-year collect-and-return	Five-years (two-years collect-and-return then three-years parts-and- labour)	One-year collect-and-return	One-year collect-and-return	One-year return-to-base
PART NUMBER	TP300LA-DW067H	Akira	T200TA-CP004H	CN73402	NX.MNTEK.027

OUR VERDICT

The Asus Transformer Book Flip TP300LA wins our Gold Award for its versatility. It's a great touchscreen laptop that you can convert into a chunky tablet by folding the screen back over itself. It was beaten by the Chillblast Akira in our performance tests but, considering it's £150 cheaper, we think the TP300LA offers great value for money.

If you want power from your laptop, consider the Silver Award-winning Chillblast Akira. At £599.99 it's expensive, but it has the power to perform complex Windows tasks with ease, plays the latest games at a decent frame rate and has a great-looking screen.

Our Bronze Award goes to the other Asus model in the group. The screen on this affordable device can be removed and used as a tablet, so it's less bulky than the fold-over models. It's less powerful than most of the other laptops we tested, but the battery life is second only to our Gold Award-winner.





₩eb User's Best Buys

Web User and its sister titles test over 2,500 products every year

HARDWARE

WINDOWS 8.1 LAPTOP

Asus Transformer Book Flip TP300LA

£449.95 from www.johnlewis.com Date tested: January 2015

This touchscreen laptop folds over into a chunky tablet. It's well built, did well in our performance tests and has a fantastic battery life.



Dual-core 1.9GHz Intel Core i3-4030U processor ■ 4GB of memory ■ 13.3in touchscreen ■ 1,366 x 768 pixels resolution ■ 500GB hard drive ■ 802.11ac Wi-Fi ■ 326 x 232 x 22mm ■ 1.75kg ■ One-year collect-and-return warranty

ROUTER

D-Link DIR-868L

£65.97 from www.dabs.com Date tested: December 2014

If you're willing to switch your wireless devices to the 5GHz network, the D-Link DIR-868L offers fast and reliable performance at a great price.

KEY SPECS

Dual-band 2.4GHz and 5GHz = 802.11b/g/n = 1,300Mbps theoretical maximum speed
Six internal antennas 4 x 10/100/1000Mbps Ethernet ports ■ WPA and WPA2 encryption = 1 x USB 3 port = 217 x 123 x 102mm = One-year return-to-base warranty

DESKTOP PC

Chillblast Fusion Obelisk

£699.98 from www.chillblast.com Date tested: November 2014



This great all-round desktop PC achieved a good overall performance in both our Windows and gaming tests. It runs quietly, has a good-quality monitor and is packed with great components, including a fast SSD and a generous hard drive.

KEY SPECS

Quad-core 4.2GHz Intel Core i5-4690K processor (overclocked) ■ 8GB of memory ■ 5 x USB3, 5 x USB2 ports ■ Gigabit Ethernet ■ 120GB SSD ■ 1TB hard drive ■ 1,920 x 1,080 pixels resolution ■ Windows 8.1 ■ 465 x 430 x 192mm

KEYBOARD

Cherry MX-Board 3.0

£55 from www.kikatek.com Date tested: November 2014



hard-wearing mechanical keyboard that's a pleasure to type on. It doesn't have lots of features, but it's ideal if you're looking for a standard, good-quality keyboard.

KEY SPECS

104 keys ■ 1 X USB port ■ 1.8m detachable cable ■ 2 non-slip surfaces ■ 2 rubber caps for adjustable feet ■ 44.6 x 15.8 x 2.8cm = 0.83kg = Win-Key lock

BUDGET LAPTOP

Asus X200MA

£175.55 from www.amazon.co.uk Date tested: October 2014



KEY SPECS

2.16GHz Intel Celeron N2830 dual-core processor = 500GB hard drive ■ 2GB memory ■ 11.6in (non-touch) screen ■ 1,366 x 768 pixels resolution = 1 x USB 3 port, 2 x USB 2 ports = 1 x 10/100 Ethernet, 802.11n dual-band Wi-Fi ■ 302 x 200 x 26mm ■ 1.2kg ■ One-year return-to-base warranty

NAS DRIVE

Asustor AS-202TE

£199.66 from www.scan.co.uk Date tested: September 2014



This NAS drive put in an excellent performance in our tests, transferring files over our network faster than any of the other devices we tested. It has an impressive range of tools, including an HDMI output for streaming to TV.

KEY SPECS

EXT4 file system SATA3 hard drive 2 x 3.5in bays ■ 1 x 10/100/1,000 Ethernet ■ 2 x USB 2 ports, 2 x USB 3 ports = 1 x HDMI (1.4a) = 1 x 3.5mm mini-jack = 230 x 164 x 108mm ■ 1.87kg ■ Two-year return-to-base warranty

🔙 Web User's Best Buys

WOHD MONITOR

AOC q2770Pqu

£367.96 from www.dabs.com Date tested: August 2014

The AOC q2770Pqu has an exceptional, highquality screen and is very reasonably priced. Its settings are preconfigured, so you don't need to tweak

them to improve the display, and it has all the ports you'll ever need.



KEY SPECS

27in widescreen ■ 2,560 x 1,440 pixels resolution ■ Portrait mode ■ Adjustable stand ■ 2 x 2W speakers ■ DisplayPort, DVI, HDMI, VGA, 2 x USB 3.0 and 2 x USB 2.0 ports ■ 642 x 245 x 428mm ■ 8kg ■ 3-years return-to-base warranty

HD MONITOR

BenQ EW2740L

£194 from www.ebuyer.com

Date tested: July 2014

The RenQ FW/2740L is an excellent-value 27in monitor with good image quality. It supports MHL, so you can connect a compatible mobile device to it, and has two HDMI ports and one VGA port.



KEY SPECS

27in widescreen ■ 1,920 x 1,080 pixels resolution ■ 2W stereo speakers ■ MHL support ■ 2 x HDMI and 1 x VGA ports ■ 320 x 115 x 95mm ■ One-year return-to-base warrantv

CHROMEBOOK

Acer C720P Chromebook

£244.81 from www.ilgs.net Date tested: June 2014

This fantastic Chromebook provides excellent overall performance,

respectable battery life and a good collection of ports. It's got a smart touchscreen, comfy keyboard and touchpad, and starts up in no time at all.

KEY SPECS

1.4GHz Intel Celeron 2955U processor ■ 16GB storage ■ 2GB memory ■ 11.6in screen ■ 1,366 x 768 pixels resolution ■ 7.5 hours battery life ■ USB 3, USB 2 and HDMI ports ■ 288 x 204 x 20mm ■ 1.35kg

BUDGET SMARTPHONE

Motorola Moto G

£99.99 (PAYG) from www.argos.co.uk Date tested: April 2014

The excellent Moto G has set a new standard in affordable smartphones. A 4G model is now available, as well as an updated version with a 5in screen and a microSD card slot to expand its storage. The phone's beautiful screen and good performance make it fantastic value for money.



1.2GHz quad-core processor = 8GB storage = 1,280 x 720 pixels resolution ■ 4.5in screen ■ 1GB memory ■ Android 4.4 (KitKat) ■ 5-megapixel and 1.3-megapixel cameras ■ 3G/ GPS/Bluetooth/802.11n Wi-Fi ■ 130 x 66 x 12mm ■ 143g

BASE UNIT PC

Chillblast Fusion Quasar

£600 from www.chillblast.com Date tested: March 2014

The Chillblast Fusion Quasar is a great all-round PC offering superb performance and plenty of room for expansion. It's expensive compared to other base unit PCs, but comes with a five-year



warranty and a high-performing SSHD hard drive.

KEY SPECS

3.4GHz Intel Core i5-4670K processor ■ 8GB DDR3 memory ■ Gigabyte GA-Z87-HD3 motherboard ■ 1TB hybrid HD/SSD hard drive Windows 8.1 64-bit Five-year return-to-base warranty ■ 465 x 430 x 192mm

BLUETOOTH SPEAKER

Cambridge Audio Minx Go

£99.95 from

www.richersounds.com

Date tested: January 2014

The Minx Go has excellent battery life, is great value

for money and is very easy to use. Although it doesn't have the

extra features of other, more expensive speakers, its sound quality is excellent, producing powerful volume with no distortion.

KEY SPECS

Two speakers ■ 3.5mm stereo ■ Bluetooth (SBC) input ■ 3.5mm headphone input ■ 237 x 123 x 60mm ■1.1kg

One-year return-to-base warranty



SOFTWARE & SERVICES

PHOTO EDITING

Adobe Photoshop Elements 13

£81.08 from www.adobe.com/uk

Date tested: December 2014

With its tidy interface and pop-out trays. Adobe Photoshop



everything an amateur photographer needs and helps you quickly find the right editing tools.

KEY FEATURES

Elements provides

Compatible with Windows XP, Vista, 7, 8+ (32- and 64-bit)

- Bundled photo organiser Content-aware edits
- Guided edits People-beautifier tools RAW support

VIDEO EDITING

Adobe Premiere Elements 13

£81.08 from www.adobe.com/uk Date tested: December 2014

Premiere Elements 13's superb interface makes its many features neat but accessible. You won't find better videoediting software for the price.



KEY FEATURES

Automatic editing ■ Export to multiple video formats ■ Image stabiliser ■ DVD and Blu-ray disc-burning ■ Unlimited timelines ■ Stop-motion capture

ONLINE STORAGE

Google Drive

From free from drive.google.com

Date tested: August 2014

Google Drive is easy to use and has lots of free storage. The Windows software neatly integrates with Explorer, which makes saving and syncing files



as simple as keeping them in any other PC folder.

KEY FEATURES

15GB of free storage ■ Web-based office software ■ Compatible with Windows XP, Vista, 7 and 8+ ■ Chrome browser add-on ■ Android and iOS apps ■ 100GB extra storage for £1.19 per month; 1TB for £5.97 per month; 10TB for £59.51 per month



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ONLINE SITE BUILDER

Weebly

From free from www.weebly.com Date tested: May 2014



Weebly's drag-and-drop interface makes it extremely easy to use. Its templates are a little restrictive, but there are still plenty of options to choose from and the results look great. It also has free Android and iOS apps.

KEY FEATURES

115 templates ■ Unlimited storage ■ SEO tools ■ Meta tags ■ Password protection ■ E-commerce tools ■ Ad-free Starter edition - Android and iOS apps - RSS - Site stats

WEB FILTER

Norton Family

Free from www.symantec.com Date tested: October 2013



This family-friendly software has all the most important filtering features and does an excellent job of blocking potentially harmful sites. It's also free to download and use.

KEY FEATURES

10-PC licence ■ Compatible with Windows XP/Vista/7/8, Mac OS X 10.7+ ■ Customisable profiles ■ Category filters ■ Whitelist/blacklist ■ Remote management ■ Email support

1

Best Free Software

BACKUP TOOL

EaseUS Todo Backup Free 8

www.todo-backup.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/ Vista/7/8+ **File size:** 92.6MB

It's essential that you back up your important personal files on a regular basis in case your data becomes inaccessible due to disk failure or a malware infection (ransomware, in particular, can cause major problems). Windows comes with its own built-in back-up tool but, as is often the case, there are better third-party solutions available, including the excellent Todo Backup Free.

This eighth edition is packed with even more powerful features but requires no technical knowledge to use it. The software lets you back up data, your entire system, hard drives, partitions or just individual files, and you can also use it to clone a drive for upgrading or migrating to an SSD.

You can run full, incremental or differential back-ups: 'incremental' backs up just the files that have changed since the last back-up, while 'differential' targets those that have changed since



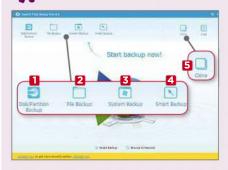
the last full back-up. Should disaster strike, you can quickly restore everything or choose the files you want.

Additionally, the software can check an existing back-up image, create an emergency rescue disk, wipe personal data so it's unrecoverable and mount image files. The latest version doesn't change the interface, but improves the creation of the WinPE rescue disk, so you don't need to install extra tools. It also offers better compatibility with Windows 7/8/8.1 and UEFI (Unified Extensible Firmware Interface - the modern replacement for BIOS) when creating WinPE bootable media.

The paid-for version of the software, which costs \$29 (£18.50) offers faster and smaller back-ups, and lets you exclude certain files.

Ö

MINI WORKSHOP | Back up your PC using Todo Backup Free 8



Launch EaseUS Todo Backup and select any of the available back-up options. You can back up a drive or partition, or your files, or initiate a full system back-up. The smart back-up feature lets you choose to protect the most important files on your system. You can also clone your hard drive.

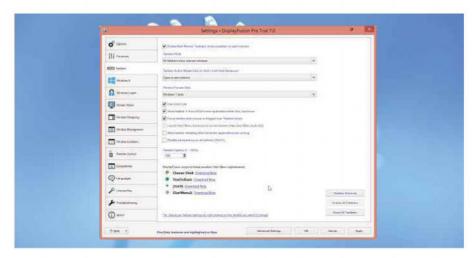


Choose to back up a drive or partition, then select the location in the window that opens. Select a save destination. You'll be shown how much space is required and how much free space is available. You can access the back-up options here. Hit Proceed to start the process.



Alternatively, you can back up files and folders. Select the areas you want to target. The common places are selected by default. Set a destination for your files to be saved to and a plan name. You can set a schedule for your back-up. Once the process is complete you can restore from the back-up at any time.

This fortnight's top new software downloads to help you make the most of your PC, and they're all FREE



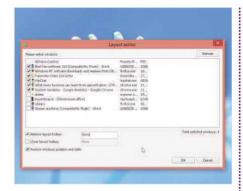
MULTI-MONITOR MANAGER

DisplayFusion 7

www.displayfusion.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+ File size: 12.7MB

If you have more than one screen attached to your PC, DisplayFusion will give you greater control over your set-up. It offers precise monitor controls, useful Windows 8 tweaks, window snapping and the ability to add wallpaper from a variety of websites. Version 7 adds support for Windows 10 and introduces further wallpaper sources. The program comes with a free 30-day trial of the Pro edition, which usually costs \$25 (£16) and offers lots more features.



SYSTEM TOOL

TaskLayout

www.systemgoods.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/ Vista/7/8+ File size: 1.1MB

If you regularly have a lot of windows open and like to have them arranged 'just so', then TaskLayout is the ideal tool. Once you've got everything perfectly positioned, launch the software and select some or all of the windows in the list. The current arrangement will be saved and you can assign it a hotkey. Make a few layout changes, then hit the hotkey to make everything revert to how you like it.



BROWSER

Light 34

bit.ly/light362

Min requirements: Windows XP/ Vista/7/8+ File size: 19.2MB

Firefox is unquestionably a great browser, but there are some variations you might prefer, such as Light. This is based on Firefox 34 and, as you might guess from the name, is a strippeddown version that loads and runs noticeably quicker than its sibling. It also offers a portable mode, which allows you to launch it from a USB flash drive. Light can be run alongside an existing Firefox installation.

New Windows 8 Apps

eBooks by Sainsbury's

bit.ly/ebooks362

Min requirements: Windows 8+

File size: 2.3MB

Sainsbury's eReader app lets you buy and enjoy 400,000 titles at great value prices, and offers over 35,000 free books, too. You can sync titles seamlessly between devices and earn Nectar points when you buy books.



OpenMetroMap

bit.ly/openmetromap362

Min requirements: Windows 8+

File size: 766KB

OpenMetroMap is a free mapping application that lets you view and add maps from different sources. It comes with OpenStreetMap, OpenCycleMap, Mapquest Satellite and others installed by default.



Now TV

bit.ly/nowtv362

Min requirements: Windows 8+

File size: 4.16MB

The official Now TV app from Sky lets you stream movies, sports and entertainment content. You'll need a subscription to get the most from it, but there's a free 30-day trial available.



Best Free Software

ANTI-MALWARE TOOL

Norton Bootable Recovery Tool 7

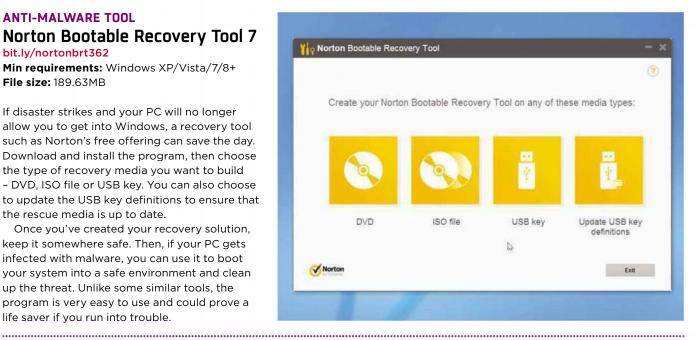
bit.ly/nortonbrt362

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+

File size: 189,63MB

If disaster strikes and your PC will no longer allow you to get into Windows, a recovery tool such as Norton's free offering can save the day. Download and install the program, then choose the type of recovery media you want to build - DVD, ISO file or USB key. You can also choose to update the USB key definitions to ensure that the rescue media is up to date.

Once you've created your recovery solution, keep it somewhere safe. Then, if your PC gets infected with malware, you can use it to boot your system into a safe environment and clean up the threat. Unlike some similar tools, the program is very easy to use and could prove a life saver if you run into trouble.



PROPERTY DESCRIPTIONS OF CO.

IMAGE EDITOR

Pixopedia

www.sigmapi-design.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+

File size: 34.8MB

Although it's very much a work in progress, this photo editor is stable and offers a good selection of features. It's not the most intuitive of programs - there are strips of buttons along the top and down the left- and right-hand sides, but you need to hover your mouse over them to find out what they all do. The bottom bar contains nine different brushes for drawing and you can switch between them using keyboard shortcuts.

The program also offers colour-adjustment tools, a range of filters, shape tools, image warping and much more. It also supports third-party plug-ins so you can expand its functionality.

ANTI-MALWARE TOOL CryptoWall Vaccine

bit.ly/crypto362

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+

File size: 13.3MB

Ransomware is one of the worst types of malware; it encrypts your personal data and then demands a ransom to unlock it. Even if you manage to remove it from your PC, your data may be lost forever.

Bitdefender's free tool immunises your PC and prevents malware such as CryptoWall (one of the most powerful clones of the infamous Cryptolocker) from being able to encrypt your data in the first place. Note that CryptoWall Vaccine is only effective in protecting systems from versions one and two of the Cryptowall ransomware, so it should be used in conjunction with any other good security software.





GAME Birdsong

bit.ly/birdsong362

Min requirements: Windows XP/

Vista/7/8+ File size: 2.6MB

The aim of this platform game is to guide your avian character through a sprawling world, collecting branches and making nests. Nests act as checkpoints, helping you to progress further. The massive world you inhabit is squeezed into a single screen, which makes for a unique and very unusuallooking game.

Don't install...

MegaMind Recorder

www.megamindtools.com

Min requirements:

Windows XP/Vista/7/8 File size: 1.6MB

Bundled with dodgy extras and an interface like a cow's behind, MegaMind calls itself a "complex tool" but its most interesting feature is a text-to-speech (misspelt 'speach') option that reads words in a robotic US accent and lacks the controls to make it truly useful. It certainly isn't as advanced or versatile as it claims to be.



...Install this instead

Audacity

audacity.sourceforge.net

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8, Mac

OS X or Linux File size: 22.9MB

This popular free audio tool lets you record, edit and merge sound files, and use a range of effects to enhance them. It's packed with tools, yet its simple interface makes it easy to use. You can increase the volume of a track, strip out vocals and background noise, change the speed and tempo and apply cross-fades to create a mix. You need to download a free copy of the LAME encoder to export an audio file in MP3 format, but the program guides you through the installation process. There are also plug-ins that add further effects and filters to the software.





UPDATED | New tweaks and fixes for your favourite free programs



SYSTEM CLEANER

CCleaner 5.01

www.piriform.com

Min requirements:

Windows XP/Vista/7/8+

File size: 5.1MB

Piriform updates its popular system-cleaning tool on a monthly basis, and usually the changes are minimal. This release improves cleaning, and optimises memory and processor usage, but also adds a new disk-analyser to show what's happened to your free space.



VIDEO EDITOR

VSDC Free Video Editor 2.3.0

www.videosoftdev.com

Min requirements: Windows

XP/Vista/7/8+

File size: 29.2MB

The latest version of this free video editor adds three new tools to download, burn and convert videos. It also speeds up exporting and preview, reduces memory consumption and improves the handling of multi-core processors for smoother performance.



SYSTEM TOOL

SIV 4.50

rh-software.com

Min requirements: Windows

XP/Vista/7/8+

File size: 1.3MB

SIV (System Information Viewer) displays lots of useful Windows, network and hardware information, which makes it handy for monitoring your PC and troubleshooting. The new release adds support for Windows 10 and polishes up the graphics, improving the presentation of certain elements.



SYSTEM CLEANER

Anvi Slim Toolbar 1.4

www.anvisoft.com Min requirements:

Windows XP/Vista/7/8+

File size: 9MB

This is not actually a browser toolbar, as you might think from the name, but rather a tool for removing unwanted and malicious browser toolbars and add-ons. Version 1.4 adds a free edition, and also fixes various bugs and improves the software scan engine.

GET FREE SOFTWARE FIRST subscribe to Web User at subscribe.webuser.co.uk



Best New Browser Tools



CHROME

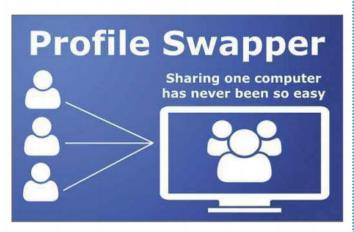
Log into multiple accounts with the same site

It's convenient to have more than one account with an online service, such as using Gmail for both personal and work emails, but it means you need to log out of one to sign into the other. And if you share your browser with other people, you'll have even more signing in and out to do.

Profile Swapper (bit.ly/profile362) makes things much easier by letting you stay logged into multiple accounts with the same site. To use the extension, just click its



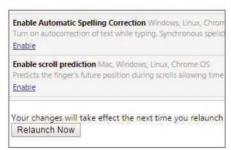
toolbar button, select New
Profile and enter a name for the profile, then click the plus-sign button and type the site's web address. This saves cookies in Chrome



for that user profile, so you don't need to keep signing in and out. Repeat this for as many accounts as you want to add, so you can switch between them in a couple of clicks.

Correct misspelt words automatically

There are lots of spell-checking add-ons that flag up mistakes in emails, forum posts and other online text fields, but Chrome goes one better by providing a built-in auto-correction tool. To activate the feature, type chrome: flags into the address bar, press Enter and find the entry Enable Automatic Spelling Correction. Click Enable, then Relaunch Now and any misspelt words should be corrected automatically. If Chrome keeps changing words that you know are spelt correctly (at least in this country!) go to Settings, 'Show advanced settings', 'Language and input settings' and check the dictionary is set to English (United Kingdom) rather than the US version.



Sort Google Keep notes into categories

Google Keep (keep.google.com) is a



brilliant free tool for creating and managing notes and to-do lists. It has a handy option for colour-coding your jottings, which Category Tabs for Google Keep (bit.ly/keep362) makes even more useful by letting you assign a category to each colour, so that tasks with a similar theme are grouped together.

Install the add-on, then go into its Options and decide the category names

for each colour, for example Work for yellow and Food for blue. When you create a note, simply choose a colour from the palette provided to save it into the appropriate category. You can then click a category tab at the top of your screen to browse all the notes stored in it, or choose All to view everything you need to remember.

Stop Facebook friends hassling you to reply

When you receive a message on Facebook, the sender knows you've read it because their message is marked with a tick and "Seen". If you don't like this feature, because it pressures you into replying when you're busy with other things, you can install the Chrome extension Facesnoop (bit.ly/facesnoop362). This prevents the 'Seen' details from appearing when you've "red" [sic] a message, so you don't have to reply immediately and can ignore it altogether if you like. Obviously, if everyone starts using the add-on, online communication could break down completely as our words tumble into a void of uncertainty, but it's a risk we're willing to take for a bit of peace and quiet from pushy friends!





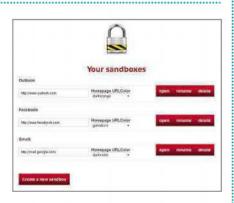
This fortnight's most useful tips and add-ons to help you get the most from Chrome, Firefox, Internet Explorer and more



FIREFOX

Boost your privacy by sandboxing tabs

Forget Firefox's Private mode; if you really want to stay private online, you need Priv8 (bit.ly/priv362). This excellent new add-on lets you open specific sites in a sandbox to keep them separate from the rest of Firefox. It's ideal for using a webmail service or social network in complete isolation, so that no data can be accessed by other tabs. To use Priv8. click the toolbar button, select Manager and click 'Create a new sandbox'. Give the sandbox a name, such as Facebook or Gmail, then



enter the web address and choose a colour to make it easily identifiable. You can then switch between sandboxed tabs, either by clicking the toolbar button or by right-clicking a tab and choosing an option from the Priv8 menu.

Select text boxes without clicking

Every click counts when you're trying to do something in a hurry, such as filling in an online form. The new Firefox add-on NoClick (bit.ly/noclick362) lets you select text boxes on pages simply by hovering your mouse over them. This means you can start typing straight away without needing to click. When you move the cursor away from the box, all the text will be selected to copy and paste elsewhere. You can also change the colour of the highlighted text in the add-on's Options. NoClick takes a little getting used to, until resisting the urge to click becomes natural, but it should take some strain off your fingers.



Only block adverts on the biggest sites

If you use an ad blocker but feel guilty about depriving small sites of revenue, consider switching to Micro Adblock (bit.ly/micro362). This lightweight add-on only blocks adverts on Google, YouTube, Gmail, Facebook and Twitter, as well as ad networks such as DoubleClick. As a result, it claims to use only two per cent of the memory

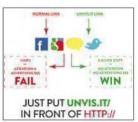


consumed by Adblock Plus. Of course, the advertising on most

small websites is provided by Google, so it's not a perfect solution, but it's the thought that counts.

Read websites without visiting them

Unvisit (bit.ly/unvisit362) lets you open articles on news websites without actually visiting them, by capturing only the text content of the page. This helps you avoid adverts, trackers and distractions, so you can



focus completely on the text. To use it. just rightclick a link and select 'Unvisit [address of

page]'. Alternatively, you can type unvis.it before a URL in your address bar, but using the add-on is much easier.

OTHER BROWSERS

Import bookmarks and print easily Last issue, we

mentioned the new bookmarksharing feature in Opera 26, but that's not all that the updated browser has to offer. It also makes it easier to import bookmarks, passwords and history from other browsers, including Chrome, Firefox, Internet Explorer and Safari. Just click 'More tools' in the main Opera menu, select 'Import bookmarks and settings' and choose the browser to import

from and the data you want. You can also import an HTML file containing bookmarks.

Another



useful addition to Opera is the built-in Print Preview feature, similar to the one in Chrome, which prevents you from wasting paper and ink on misaligned print-outs.



Try a much faster version of Firefox If you can't wait until 31

March, when Mozilla finally releases a 64-bit version of Firefox, why not try Waterfox (www.waterfoxproject.org) in the meantime? This has just been updated to version 34, in line with Firefox 34 on which it's based, and offers a superspeedy 64-bit experience on Windows and OS X that now uses less memory than ever. All

your Firefox add-ons will work in

Waterfox, as well as 64-bit plug-ins that Mozilla now blocks, including Flash, Java and Silverlight,



and the interface is exactly the same so you'll feel instantly familiar with the browser.



Best Free Apps 🗯 🚅

NEW

App of the Fortnight

HEALTH

MSN Health & Fitness

3

bit.ly/health362

Min requirements: Android 4.1, iOS 8

Size: 7.9 MB

Artificial light iPad screens

could be spoiling our sleep

If you've made a resolution to be more active or to start a healthier diet this year, this app will help you stick to your goals. MSN Health & Fitness was released as part of a suite

of apps from Microsoft that also includes MSN Food & Drink, MSN News and MSN Sports. It contains a wealth of information and tools to help you become 'a healthier you'. Indeed, the app contains workout plans for a range of fitness goals from losing tummy fat to building up your arm muscles, and there are even instructional videos showing you how to perform each exercise correctly. Every workout has a difficulty rating, ranging from Beginner to Advanced, sorted into three categories: Strength, Yoga and Pilates. MSN Health & Fitness also offers detailed information on a range

of diets and provides a handy Diet Tracker so you can keep a record of what you eat and see the number of calories you've consumed each day. We especially like the app's Cardio Tracker, which uses your device's GPS to track the time, distance and pace of your workout plus the calories you burn during outdoor activities such as running and cycling. Last but not least, there's a medical

section with
fascinating articles about health and
wellbeing as well as an interactive symptom
checker to help you identify possible health
conditions (although we always advise you
visit a doctor rather than self-diagnose!).

How to keep up your

fitness while watching TV



NEW

Sun Salutations with



LIFESTYLE

Happy for Life bit.ly/happy362

Min requirements: Android 4.0.3. iOS 7

Size: 3.9 MB

The Guardian's Happy for Life app aims to keep you smilling by suggesting quick and easy activities to boost your mood. Each day, you'll be asked how happy you're feeling before the app proposes three different activities



you can try. These include everything from watching a motivational video to planting a tree and, once you've completed an activity, you're prompted to record how happy it has made you. There's no pressure to complete any of the tasks if you don't want to, but you can at any time review the things that made you happiest using the app's dashboard. The information is anonymously collected as part of *The Guardian*'s Happy for Life project (bit.ly/dashboard362), which aims to determine which activities make the UK most happy.



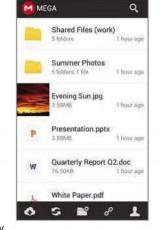
CLOUD

Mega bit.ly/mega362

Min requirements: Android 2.3

Size: 9.2 MB

Mega (mega.co.nz) is a secure cloudstorage service that offers users a staggering 50GB of space for free. Its Android app was first released 18 months ago and, despite still being in beta, it is now



available from the Google Play store for the first time. Version 2.0 of the app has been improved to make it better at handling large accounts, and you can now use it to share folders with others or access folders that have been shared with you. The Mega

been shared with you. The Mega app also supports audio and video streaming and has a built-in photo gallery function.



Our rating



This fortnight's top free and paid-for apps for Android, iOS and Windows phones and tablets, and smart TVs

DRIVING

miDrive

bit.ly/midrive362

Min requirements: iOS 7

Size: 19.2 MB

The updated miDrive gives you all the information you need about learning to drive, including how



much it costs, how to pick a driving instructor and what to expect in your first lesson. After you set up a free account, the app creates a personalised timeline of activities to help you reach your goals, such as finding a nearby driving instructor (using its built-in tool), and reading tips and watching videos on the practical aspects of driving. There's also a new feature that lets you pay your

instructor after each lesson, and you can buy miDrive vouchers to give to friends and family.



Our rating



MEDIA

VLC for Android

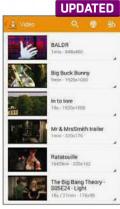
bit.ly/vlc362

Min requirements:

Android (varies with device)

Size: Varies with device

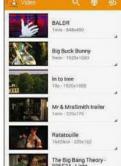
VLC has been available on Android for a



while, but the release of version 1.0.0 of the multimedia player means that it is now out of beta for the first time. No notable new features have been added and there's still no support for Chromecast, but with the app having been in development for two years, VLC fans will be pleased to finally get a stable release. Like the Desktop version, VLC for Android plays most local audio and video files, as well as

network streams and DVD





ROUND UP | Quick bites

Snapguide

bit.ly/snapguide362

Min requirements: iOS 7.0

Size: 52.3MB

Previously reviewed in Issue 354 (bit.ly/webuser354), this fun app lets you browse and create how-to guides about lots of subjects, including arts, crafts, food, gardening and technology. The iPad version of Snapguide has now had a major update, offering a new design that's faster and easier to navigate, and gives you more options to



personalise your experience based on your interests.



APPS

NEW

Shareables

bit.ly/shareables362

Min requirements: Android 4.0

......

Size: 2.0MB

Shareables helps you discover great apps by showing you which ones are popular with your friends and family. In order for this to work, you need to sign in with Facebook and give the app access to your Google account before selecting the apps you'd like to share.



When you find an app you like, you can download it, share it, or save it for later.



SOCIAL

Bebo

bit.ly/bebo362

Min requirements: Android

4.0.3, iOS 7.1 Size: 15MB

Bebo has been reincarnated as a messaging app after the social network's original founders bought it back for \$1 million in 2013. When you first open the app, you're asked to create your own avatar (or 'Bebo') which you can then use in conversations to convey how you're feeling by adding



hashtags (for example, #dancing will make your avatar look like it's dancing). If an illustration doesn't exist for the hashtag you've used, then Bebo's team will set about making one. There are also a variety of hashtags that launch special functions such as #draw, which opens a whiteboard for you to scribble on. We really like the idea and found it great fun to try, even though it's clearly aimed at people younger than us. The app's developers have announced that photos from old Bebo accounts will be available from the end of January, so we look forward to seeing what's next for the social network.







Best Free Apps

SOCIAL

Ribbon

bit.ly/ribbon362

Min requirements: Android 4.1

Size: 24MB

Ribbon is a social network that ensures you never miss a chance to meet up with your friends. As well as letting you create events such as house parties, the app lets you find out about public events around the world, including concerts and sports fixtures. By planning your schedule

with Ribbon, you can see if your friends are going to the same event or visiting your town, and coordinate with them directly from the app, so it's easier than ever to plan your social life. You can choose to make any event you create private or public, and there's also a handy feature that lets friends of your



UPDATED



Our rating

guests join.



COOKING

Simmer

bit.ly/simmer362

Min requirements: iOS 7

Size: 11.7MB

Simmer is a cooking app with a twist: as well as providing recipes for you to browse and share, it lets you create your own step-by-step guides by recording a series of 30-second video clips. Once you've created a recipe, you can share it with other Simmer users or post it to Facebook, Twitter or your own website. If you find a recipe you like, you can comment on,

share or save it, or follow the professional chef or home cook who produced it to see what other mouthwatering treats they've rustled up. The app is currently only available on iOS.





Our rating



APPS WORTH PAYING FOR

TOOL

Workflow

bit.ly/workflow362

Min requirements: iOS 8 Size: 17.8MB Price: £1.99

Workflow is a personal automation tool that lets you create "powerful workflows" by combining actions you perform on your device, such as getting directions to a local coffee shop in one tap or instantly capturing all the images from a web page.



PRODUCTIVITY

Forest

bit.ly/forest362

Min requirements: iOS 7 Size: 8.9MB Price: 69p

Are you worried that you waste too much time on your iPhone? Forest helps you to beat your addiction by giving you the unusual incentive of watching a tree grow for as long as you avoid opening any time-wasting apps.

TOOL

Duet Display

bit.ly/duet362

Min requirements: iOS 5.1.1 **Size:** 53MB **Price:** £10.49



iPad and putting it to good use. HISTORY

Think Like Churchill bit.ly/churchill362

Min requirements: iOS 7.1 **Size:** 514MB **Price:** £2.49 As its name suggests, this

app offers an insight into some of Winston Churchill's most important decisions. Guided by Boris Johnson, who has just published a biography of the wartime leader, you'll be immersed in five scenarios that let you walk in the great man's shoes.

Developed by ex-Apple engineers, Duet Display lets you

use your iPad or iPhone as a second screen for your Mac.

It's compatible with all phones and tablets running iOS 5.1.1

onwards, making it a great excuse for dusting off your old



PASSWORDS

oneSafe

bit.ly/onesafe362

Min requirements: Android 4.0, iOS 8 Size: 17MB Price: 63p

OneSafe is a password manager that protects confidential information including passwords, documents, photos and credit card numbers. The app's Dropbox integration means you can also securely sync information between iOS and Android devices.



Workflow

Duet Display

Think Like Churchill











Forest



Best New TV Apps

KIDS

Hopster Smart TV App

bit.ly/hopster362

Min requirements: Samsung Smart TV

Size: N/A

Samsung has teamed up with TV app Hopster to provide safe, ad-free programming on its Smart TVs for children aged between two to six. The new Hopster app is the first to have all its content rated 'U' by the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) and has had its learning games vetted by academic advisors to provide the best educational experience possible. It's effectively a pre-schoolers' Netflix, with programmes including Bob the Builder, Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom, Paddington Bear, Pingu and many more. The app also features a separate lockeddown area for parental administration. Hopster costs £3.99 per month, with a seven-day free trial available, and also offers an iOS app.



FILM & TV

Amazon Instant Video

bit.ly/instant362

Min requirements: Sony Ultra HD

Size: N/A



Amazon has quietly begun streaming films and TV shows in Ultra HD resolution, which offers four times as many pixels as Full HD. The 4K content is currently only available through apps on Sony Ultra HD smart TVs, with further models from LG and Samsung due to be added later this year. However, unlike Netflix, which costs an extra £2 a month for Ultra HD streaming, Amazon doesn't (yet) charge Prime customers extra to receive streams at the higher resolution. Ultra HD titles already available include Captain Phillips and Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon, and Amazon will also be streaming its growing library of inhouse productions such as Alpha House and Transparent in 4K.

MUSIC

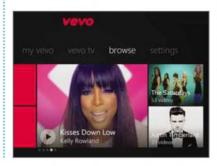
Vevo for Xbox One

www.vevo.com/apps

Min requirements: Xbox One

Size: N/A

The popular music-streaming service has added the Xbox One to its impressive list of supported platforms, so you can now watch Vevo's free library of more than 75,000 high-quality music videos from 21,000 artists on phones, tablets, set-top boxes, smart TVs and the Chromecast. The company recently revealed that it attracts more than 4.3 billion views a month through its curated channels, and ensures "the music never stops" by continually suggesting and playing videos to personalise your experience. Vevo also shows original programmes such as behind-thescenes series Tour Exposed, which are free but supported by adverts.



🗶 Don't install...

Free Torch

bit.ly/freetorch362

Smartphone flashlights and torch apps use your device's camera to provide illumination, and there are lots of good free options available. Unfortunately, Free Torch, with its suspiciously long list of permissions, such as access to device ID and call information, and the crucial absence of anything resembling a torch, isn't one of them. It's essentially just a



means of sneaking adverts onto your screen and should be avoided at all costs.

...Install this instead

Tiny Flashlight

bit.ly/torchtiny362

Min requirements: Android 1.5

Size: 1.4MB

You may be wondering what more a torch app could possibly do than merely shine a light from your mobile device, but Tiny Flashlight provides a whole host of clever features including the ability to create Morse code messages by converting text into flashes; projecting a strobe light for parties (though obviously not to be used near people with photosensitive epilepsy); and

flashing police lights if you want to put the willies up a troublesome neighbour. The app offers a choice of widgets and lets you change its brightness and colour.







Our guide to enchanted objects

They might sound like something from Harry Potter but, as **David Crookes** explains, enchanted objects could be the next big thing in tech



Enchanted objects are everyday items that perform their familiar functions but, because they connect to the internet using apps, are also able to do extraordinarily smart things – for example, a lightbulb that learns the times you're most likely to be at home. The idea is that apps will become so widespread in everyday objects that technology will, as a result, become ubiquitous in our lives and make humdrum tasks easier than ever.

How do these objects work?

There are numerous examples of potential enchanted objects, such as a web-connected umbrella that can receive weather forecasts and tell you when it's going to rain via a flashing light on the handle and a medicine bottle that makes a noise or glows when it's time for you to take a tablet. People could wear a button that monitors exposure to bright light and indicates when more light is needed to improve their mood, energy and sleep. The possibilities of enchanted objects in the real world are near-endless.



Couldn't these ideas work as phone apps?

They certainly could, and do. There are already weather apps for phones that alert you to an imminent downpour; reminder apps that prompt you to take your medication; and a whole host of apps to monitor your health. However, they all require you to look at a screen. Instead of devolving powers to a phone or tablet, enchanted objects simply embed the objects we use every day with instantly usable hi-tech magic.

Isn't this just the Internet of Things again?

Yes and no. It's certainly a branch of the Internet of Things, given that the objects are things and they are connected to the internet. But enchanted objects are designed to work without any swipes, glances or additional effort from the user. So if you eat with a HAPIfork (www.hapi

don't have to hold it or use it any differently to a normal fork, but it still sends information about your eating habits – such as whether you eat too fast – to your smartphone for later analysis. Similarly, you can use a Livescribe pen to write in the same way as you normally would, only it captures your handwriting and stores it in its memory.

.com/product/hapifork), for example, you



What about a central hub?

There wouldn't necessarily be a need for one.
Enchanted objects

such as clothes and jewellery could work independently (your T-shirt may monitor your body heat, while your ring may look for light). Everything would have an app and work to make your life easier in a seamless, natural and transparent

fashion.

Where did this idea come from?

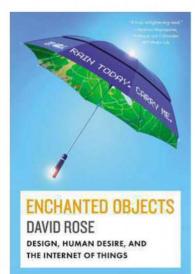
The concept of enchanted objects is the brainchild of entrepreneur David Rose (enchantedobjects .com) who has published a book on the subject called Enchanted Objects: Design, Human Desire and the Internet of Things. He is the CEO



of the imagerecognition software platform Ditto Labs (ditto.us.com), but his former companies, Vitality and Ambient Devices (www .ambientdevices.com), have dabbled with enchanted objects in the past. The latter. in particular, has embedded internet information in umbrellas, lamps and mirrors.

Are smartphones irrelevant to enchanted objects?

Some of the current crop of items that Rose refers to as 'enchanted' can and do connect to smartphones and tablets, but the concept's central theme is that the future doesn't necessarily have to include a screen. Indeed, Rose imbues the "slim slab of black glass" with nightmarish qualities because of its ability to converge all manner of objects from books, clocks and maps to calculators, pencils and musical instruments. He argues that, in a bleak future, "all the wonderful everyday objects we once treasured have disappeared, gobbled up by an unstoppable interface". Enchanted objects, he says, will save us from that, allowing all those objects we cherish to



continue to exist, but with an added edge. Imagine a novel that started glowing if you haven't read past chapter four or beeped if a sequel has been written, for example.

But will we just have more items to recharge?

Perhaps not, because Rose talks of enchanted objects looking after themselves. He highlights the 'parasitic' nature of smartphones

and tablets and their demand to be touched, charged and looked after. He wants to see manufacturers using solar power and other "non-parasitic" powers so that people can simply own and use enchanted objects without having to constantly worry about them. That enchanted umbrella warning you of rain should be just as independent as a standard umbrella from a pound shop, he

What about the likes of Apple, Samsung, Google and Microsoft?

Unsurprisingly, these companies, along with many others, have begun to invest in the Internet of Things and we are certainly seeing a rise in interactive

wearables, from watches to glasses. Rose argues that these objects continue to sap our attention. He says the Gear Watch interface is too similar to Samsung's phones and tablets, and that Google Glass requires too much interaction and runs the risk of isolating people in their own worlds rather than connecting them to others

Sounds like there'll be lots of Kickstarter projects then?

Without a doubt. Computers have become ever smaller, cheaper and embeddable in almost everything, so the only requirement for success is a brilliant idea and enough money to turn it into reality. Crowd-funding is a natural fit for this kind of thing and we're already seeing plenty of entrepreneurial flair. Check out the BeON: Preventative Home Security Kickstarter project (bit.ly/ beon362), which offered a signed copy of Rose's book as one of the pledge rewards to potential backers.



ENCHANTED OBJECTS

There are many examples of enchanted objects that are available to buy right now. Here are five of our favourites



Jawbone UP

Slip this bracelet on your arm and you can track the number of hours you sleep, the distance you walk, the calories you burn and the amount of time you spend sitting down.



Pebble Smartwatch

This Kickstarter-funded smartwatch takes the humble watch and adds a host of useful functions, from instant weather updates to text messages. Yes, it hooks up to a mobile phone, but it's still an enchanted object of



Mimo

Made from cotton, this is a washable baby onesie with a difference - it has a built-in baby monitor that checks your child's breathing patterns, sleep activity, body position (you're notified when the baby turns over), skin temperature and more.



Nest Learning Thermostat

Snapped up by Google, the Nest Learning Thermostat works out when you're away from home, so it can turn itself down. It also remembers your preferred temperature, programming itself for hands-free home



Narrative Clip Wearable Camera

A device that exists iust because it can. this camera snaps a photo every 30 seconds and stores up to 6,000 images. Best of all, you don't have to lift a finger. Magic.



STREAMANYTHING TOANY DEVICE

Wayne Williams explores the easiest and cheapest ways to access all your files and entertainment, wherever you are

treaming content around your home has never been quicker, easier or cheaper, thanks to the ever increasing number of great services, devices and apps to choose from. You no longer need to sit by your PC to enjoy music and videos you've downloaded from the web, and you don't have to waste money and storage space on CDs and DVDs. The popularity of Google's Chromecast and the arrival of Amazon Fire TV, along with

numerous other similar devices, means it's easier than ever to make your streams come true (sorry!).

In this feature, we'll explain how to stream videos from your computer to a smartphone or tablet; watch live Freeview channels from anywhere; listen to music from cloud-storage services and use Chromecast to display documents on your TV. We'll also show you how to play the latest games (PC and PlayStation) over the internet.

VIDEO 📴

Use Air Playit to stream video to your mobile devices

If you have videos stored on your PC or Mac, and you want to watch them on your phone or tablet, one of the best free options is Air Playit (airplayit.com), which lets you stream content directly from your computer to an iOS or Android device. Download and install the server on your computer, then install the free app on your smartphone or tablet. Share some folders in the Desktop app and the videos they contain will show up on your device, ready for playing. Air Playit claims to be able to stream 320 different video and audio formats (who knew there were so many?) via Wi-Fi and 3G/4G. See our Mini Workshop below to find out how to use Air Playit.



Use VLC Streamer to view videos on iPhone or iPad

VLC Streamer (bit.ly/vlcstreamer362) makes it easy to watch movies stored on your computer on any Apple mobile device. Just run the Streamer Helper on

your PC (Windows or Linux) or Mac, then install the app on your iPhone or iPad. There are free (ad-supported) and paid-for versions available, with the latter priced at a reasonable £1.49. Just add movies to the helper and you can play them instantly on your iOS device.



Stream videos over the internet using VLC

VLC Media Player (www.videolan.org) is a very versatile free program that can handle all popular audio and video formats, and also stream media over the internet. The set-up process isn't as intuitive as it could be, but once you know what you're doing, it's easy enough. Install the software on both the host system (where your videos are stored) and the remote one (where you want to play them). On the host PC, go to Media, Stream, select a video and click the Stream button. Click Next, select HTTP in the Destinations dropdown menu, and click Add. Click Next again, then click Stream. On the remote PC, go to Media, Open Network Stream and enter http://ipaddress:8080 (using the other computer's actual IP address). You'll need to make sure the



COVER

Windows firewall on either computer doesn't block the stream.

Stream videos to Android or iOS using Emit

Emit (www.emitapp.com) is similar to Air Playit and lets you stream content from your PC or Mac to iOS and Android devices, and also Google TV. The server software for your computer is free, and there are paid-for and free apps for your mobile devices. Emit Free offers all the

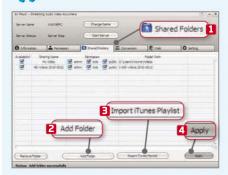


features you could want for viewing web videos, including live encoding and streaming, support for SRT subtitles and the ability to convert and

download content for offline viewing. The only difference between this version and the paid-for edition is the inclusion of adverts. If you find the ads

*

MINI WORKSHOP | Stream videos using Air Playit



Install the Air Playit server on your PC or Mac, run it and click the Shared Folders tab. 1 This is where you'll add the videos you want to stream. Click Add Folder 2 and navigate to your video library. You can also import an iTunes playlist. 1 Click Apply 4 to action the changes.



Click the Start Server button, then download the free Air Playit app on your iOS or Android device. Open the app and click the + button at the top-left. Your local server should be listed 1 and you can also enter the details for a server manually, 2 if you need to.



Tap the local server to add it, and select it from the main screen. Your shared content will be listed on the left. Tap a video to make it appear in a window. You can start it playing or convert it. You can also select a subtitle, if it's available, and a different audio stream.

too intrusive, upgrading only costs £1.49 (iOS) or £2.17 (Android).

Watch Freeview channels on any tablet

TabletTV (tablettv.co.uk) is a new product that lets you watch live television on your tablet from anywhere. It's a tiny tuner with a built-in aerial that's available in mains and portable versions, and connects wirelessly to your tablet so you can enjoy

high-quality streaming directly from your local Freeview transmitter rather than the web. Download the free TabletTV app for iOS or Android and you can start watching whatever Freeview channels are available at your current location. The TV signals are sent to your tablet using the tuner's built-in Wi-Fi, and you can also connect the device to a TV if you want. The batterypowered tuner costs £69.99 (including shipping) while the mains version costs £64.99.



Turn a Raspberry Pi into a videostreaming device

The Raspberry Pi (raspberrypi.org) is a brilliant, credit card-sized computer that costs around £25. Although it was originally designed to help teach children

programming, it can be put to lots of different uses, including as a media server and player for streaming videos. SqueezePlug (www .squeezeplug.eu) is a bootable operating system that lets you play and stream media files

using your Pi. Basic set-up instructions are available from bit.ly/ squeezeplug362.

Use Guest Mode to stream video to any Chromecast



Guest Mode is a new feature in the Chromecast app for Android (bit.ly/ chromecast362) that lets anyone cast content to a Chromecast without having to first connect to the owner's wireless network. The Chromecast owner just has to activate Guest Mode in the app, then once that's live, anyone in range will be able to send content to it by selecting that Chromecast from their device.

Stream films and TV shows using Amazon Fire TV

Amazon Fire TV (bit.ly/firetv362) is a new streaming media player that lets you watch various video-on-demand services on your television. It comes with support for Netflix, BBC iPlayer, Demand 5, Vevo and Amazon Instant Video. To get the most from it, you really need an Amazon Prime subscription (you get a 30-day free trial), but it's not essential. The device is easy to set up and use, and comes with built-in voice search. The Amazon Fire TV currently costs £69 while a Prime subscription is £79 a year.

Watch American TV on any device

Hulu is the American equivalent of BBC iPlayer. Only viewers in the US can watch the shows on offer, but you can cheat this restriction by using certain proxies or VPN (Virtual Private Network) tools. Unfortunately, Hulu has got wise to this trick and blocks some of the programmes. One way around this is to buy a MatchBoxAir Router for TV (www.matchboxair .com), a clever box that lets you watch Hulu, Netflix and more from any country directly on your PC,

> TV. It's available for £39.99 from Amazon.

tablet, phone or



Stream your Desktop using VLC Media Player

VLC Media Player is an amazingly powerful and versatile media player that can be put to numerous uses, including live-streaming your Desktop over the



internet. To set this up, go to Media, Stream (or press Ctrl+S) and select the Capture Device

tab. For Capture Mode, select Desktop. You can enter the desired frame rate in the Options box (15 fps should be fine). Click Stream and under Destination Setup, select a streaming method

(HTTP) and click Add. You can also configure the transcoding options. Connect to the stream using the same instructions we gave for 'Stream videos over the internet using VLC Media Player'.

Access your Desktop using **TeamViewer**

Although TeamViewer (www .teamviewer.com) is really designed for troubleshooting remote systems or hosting virtual meetings, it can also be used to access one PC from another, and/or copy files between them. The latest version adds support for sharing files using Dropbox, Google Drive, OneDrive and Box. It's free for personal



use and there are apps available for iOS and Android phones and tablets. See our Workshop on page 56 for more about using TeamViewer.



MUSIC 🕝

Stream music to your mobile from the cloud

The problem with storing and listening to music on your smartphone is that you're likely to run out of space. That means you'll end up only carrying around part of your music library. CloudAmpz for Android (bit.ly/cloudampz362) provides a solution to this problem becasue it not only plays music stored on your device, but also streams tracks from cloud-storage services such as Dropbox, Google Drive, OneDrive and Box. CloudAmpz for Android supports MP3, FLAC and OGG formats, and there are free (ad-supported) and paid-for versions on offer. The paid-for version only costs 62p, so is well worth considering if you like the service.



Use iTunes to stream music between computers

Apple iTunes (www.apple.com/uk/itunes) has a built-in feature called Home Sharing, which lets you stream music (and videos) between up to five networked PCs or Macs

(provided they have iTunes installed on them). Launch iTunes on your main computer (the one that contains your music library). Go to Edit, Preferences, Sharing and tick 'Share my library on my local network'. You can choose to share the entire library, or selected playlists, and optionally protect the stream with a password.

Run iTunes on a different



computer, then click the Sharing button in the the top-left corner (it looks like a small house). Choose a shared library and you can begin steaming the content.

Listen to music over the internet using AudioStreamer

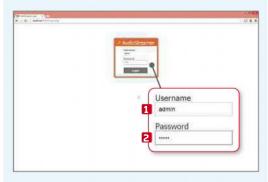
AudioStreamer (www .audiostreamer.org) is a simple program that lets you stream music from your home computer to anywhere over the internet. It doesn't require installation, so it can be launched from a USB flash drive and sits in the System Tray, running quietly in the background. AudioStreamer is configured directly through your browser and can handle all the major audio formats. See our Mini Workshop on the right to find out how to use AudioStreamer.

Listen to TuneIn Radio on your Chromecast

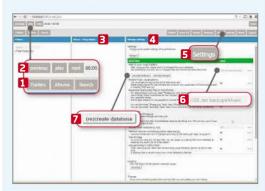
TuneIn (tunein.com) offers listeners access to over 100,000 radio stations and more than four million podcasts. That's a lot of content, so you'll never be stuck for something new and interesting to tune into. The company recently added Chromecast support to its apps, so you can now cast whatever you're listening to directly to your TV.



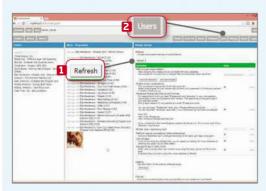
MINI WORKSHOP Stream music over the internet with AudioStreamer



Install AudioStreamer and it will start running in the background. Open any browser and go to localhost:9090. You need to enter a username and password: the defaults are admin and start respectively. You can change these to something more secure later.



The interface has three columns: the first is for Folders/Albums/Search and you can choose what's displayed using the buttons above; the middle column shows albums; and the third column displays everything else. Click Settings to change the music folder location and to (re)create the music database.



When that's done, click Refresh to see the list of folders. You can change the login details under Users. To start listening to music, open a browser on another computer or mobile device (either on your network or over the internet) and go to http://ipaddress:9090 replacing 'ipaddress' with the host computer's actual IP address.

DOCUMENTS

Cast PDFs to your TV using Chromecast

You can cast any web page displayed in Chrome to your TV set, using the Chromecast. Because Chrome comes with its own built-in PDF viewer, it can also cast PDFs to the big screen. There is a catch, however, because Chrome's PDF viewer only renders PDFs embedded on the web. If you want to be able to cast any PDF, including ones stored on your PC, you need to set Chrome as your default PDF viewer. Right-click a PDF file, go to 'Open with' and select 'Choose default program'. You might need to browse for and select

the Chrome EXE file.

Stream Office documents to your

Just as you can use Chrome and a Chromecast to send PDF files to a big screen, so you can use the same arrangement to cast Word documents. Excel spreadsheets and PowerPoint presentations. To do this, you'll first need to install the Office Editing for Docs, Sheets and Slides add-on in Chrome (bit.ly/officechrome362). As well as being able to cast documents, this add-on lets you edit them in your browser.



Access Google Docs on your phone or tablet

Documents and spreadsheets can be opened, edited and saved on your iOS or Android drives using the dedicated free Google Docs mobile apps (bit.ly/ docs362). The apps let you collaborate on files in real time with other users. and documents can also be saved for offline access. They can handle files saved in the popular Microsoft Office formats, too.



GAMES 🔞



Stream games from one computer to another

The popular gaming service Steam (store.steampowered.com) lets you download and play games on your PC. It also comes with a useful feature called In-Home Streaming, which lets you play a game installed on one computer on a completely different system on the same network. The quality of the experience will vary depending on your hardware and the quality of your network (obviously), but you can improve overall performance by tweaking the software's settings.



Stream PlayStation 3 games to other consoles

PlayStation Now (bit.ly/psnow362) lets you stream PlayStation 3 games directly to compatible Sony devices including the PlayStation 4, PlayStation 3 and PlayStation Vita. You'll need to join the PlayStation Now Beta community and



access the feature through the PlayStation Store. Owners of the PS Vita and PS TV will need to download an app first. More than 150 games are available to stream, including Mass Effect 2, Killzone 3, Dead Island Riptide and Dead Space.

Play the latest games using OnLive

OnLive (www.onlive.co.uk) lets you stream some of the latest games directly from the cloud to your TV, PC, Mac or tablet. Sign up for a free account and you can try out various games.



There are two subscription types to choose from. The CloudLift beta lets you play games you've downloaded at home on devices anywhere, while PlayPack gives you instant access to 250 games stored in the cloud. You can also buy games through OnLive.

Play Chromecast games on your

Chromecast recently added more than half a dozen family-friendly games, which you can stream to your TV screen and play using your phone or tablet. These include versions of old favourites such as Monopoly, Scrabble and Connect 4, as well as the trivia game Big Web Quiz, which pits your knowledge against up to five friends, and Just Dance Now, which turns gestures you make with your mobile device into onscreen dance moves. Most of the apps are free to install and available for both Android and iOS.





PHOTOS



View iPhone and iPad photos on your PC

If you have more than one iOS device connected to the same Apple account, you'll probably be aware that photos you take with one device automatically appear on the other(s). This is done through My Photo Stream and photos can be copied directly to your PC through iCloud for Windows 4.0 (bit.ly/ icloudwin362). Make sure Photos is selected in the iCloud settings window. Photos in My Photo Stream don't count against your iCloud storage.



Send photos from your camera to your tablet

Transferring photos from a digital camera - such as a DSLR - usually involves inserting the card into a PC (often using an adapter) and then manually copying them over. If you want to view the images on a tablet, you'll

need to copy them again, or upload them to the cloud, which is all very time consuming. However, Eye-Fi Mobi cards (uk.eye.fi) have a built-in wireless network to which you connect your smartphone or tablet. Once connected, the photos on your

camera will be copied straight to the mobile device. A 32GB card current costs £58.33.

Stream photos from your Android device to the TV

If you take a lot of photos on your Android phone, you can use AllCast to display them on a big screen without the need for any cables. This free

app lets you stream your pictures to a set-top box, smart TV, games console or Chromecast over your wireless network. Just choose where your photos are stored and select the device you want to display them on. You can also use PhotoCast for Android (bit.lv/ photoandroid362) and iOS (bit.ly/ photoios362) to stream images from your phone or tablet to your telly.



View your photos anywhere using StreamNation

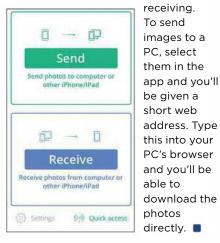
StreamNation (www.streamnation.com) is a free service that lets you store photos, movies, TV shows, music and documents in the cloud, and then access them from anywhere. The company recently updated all of its apps and



overhauled the website, streamlining the experience and removing features that weren't up to scratch. Files can be imported from the likes of Dropbox, Google Drive and Flickr. New features are coming soon, and will include improved Chromecast support.

Send photos to your PC from an iOS device

There are several ways you can send photos taken with your iPad or iPhone to Windows, but Photo Transfer Pro from Orcbit (www.orcbit.com) is definitely one of the easiest. The free app has buttons for sending and



on sale Wednesday 28 January 2015 NEXT ISSUE OANTI-VIRUS TEST 2015 Our biggest ever review of security software OCCLEANER'S TOP NEW TOOL Discover what the latest version can do **vour browser OTURN OFF** ANNOYING SOUNDS Banish the bleeps Secret tricks to make Chrome, Firefox and IE that drive you bananas do things you never thought possible SUBSCRIBE TO WEB USER AT SUBSCRIBE.WEBUSER.CO.UK

Best Android launchers

Android launchers let you change the look and feel of your device's home screens and app drawer. **Edward Munn** looks at six alternatives to your phone's default launcher



Nova Launcher | bit.ly/nova362 | ★★★★

FEATURES **** PERFORMANCE **** EASE OF USE ****

What we liked: Nova Launche favourite And

Nova Launcher is our favourite Android launcher because it offers a great combination of usability, performance and customisation options. The

home screens display the usual grid of apps above the dock, but you can apply tweaks to everything from the number of icons in the grid and dock, to the appearance of icons, folders and labels. Nova also gives you control over widgets, letting you place them anywhere and resize them according to your requirements.

When you install the app, you're

APPS VIDGETS

Wenn Messung Messenge Mes

asked whether you want to import your home-screen configuration from your previous launcher, which makes setting up your new home screens quick and easy. Nova also gives you the option to include a Persistent Search button, giving you one-touch access to Google Now, and lets you use the OK Google voice command from the app drawer and home screens. We really like Nova's back-up option, too, which lets you save your settings in case you ever need to restore a previous configuration.

While some launchers attempt to make life easier by automatically grouping apps, we prefer Nova's simple, traditional layout and the option to arrange your apps exactly as you like. It's great if your phone's manufacturer has tampered with Android and you want to start with a blank canvas. Also, if you're still waiting to install Android Lollipop, Nova's Lollipop icon theme and app 'slide up' animation will give you a taste of what's to come. Upgrading to the Prime version of the app costs £2.50 and unlocks a range of brilliant advanced features including gesture-based inputs, unread counts and the option to create folders and tabs in the App Drawer.

How it can be improved

We could find very little fault with Nova launcher. While it doesn't offer as many context-aware tools as our Silver Award winner, you can acquire most of these using the right configuration of apps and widgets on your home screens.



OUR VERDICT

Nova Launcher is the best free launcher for Android. It's easy to use, blisteringly fast and looks great, making it a deserving winner of our Gold Award.

Best Android launchers

Yahoo Aviate Launcher | bit.ly/aviate362 | ★★★☆

FEATURES ★★★★ PERFORMANCE ★★★★ EASE OF USE ★★★★☆

What we liked:

Yahoo Aviate offers an altogether different

experience to the ususal Android launchers. Its helpful set-up wizard asks you to select the apps (and types of app) that you'll be using the most, then displays your favourites on the main home screen. A quick

swipe left shows your other apps, automatically sorted into collections such as Social, Productivity, Transport and Entertainment.

By default, the page to the left of the primary Home screen is Yahoo Today which, like Google Now, displays handy information including news, the weather and your calendar events. Selecting the menu button on this page lets you choose from a range of other useful context-related pages including Moving, which contains your Transport apps as



well as useful 'Directions to Home' and 'Directions to Work' shortcuts; Listening, which displays whatever you're listening to along with your Music apps; and Nearby, which lets you browse restaurants, bars and businesses close to your current location.

How it can be improved

Because of its rigid framework, Aviate isn't as customisable as some of

the other launchers we tested. At times, its interface can feel a little clunky and slow compared to standard launchers.

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OUR VERDICT

We really like Aviate's quick set-up wizard and its innovative, contextaware features. However, if you want a more conventional launcher, you might be better off with our Gold or Bronze Award-winners.

.....

Apex Launcher | bit.ly/apex362 | ★★★★☆

FEATURES ★★★★ PERFORMANCE ★★★★☆ EASE OF USE ★★★★☆

WebUsei BRONZE AWARU

What we liked

Apex is a traditional Android launcher that's very similar to Nova

Launcher, so it does most of the important things well. Its many customisation options include the ability to change the number of icons and the size of the margins on your home

screens, which is very handy if you want to fit more onto them. Like Nova, Apex Launcher lets you import settings from your previous launcher and there's a handy option to add a Persistent Search bar for quick access to Google Now. The Advanced Settings also provide the option to turn on 'Ok, Google' hot-word detection.

Apex provides the option to back up your settings and data, but we especially like that it lets you lock the layout so you don't accidentally make



.....

any changes. It also lets you set gesture-based inputs, which is very useful if, for example, your device doesn't have a multitasking button and you want to be able to open Recent Apps with a single swipe.

How it can be improved

Despite pre-dating Nova Launcher, Apex is a little less refined than its main competitor. Its menus are

rather convoluted in places and we found it was occasionally a bit slow.

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OUR VERDICT

It was difficult to separate Apex Launcher and Nova Launcher, but we felt the latter just edged ahead in usability and performance. However, Apex's gesture-based actions are very handy and Nova only offers this in the paid-for app.

.....

BEST OF THE REST

Z Launcher Beta

bit.ly/zlauncher362

Developed by Nokia, Z Launcher

has a simple, clean interface. It learns how you use your phone and shows your most-used apps according to the time of day. You can jump straight to any contact or app by scribbling the first letter of its



name on the home screen.

However, it has very few options to personalise your home screen and you can't add any of your own widgets.

Google Now Launcher

bit.ly/googlenow362

Google Now Launcher gives you a standard Android look, which is perfect if you don't want to use the launcher supplied by your device's manufacturer. However, other than having a



built-in Google Now home screen, it lacks the advanced features and customisation options of our Gold and Bronze award winners.

Zeam Launcher

bit.ly/zeam362

This minimalist launcher is no longer under development, but it's

compatible with all devices running Android 2.2 onwards and focuses entirely on providing a light and speedy experience. It looks rather dated, but offers more customisation options and



features than some, making it a good option if you fancy trying a different launcher on your old Android device.

Solve all your **CHROME** problems

If you've been having trouble with Chrome recently, you're not the only one. Robert Irvine looks at the most common complaints and explains how to fix them



Chrome used to be renowned for its speedy start-up and lightning-fast loading of web pages, but judging from our own recent experience and the number of emails we've received from readers, this is no longer the case. However, when we tested our version of the browser (Chrome 40) using the online benchmarking tools Browserscope (www.browserscope.org) and Peacekeeper (peacekeeper .futuremark.com), the results found it to be speedier than ever and faster than rival browsers such as Firefox and Internet Explorer. This suggests that there's nothing wrong with Chrome itself, but the way it interacts with other elements may be slowing it down.

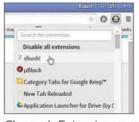


Often the cause is a wayward add-on, so it's worth checking what else is running each time you launch the browser. Open Chrome's Task Manager

by pressing Shift+Esc and you'll see a list of all running processes. Check to see



if any extensions are using an excessive amount of memory and, if so, select the



add-on at fault and click End Process. If it's not an important extension. uninstall it altogether via

Chrome's Extensions page. You can use One-Click Extensions Manager (bit .ly/oneclick362) to instantly disable (and re-enable) individual add-ons or all of them in one go. Adblock Plus (adblockplus.org) is a notorious resource hog, so consider switching to the similar but more lightweight uBlock (bit.ly/ublock362) instead.

Another possible cause of 'laggy' performance is Chrome's use of GPU (graphics processing unit) hardware acceleration which, ironically, is supposed to make pages load faster.

You can trv turning off this feature to see if there's

any noticeable speed boost by going to Settings, 'Show advanced settings', then System, and deselecting 'Use hardware acceleration when available'. Next, type chrome: flags into the address bar, find the entry 'Override software rendering list' and click Enable. Click Relaunch Now and you should hopefully notice an improvement in performance.

Why does Chrome keep crashing?

One of the most common causes of crashes in Chrome is Adobe Flash, which can prevent some pages from loading properly and lead to the 'He's dead, Jim' or 'Aw snap' error message. The easiest solution to Flash problems is to type chrome://plugins into the address bar and click the Details link on the right. Disabling one of the two Shockwave Flash options should solve the problem. If one entry is already disabled and the other is enabled, try reversing them. The downside to this method is that you won't be able to



view Flash content such as videos and games. so you might want to try

restrictive approach of running plug-ins such as Flash manually rather than automatically. Go to Settings, 'Show advanced settings', then Privacy and click 'Content settings'. Scroll down to Plug-ins, select 'Click to play' and click Finished. This will block Flash content on web pages until you click the Play button to make it run, which may prevent the browser from crashing.



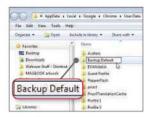
If this doesn't work, you can try to find out what else could be causing the crash. Type chrome: conflicts into the address bar, press Enter and look for details of any 'modules' that are conflicting with Chrome. If everything is

Fix Chrome problems



fine, you should see the message 'No conflicts detected'; if not, try updating or uninstalling the module responsible for the conflict.

If Chrome crashes as soon as you open it, the cause is probably a corrupt user profile, so it's worth creating a new one to see if the problem persists. Make sure the browser is fully closed by right-clicking the taskbar and launching the Task Manager. Look for instances of Chrome.exe running under the Processes tab and, if you find any, select them and click End Process. Next, press the Windows key+R to open the Run box, type %LOCALAPPDATA% \Google \ Chrome\User Data\ and press Enter.



Locate the folder and give it a new name, such as Backup Default. Launch

Chrome and a new Default folder will be created automatically.

Why isn't Chrome syncing?

Chrome's ability to sync your bookmarks, extensions and other settings, so you can access them from any installation of the browser, is brilliant, but this makes it doubly infuriating when it stops working. Fortunately, the problem can usually be solved simply by disconnecting your Google account in Chrome's Settings, restarting the browser and signing in again. Click 'Advanced sync settings' and ensure that all the options you want to sync are selected.



If Chrome is syncing old data, but isn't updating to include your newly added bookmarks and installed extensions, go to your sync dashboard at www.google .com/settings/chrome/sync where you'll see a summary of all your synced data.



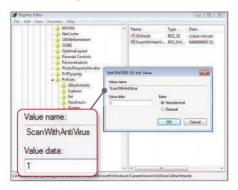
Click the 'Stop and Clear' button below this to stop syncing the listed items (this won't delete any locally stored data).

Why does the virus scan keep failing?

If you see the message 'Virus scan failed' when you try to download a file, you should use your anti-virus program or a free security tool such as Malwarebytes Anti-Malware (www. malwarebytes.org) to scan your PC for malware that might be causing the problem. Once you've detected and removed any threats, you can tweak the Registry to disable the automatic scanning of downloads. Press the Windows key+R, type regedit and press Enter. Navigate to

HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\ SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\ CurrentVersion\Policies\Attachments

Double-click ScanWithAntivirus on the right and change its value data from '3' to '1' (change it back to turn the feature on again).



Why isn't Chrome updating?

Chrome is set to update as soon as a new version becomes available, but if this stops working, you'll be presented with the error message: 'Update failed



(error: 7)'. This advises you to change a setting in

the Group Policy Editor, but said feature isn't accessible in Home versions of Windows. Instead, you can solve the problem using a quick Registry tweak. Navigate to the key

HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\

SOFTWARE\Policies\Google\Update\ and delete the values Update{8A69D345-D564-463C-AFF1-A69D9E530F96} and Update{8BA986DA-5100-405E-AA35-86F34A02ACBF}. Restart Chrome, go to About Chrome and the browser should update without any problems.

Why has Chrome changed my homepage?

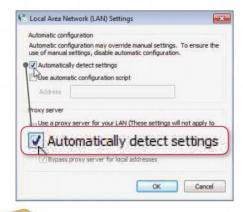
If Chrome changes your default Start page or search engine, or adds an unwanted toolbar, it's probably due to an unwanted program on your PC. Download and run the Software Removal Tool (www.google.com/ chrome/srt), which performs a 'factory reset' of Chrome by restoring the browser's original settings, including your Start page and search engine, and removes programs that affect its behaviour.



Why does Chrome take ages to load pages?

If Chrome is taking a long time to load a website, it may be configured to access pages through a web proxy. If so, you'll see a "Resolving proxy" message appear in the bottom-left corner of the browser. To fix the problem, go to Settings, 'Show advanced settings', Network and click 'Change proxy settings' to open the Internet Properties box. Click LAN settings and deselect the option 'Automatically detect settings'.

Another possible cause is that a corrupted cookie is preventing Chrome from loading a page. You can clear your cookies by clicking 'Content data' on the Settings page, selecting 'All cookies and site data' and clicking 'Remove all'.



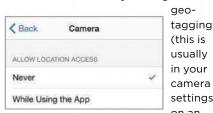
Remove your PERSONAL DATA from files

When you share files online, you could be giving away more info about yourself than you realise. **Rob Beattie** explains how to strip sensitive date from files before sharing them

■ he next time you share a photo on Facebook or send a Word document as an attachment, stop for a second and consider the hidden information these files may contain: who you are, who you work for, where you were when you took a particular photo, and all sorts of other details. Individually, this may not amount to much, but combined with other information, it could allow someone to build a picture that compromises your privacy. In this feature, we explain some free and easy ways to strip this data from the files you share, to stop your private information falling into the wrong hands.

Strip EXIF data from your photos

Every time you take a photo, your camera stores information about it in the Exchangeable Image File Format (EXIF) including when and where the photo was taken, and details of your camera's settings. You can stop your camera or mobile device logging location information by turning off



Android phone or tablet, and under Privacy, Location Services, Camera on iOS), but to keep the rest of your data private, you'll either have to remove it before you share the photo or tweak your PC so the data isn't recorded.

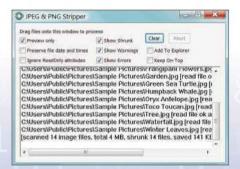
To do this in Windows, right-click a photo and choose Properties from the menu. When the dialogue box opens, click the Details tab. At the bottom, click the 'Remove Properties and Personal



Information' link and, when the next dialogue box opens, make sure 'Remove the following properties from this file' is selected and put a tick next to any EXIF data you want to remove. Then click OK.

Alternatively, you can choose 'Create a copy with all possible Properties removed' and click OK. Windows will create a new copy of the image with no EXIF information so you can share the 'clean' copy and keep the original separate. Usefully, if you select more than one photo, Windows will apply your changes to all of them.

If you don't want the hassle of deleting data manually, try the handy free program JPEG and PNG Stripper (bit.ly/jpeg362). This targets entire folders of images and, as the name suggests, strips all EXIF information from any JPEG and PNG files it finds.



Remove personal info from Office files

Private data in Office documents comes in two varieties: metadata (details such as author name, subject and title) and your own additions that you might not want other people to see, such as comments and revisions that you later toned down or rough preliminary notes you knocked up to get started with a PowerPoint presentation.

If you're using Office 2007, open the file you want to check, click the Office button, choose Prepare from the menu and click Inspect Document. Tick the items you want to check (for example, Comments, Revisions, Versions and Annotations), then click the Inspect button. This will flag any relevant information, which you can delete by clicking Remove All next to an item.



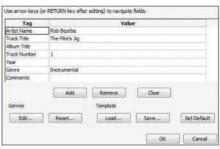
In later versions of Office, open the File menu and click 'Check for Issues' in the panel next to 'Prepare for Sharing'.



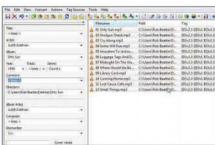
Remove personal data

Properties, select Details and follow the same steps.

.sourceforge.net) has a good ID3 tag editor under Files, Open Metadata

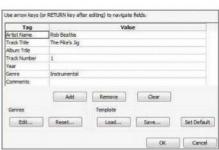


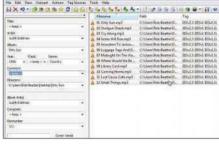
Editor. Or if carrying this out one file at a time seems too tedious, try the excellent all-in-one ID3 tag editor MP3tag (www.mp3tag.de/en), which can remove tags from multiple files and folders simultaneously. But be careful how you use this program because you'll have to painstakingly re-enter the deleted data if you want it back again.



first tip: right-click the file, choose

If you want more control, the free audio editor Audacity (audacity





BeCyPDFMetaEdit. a new option - 'Edit metadata' - in the right-click menu. Select this to open the program with the PDF already loaded. Make sure the Metadata tab is selected and from there you can BINBITA individually remove fields such as the author, date created and date modified or just click the Clear All Fields button to get rid of the

From there, choose Inspect Document, then follow the same process as before.

If you're using a version of Office from before 2007, it's worth checking out a free program called Document Metadata Cleaner (bit.ly/metadata362). This scans Word, Excel and PowerPoint files and lets you remove any hidden metadata in one fell swoop. It works with all versions of Windows and is very easy to use.



Delete metadata from PDF

Like Office documents, PDFs sometimes contain information that you might not want people to see without your permission. If you own one of Adobe's paid-for products, it's easy to get rid of metadata, but if you don't, then it's more problematic.

The free version of Adobe Reader will torment you by displaying metadata, but not letting you edit it. Instead, you'll need to use a tool such as



Remove information from MP3 files

done.

lot. Click Save and you're

Download and

install it from

bit.ly/becy362, accepting

all the defaults. Launch

right-click the PDF you

want to edit and you'll see

the program, then

Although audio files contain less sensitive data than images, you might still want to remove the star ratings from an album, details of when it was created or its audio bitrate, all of which are likely to be included with the file. And if you've downloaded the song illegally, there might be evidence of your shameful behaviour embedded in the file. You can remove this information from MP3s by using exactly the same technique applied to EXIF data in our

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM WITH METADATA?

It's a reasonable question and one that most people will answer with an "I've-got-nothing-to-hide" shrug. Even if that's true, information about what you do and where you go in both the real and virtual world is valuable, and even the tiniest snippet of information (your name on a document, your location on a photo) can be used to piece together a picture of who you are and what you're up to. That's why services such as Facebook and Google Mail are free, and it's why they're able to target you with ads based on things you like and topics you talk about.

Mobile devices and their built-in location services take this to a more intimate extreme. While they are fantastically useful for finding the nearest pub or fast-food joint, they also allow companies to track where you go, as well as providing clues about what you like to eat and drink. Snap a photo and it'll be easy to

discover where the picture was taken and what shutter speed you used, together with the make and model of the camera.

In a few years time, as you stroll into town wearing your Google glasses, advertisers will be able to tell when you're approaching a place where you like to eat, at which point they can display personalised ads

- perhaps with money-off incentives
- as you walk past the door.

Read the Guardian article 'What is metadata?' (bit.ly/guardian362) to learn more about this phenomenon.





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	Provider	Package name	Monthly price	Contract length	Broadband speed	Allowance	First-year cost*
1	sky	Sky: Broadband & Calls	£7.50 (12 months FREE)	12 months	17Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited	£0.00
2	⇔ plusnet	Plusnet: Broadband & Calls	£9.99 (£2.50 for 12 months)	12 months	17Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited	£30.00
3	E	EE: Broadband & Calls	£9.95 (£2.50 for 12 months)	12 months	17Mbps max speed	onlimited	£30.00
4	TalkTalk	TalkTalk: Broadband	£3.50 (HALF PRICE for 6 months)	18 months	17Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited	£31.50
5	plusnet	Plusnet: Fibre Broadband & Calls	£14.99 (£3.75 for 6 months)	18 months	38Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited	£112.44
6	sky	Sky: Fibre Broadband & Calls	£20.00 (6 months FREE)	18 months	38Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited	£120.00
7	TalkTalk	TalkTalk Fibre Broadband	£13.50 (HALF PRICE for 6 months)	18 months	38Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited	£121.50
8	Virgin media	Virgin: Broadband & Calls	£17.50 (£12 for 12 months)	18 months	50Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited	£144.00
9	E	EE: Fibre Broadband & Calls	£19.95 (£5 for 3 months)	18 months	38Mbps max speed		£194.55
10	Virgin	Virgin: Broadband & Calls	£30.00 (£24.50 for 12 months)	18 months	152Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited	E294.00

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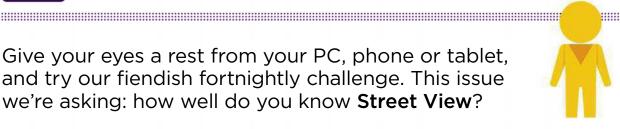
Broadband Genie's helpline is powered by Simplify Digital, the Ofcom-accredited switching service

^{*}First-year cost does not include line rental. Cost is calculated at monthly price x12 with all introductory offers subtracted. Additional charges incurred outside of free inclusive calls not included in first-year cost.



Take a Screen Break

Give your eyes a rest from your PC, phone or tablet, and try our fiendish fortnightly challenge. This issue we're asking: how well do you know **Street View**?



- In which year did Street View ■launch?
- What's the name of Street View's orange mascot (above right)?
- In 2009, which was the last US state to be captured in Street View?
- What's the name of the Street View camera backpack (below)?



- 5 In 2008, the route of which annual sporting event became the first European location to be captured in Street View?
- What did Street View accidentally do to Colonel Sanders's face on the front of some KFC stores?
- What colour are the lines on Google Maps that indicate Street View coverage is available to view?
- In October 2014, a Canadian court fined Google \$2,250 for showing which part of a woman's body on Street
- oIn 2009, which Buckinghamshire village's residents formed a human chain to block the Street View car?

- Which vehicle did Google use to capture imagery of Antarctica?
- 11 Which animal did Google use to capture images of the Liwa Desert in 2014?
- Which 4,500-year-old monuments were added to Street View in September 2014?
- 13 When images of the UK appeared in 2009, which city was missing Princes Street and the Royal Mile?
- What's the name of the version of Street View created for the Nintendo Wii?
- Which is the only western European country not widely covered on Street View?

CAN YOU IDENTIFY THESE BRITISH CITIES?







Get the answers online at www.webuser.co.uk/quiz362

COMPETITIONS

WIN 1 OF 5

D-Link DIR-868L wireless router

Winner of the Gold Award in Issue 360's wireless routers Group Test, the DIR-868L uses dual-band technology to operate on both the 2.4GHz band and 5GHz bands. Its cylindrical shape gives it a small footprint, so it can easily fit on even a narrow shelf.

To enter, email your address to webusercomp@dennis.co.uk with 'D-Link' in the subject line. For more information, 'like' D-Link's Facebook page (www.facebook .com/DLinkEU), and follow D-Link on Twitter @DLink_UK.



WIN 1 OF 3

KitSound Glow Bluetooth speaker

The stunning Glow speaker creates an audiovisual light display for your music. It has five pre-programmed LED light shows, including flashing, strobing and one that changes in time to your music. You can wirelessly stream music from a Bluetooth-enabled device for up to 18 hours.

To enter, email your address to webusercomp@dennis .co.uk with 'glow' in the subject line. For more info, 'like' KitSound's Facebook page (www.facebook.com/KitSound UK), and follow KitSound on Twitter @KitSoundUK.

WORTH £100 **EACH**



Practical WebUser

17 pages of workshops, tips, projects and problem solving

Ditch Google Maps and use Maps.Me | maps.me



Maps. Me is a free offline mapping app for Android and iOS. Here's what you need to know

oogle Maps is a fantastic, accurate service, but you have to be online to use it, which can cost you money when you're out and about. You can save portions of its maps for viewing offline (if you know how), but that only covers a certain area, and you'll need to go back online if you stray beyond the saved boundary.

Maps.Me has a major advantage over

Google Maps in this regard, because it offers a detailed map of the world that you can explore offline. You will need to download individual country maps the first time you visit somewhere new but once that's done, the app no longer requires an internet connection.

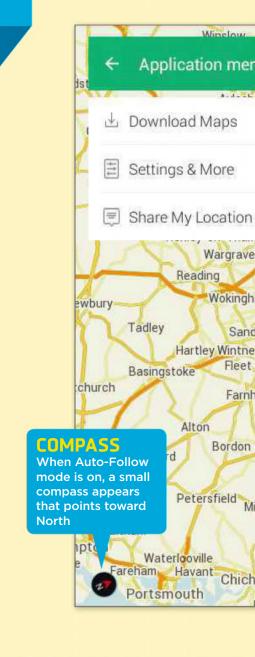
Maps.Me used to cost \$5 (around £3.17) but is now entirely free, with no in-app purchases.



Launch the app and it will automatically centre on your location. The interface is designed to be minimal so it doesn't get in the way of the maps. There are buttons for zooming in and out, 11 and a translucent menu bar. 22 Tap and drag the map to see new areas load immediately.



Zoom in on a new area, and you'll see a prompt to download data for that country. You have two choices: download only the map 1 or download it with routing included (essential, if you want directions). 2 The size of the download is displayed in each of the buttons. You'll need enough free space on your device.





Wait for the download to complete. This may take a while, depending on the speed of your connection. You can then zoom in and out as required, using the buttons or pinch gestures. The scale of the map is displayed in the bottomright corner. 1



Zoom in close to the ground to display the names of buildings and places of interest. Tap something to make a box appear that tells you what it is, 11 offers directions and lets you mark it with a star. 2 Tap the box to show the distance and direction from your current location. 3 You can also share it. 4



Choose to get directions to display the recommended route on the map. 1 The length of the journey is shown in the box top-left. 2 Tap Go 3 to start displaying turn-by-turn directions to your destination.





Click Options 11 in the small bar on the right to open the Application Menu. From here, you can download additional maps from around the world; 2 access the app's Settings; 3 and share your current location with friends 4 through various channels including email, Google Drive, Google+ and Bluetooth.



The list of downloadable maps is sorted by continent. 1 Select one to view its countries. Tap a country map to download it. In North America, you can download individual States. You can also view maps you've downloaded previously and zoom to that country, delete the routing or delete the entire map.



Search for somewhere by clicking the magnifying-glass icon. 11 You can search for a location by name 2 or choose one of the categories 11 to display a list of matching places nearby. The list of options includes food, hotels, sights, cash machines, banks, parking, toilets, hospitals and Wi-Fi hotspots.



Customise Windows 8.1's built-in tools

Winaero: winaero.com | 🕒 30 mins | 🔊 Windows 8.1

indows 8.1 fixed a lot of the things that annoyed us about Windows 8, and its built-in tools let you configure it further. However, some elements still can't be changed, such as the list on the Windows+X menu and the way the Start screen operates. Luckily, there are developers creating tools you can use to change these and many other elements in Windows 8.1. Winaero (winaero.com) has around 60 freeware programs listed on its homepage, many of which use a quick tweak to target a specific problem, and we've included several in this Workshop, along with a few from elsewhere.

As with all downloads, make sure you click the correct button because the pages these programs appear on are often peppered with similar buttons that are ads for other programs. Also, make sure your PC is fully backed-up and you've created a restore point before you start making changes.





Download and install Start Button Changer from bit.ly/change362. Click the Change button 1 to swap the main icon for a different image (use GIF, JPEG or PNG images). To change the Hover and Pressed images, 2 right-click and choose Change Mask Image.



To remove the Start button, install and run StartIsGone from bit.ly/gone362. An icon appears in the notification area. Right-click it, then click 'Run at startup' 1 to keep the Start button hidden when you restart, or click Exit 2 to bring it back.



Start Menu Modifier (bit.ly/menumod362) makes the Start screen act more like a Start menu by opening it within the Desktop. 1 Choose the location where you want it to open 2 and click Apply. 2 Tick the box to run it when Windows starts. 4



You can already tinker with the Lock Screen from the Charms bar, but Lock Screen Customizer (bit.ly/lock362) lets you make further tweaks. You can disable it completely, 1 change the background, 2 switch the type of clock it uses 3 and change the colour of the login screen. 4





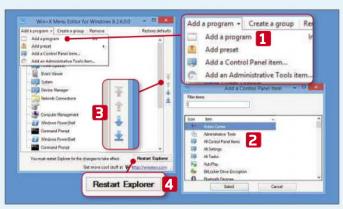
EXPERT TIP

Andy Shaw says

Changing the boot screen logo is surprisingly complicated. It's embedded in the operating system and you need to make changes to several different settings to make it work. The Windows 8.1 Boot Screen Logo Changer (bit.ly/bootlogo362) will help you do this, but follow the instructions carefully. You'll also find some useful notes on using it at bit.ly/bootnotes362.



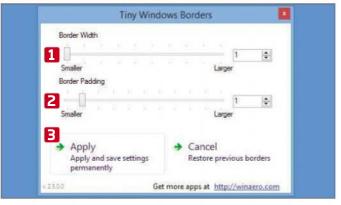
Charms Bar Customizer (bit.ly/charms362) changes the Charms icons. Double-click an icon you want to replace and click Change. The left-hand icons will appear when your mouse moves to a corner of the Desktop; the right-hand ones appear when your mouse hovers over a charm.



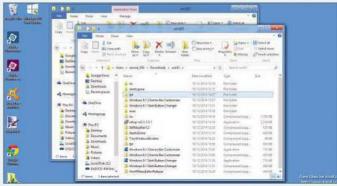
Win+X Menu Editor (bit.ly/menu362) lets you customise the Windows+X menu. Click 'Add a program' 1 to choose from programs, items in the Control Panel and more, then make a selection from the pop-out Window. 2 Use the arrows to change the order, 1 then Restart Explorer. 4



This PC Tweaker (bit.ly/this362) lets you add folders and Shell Locations (such as the Control Panel or 'Network and Sharing Center') to the This PC window. You can also remove elements that are already there. (2) If you change your mind, click Restore Defaults (3) to reset everything.



The borders of windows are quite thick by default in Windows 8.1. Tiny Windows Borders (bit.ly/tinyb362) lets you reduce the border width 1 and the padding around it. 2 Click Apply 1 to see the effect of your changes.



Microsoft's translucent Aero theme was dropped because it affected performance, but if you have a powerful PC, you can bring it back with Aero Glass for Win8.1+ (bit.ly/aero362). Installing the software immediately launches the theme onto your PC, so you don't have to adjust any settings.



Boot UI Tuner (bit.ly/boot362) lets you remove elements shown during boot-up, such as the logo and revolving-circle icon. 1 The Behavior tab 2 hides advanced options, including 'Always display advanced boot options', which helps you enter Safe Mode more easily.

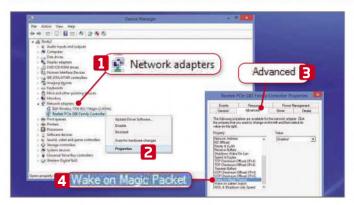


Turn on your PC remotely

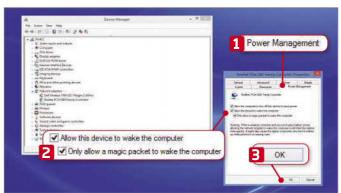
f your PC is connected to your router by an Ethernet cable, you might be able to turn it on remotely and use the free TeamViewer software to access its contents, even when you're away from home.

In this Workshop, we'll show you how to set up your Ethernet hardware and TeamViewer's Wake on LAN (WoL) features to get you up and running.

TeamViewer: www.teamviewer.com | 🕒 10 mins | ಿ XP, Vista, 7, 8+



Check if your PC is compatible with WoL by opening Control Panel, then Device Manager. Open the 'Network adapters' section, 🚺 right-click the network interface card, choose Properties, 2 then the Advanced tab. 3 If you can find a property named 'Wake on Magic Packet', 4 you can use WoL.



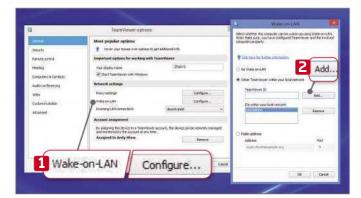
Set the value to Enabled and click OK. Click the Power Management tab 11 and tick 'Allow this device to wake the computer' and 'Only allow a magic packet to wake the computer'. 2 Press OK. 3 Reboot your computer, enter the BIOS and make sure WoL is enabled there, too.



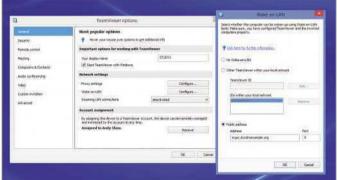
Windows 8's hybrid shutdown is not compatible with WoL so you should disable it by opening the Control Panel and choosing Power Options. Click 'Choose what the power button does'. Untick 'Turn on fast start-up'. 1 You may first have to click 'Change settings that are currently unavailable'. 2



Install TeamViewer on all the PCs you want to use, including the remote PC that's being used to wake the other one. Create an online account and assign all the PCs to the account. Make a note of the ID 11 on the remote PC that's performing the wake up.



In TeamViewer on the PC to be woken, click Extras, then Options. Select the General tab, click the Configure button next to 'Wake-on-LAN', 11 type the ID of the other PC into the TeamViewer ID box, then click Add. 2 Click OK. Power up the PC over your local network by clicking the 'Wake up' button.



To make this work over the web, you need a static IP address from your ISP or a dynamic DNS service. In the Wake-on-LAN configuration, select 'Public address'. Enter your device's info. You may need to set up port forwarding on your router, to forward data packets to port 9 of your PC.

Workshop 4

Send massive files to anyone

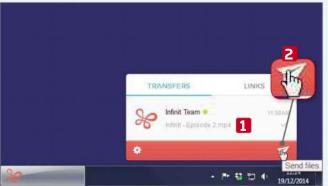
sing a cloud service to share your files is quick and easy, but you're restricted by the storage limit on your account. Infinit fixes this problem by using peer-to-peer technology, so that the service is unlimited and free.

What's more, you can send files to someone, even if they don't have an account, by uploading the files to Infinit's servers, then sending them the link.

Infinit: infinit.io | 🕒 10 mins | 🎥 XP, Vista, 7, 8+, 🐞 OS 10.7+



Download and run the Infinit Installer. When you're asked to create an account, enter your name, email address and password, 1 then click Register. 2 A notification appears to tell you that the Infinit Team has sent you a file. Click the green tick to accept the transfer.



Click the received file's name 1 to open your Downloads folder, which is where your received files will be saved. To send your own files, click the aeroplane icon on the Infinit dock.

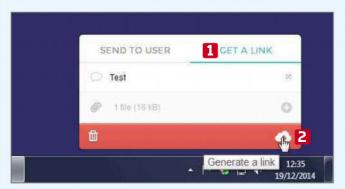


If the person you're sending files to has an Infinit account, type their name into the search box.

Otherwise, enter their email address, 1 type a message in the 'Optional message' section 2 and click 'Add files' to choose the files you want to send.



Click the aeroplane icon again to send the files, or select the trash icon to cancel the transfer. If the recipient doesn't have Infinit, they'll receive an email containing your message and a link to the files. The transfer will be listed in your Infinit dock.



If you'd prefer to generate a link without sending an email, click the aeroplane icon, then select Get a Link. 1 You can still add a message but once you've clicked the cloud icon to upload your files, 2 the link will be copied to your clipboard.



This method is useful if you want to send files between your devices. You can review your links at any time by visiting the Links page 1 on the Infinit dock. There are buttons here to open the link, 2 copy it to your clipboard 3 or cancel it. 4

Weekend Project

Get to grips with some serious PC DIY to boost your computer's performance





Record programmes from your TV to your PC

We've come a long way since the shaky days of VHS home taping. **Wayne Williams** reveals the best ways to record your favourite shows

n the old days of analogue, recording from your TV or radio was a simple matter of pressing Record and Play on a video recorder or tape deck. You could even record audio from your TV by positioning a cassette recorder in front of the television speaker, though the quality would be less than perfect! In our current digital age, there are many different ways to record something off the telly – both video and audio – and we'll explore some of the best and easiest options in this Weekend Project.



Record TV directly on your PC

One of the simplest ways to record television programmes is by turning your PC into a TV. You can do this by installing a TV tuner or by watching live TV through services such as BBC iPlayer and using Any Video Recorder (www .any-video-recorder.com) to capture the footage. We explain how to do this in our

Adding a TV tuner is very simple and



there are lots of cheap options available. You can install an internal card on a desktop PC or add a USB dongle. Hauppauge (hauppauge.co.uk) offers a good selection of TV tuners, but if you're on a very tight budget, you could try the Sumvision USB DVB-T TV Tuner, which you can pick up

Hauppauge has a range of tuners you can use to bring live TV to your PC

Mini Workshop, opposite.



You can manage your PC's TV tuner using a media centre such as Kodi

for around £10 including postage (bit.ly/ sumvision362). You'll then need some media-centre software, such as Kodi (kodi.tv), which used to be known as XBMC, or MediaPortal (www.teammediaportal.com).

Another option is the newly launched DVBLink 5.1 (dvblogic.com). This program lets you turn any PC or NAS (Network Attached Storage) into a personal TV server, provided you have a TV tuner installed. It lets you stream live and recorded TV to any device in a home network or via mobile, and to record and enjoy Freeview and Freesat content in original quality. DVBLink also offers TV



DVBLink's hardware and software can turn a PC or NAS into a streaming live TV server

Adviser, a comprehensive, self-learning Electronic Program Guide (EPG). The DVBLink TVSource software for NAS and Linux costs £31, while the DVBLink TVSource + DVBLink Connect Server bundle for Windows is £36. If you want the DVBLink TV Adviser subscription, it costs £8 for 3 months or £20 for 12 months.

Your recorded TV content will be stored on your PC's hard drive, and the size of each programme will vary depending on how it is captured. A one-hour programme will consume approximately 2GB of drive space. You can compress the video afterwards (or convert it into a smaller format) to save space.

Record from your existing TV

If you don't want to go to the effort of turning your PC into a TV, you can use your existing home-entertainment set-up or buy a recording device. Recording to CD or DVD is becoming less common, and most recordings are now stored digitally on PVRs (personal video recorders) such as Sky+ and TiVo. These devices can hold hours and hours of programming and automatically fetch new episodes for you. The downside is you can only watch those shows from the set-top box, which can be annoying if you want to play recorded content on another device, such as a portable DVD player, PC or tablet.

Fortunately, it's reasonably easy to make a copy of TV programmes and there are several options available to you. You can buy a DVD recorder with Freeview built-in, connect an existing Freeview source - a Freeview TV or

set-top box - to a DVD recorder (or a video recorder, if you really want to go old school), or connect a DVD recorder to your hard-drive recorder. You should be able to pick up a cheap DVD recorder on Amazon or eBay.

The best way to connect a set-top box to a recording device is via SCART. The process is very straightforward - our Mini Workshop on page 61 offers some useful tips. If you have a DVD recorder, you can then transfer the recording to another DVD player or play it and even re-edit it on your PC.

If your TV has a built-in Freeview or Freesat receiver, there's a chance that you might be able to record from it. However, most TV SCART sockets are for inputs and not outputs, so this may not be possible. Check your TV manual to find out for certain, but don't worry if you can't record from it, because you can pick up a cheap set-top box and use that instead. If you're recording to DVD, the quality will be reasonable. Recording to VHS will be less so.



SCART connectors used to be the standard before HDMI

MINI WORKSHOP | Record TV on your PC with Any Video Recorder



Any Video Recorder lets you record programmes playing on your PC, including shows on iPlayer and ITV Player. You'll need to set the temporary (working) directory 11 and choose where to save the video to. 2 You can set the frame rate and bitrate under Video Setting. **3**

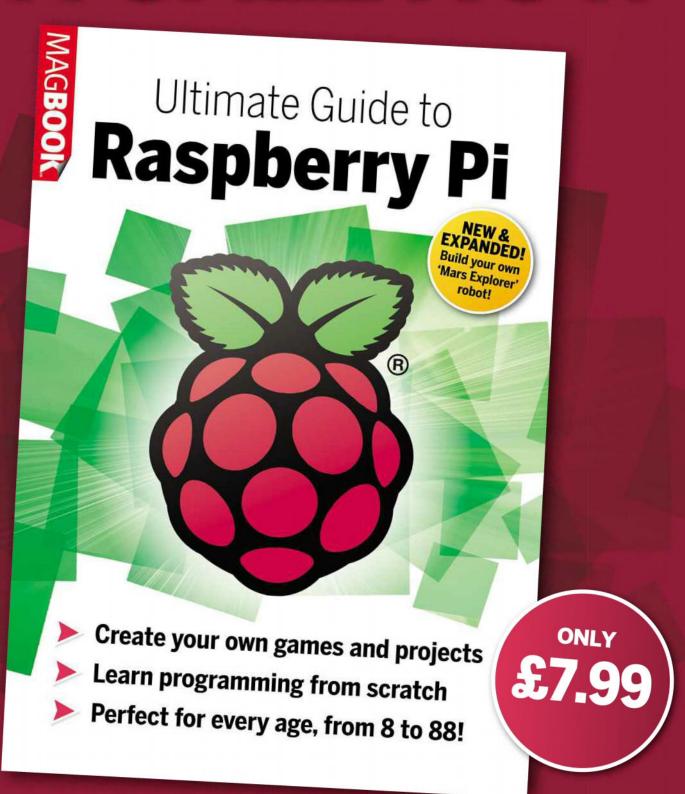


Open the video you want to record, then click the Record Now button in Any Video Recorder. A window with a red frame appears. [] Move and resize this so it covers the entire video area. You can set a time when the recording should stop 2 or have it end automatically. 3



Start the programme playing and click the Rec button. The software will start capturing the video and the border will turn blue. 11 You can see how much space the recording is using. The program records exactly what's displayed on your screen, so you need to have the video on top at all times. Press stop 3 when it's finished.

ONSALENOW



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A DVD recorder such as this Pioneer model can transfer live or recorded TV onto a DVD



HDMI sends a perfect digital signal to your TV but you often can't use it for recording

HDMI ports, but these will be HDMI out rather than HDMI in. This is because the High-Definition Multimedia Interface includes a copy-protection method called High-Definition Copy Protection (HDCP). HDMI inputs are restricted to devices with a display - such as TV sets - and aren't permitted on recording devices. HDCP is designed to stop you recording copyrighted programming and essentially works by interrogating the destination device to make sure it's able to display content but not record it.

Record what's on screen with a phone, camera or camcorder

If you want a quick way to record something on screen (to capture a news segment for sharing on Facebook, for example) then you can use any handheld recording device, such as your phone's camera. However, your recording may suffer from flicker. A TV picture is made up of fields and lines (720 columns and 576 rows on a normal set) and there are two ways to present video on a screen interlaced and progressive (the i and p found next to 720 and 1080 in HDTVs). When a picture is interlaced, each video frame is made of only half the picture,

with every other line being blank. This is reversed for the next frame, which shows all the missing lines from the previous frame. Because this happens so quickly, our eyes make us think we're seeing the whole picture.

However, a camera recording at a different frame rate can accentuate the problem, which is what causes the image to flicker. Some camcorders let you make adjustments to remove this problem, and making sure your camera is recording at the same frame rate as the TV, and turning off the camera's Electronic Image Stabilization (EIS) can help.

If you have the correct inputs and leads, you might be able to record directly from your TV (or set-top box) to a camcorder. Most modern camcorders will have HDMI, but this will probably be input only. However, some also have digital or analogue AV-in, which you may be able to record from. You can then transfer the video to your PC.

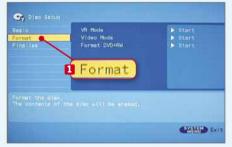


This Virgin Media set-top box has SCART sockets for an external recorder and a TV

MINI WORKSHOP | Recording to DVD from SCART



Make sure you have the right connections on the back of your recorder. Attach the device you want to record from to the SCART input socket. [1] This may be labelled Decoder or Line-in. When recording, make sure your TV is set to the recorder's output, and that the recorder is set to Line-in, so you can see what's being recorded on your TV.



If you're recording to DVD, you have to format the disc first. 🗓 Note that recorders might have different modes and that DVDs can be formatted to different length/quality ratios. You need to make sure you buy the correct type of DVDs, too. Check your manual, but if you want to play them on other devices, we've found record-once DVD-Rs or DVD+Rs to be the most reliable.



After recording, you should be able to play back your programme on the device it was recorded on and even add more recordings. If you want to play it elsewhere, such as on another DVD player or PC, you will need to finalise the disc. This only takes a minute and the option should be available from the recorder's menu.

NEXT ISSUE

How To... Turn a Raspberry Pi into a music-streaming jukebox

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Web User's Top Tips

Our expert shows you how to create hack-proof passwords and store them safely

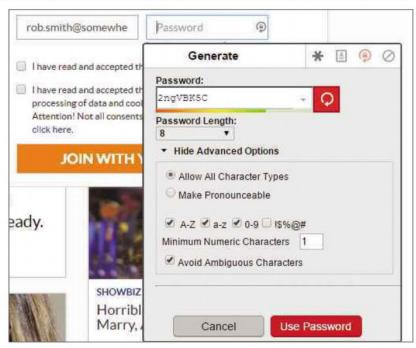
TOP TIPS FOR CREATING AND STORING PASSWORDS

Use LastPass

f you struggle to remember passwords (and who doesn't?), go to lastpass.com and download the LastPass browser extension - it's available for most browsers. You can then create a free account to store all your passwords securely online. All you need to remember is one overarching master password that protects the rest.

Click the toolbar button and sign in. When you sign up to a new website or service, click the button at the right side of the password box to make LastPass show a gadget for creating a complex password. From then on, LastPass automatically detects when you log into a website and asks if you want to store the details. The next time you visit the site, LastPass automatically enters your login details.

You don't need to remember your passwords and you will never lose them, because they are stored securely online.



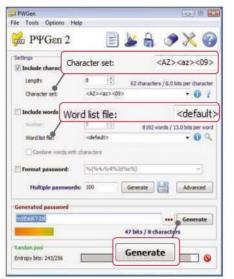
LastPass can create complex passwords and remember them for you

Make stronger passwords

Hackers know what the most common passwords are (search Google for a list of the top 25, if you're curious), and will use them to try to gain access to an account. Make sure your passwords are strong enough to keep your accounts secure: they should have more than six characters, one or more upper case letters and one or more numbers. If non-alphanumeric characters are allowed, such as dash, hash, plus and so on, then include one of these.

There are many password generators that make this task easier, such as PWGen (bit.ly/pwgen362). Run the

If you see words that look like they've been typed in a typewriter, follow the instructions and type them exactly as they appear, paying close attention to spaces and punctuation.



Create very strong passwords that are hard to crack using PWGen

program and click the Generate button. The default settings work well, but you can also adjust the settings to customise your passwords. For example, you can choose the character set, such as letters

and numbers, include or exclude symbols, make the password easy to read or generate password phrases from a word list.

Avoid the keyboard

Keyloggers are tools used by hackers and malware to record your keypresses and reveal the usernames and passwords you type. An onscreen keyboard prevents this information from being recorded. To display one in Microsoft Surface and Windows 8 touchscreen laptops, click the keyboard icon in the taskbar. Some security programs, such as Kaspersky (www.kaspersky.co.uk), also have a virtual keyboard. Click the icon in the notification area and select Tools.

Encrypt your password file

The best security is to have a strong, unique password for every website you're signed up to, but you'll never remember them all so one option is to store them in a file. You could use

WordPad, Notepad or another text editor and keep the file on your computer. However, this isn't very secure and anyone with access to your computer could view the passwords. To stop this happening, you can dramatically increase security by encrypting the file with WinAES (fatlyz .com/winaes). Drag the password file from an Explorer window and drop it on WinAES. Tick 'Securely erase original files' and click the Encrypt button. It only takes a second.

WinAES doesn't need installing and it has a useful password generator on the Security Tools tab. The only downside is that you need to decrypt the file each time you want to view your passwords.



Secure your cheat sheet of passwords by encrypting it with WinAES

Use a password manager

The easiest way to keep passwords secure is with a password manager. LastPass is our favourite (see above) but you have to pay for some of its best tools. If you're determined to keep things free, try KeePass (keepass.info). It's designed for storing passwords, website URLs, login names, notes and anything else you might need to remember. The passwords are stored on your hard drive in a securely encrypted file, so you only need to remember one master password to unlock the info.

If you use more than one computer, select the portable version of KeePass and copy the software to a USB drive. You can then carry your encrypted passwords in a file in your pocket, then plug the USB drive into any PC to access them. Another option is to store the KeePass data file on Dropbox, OneDrive, Google Drive or any other folder that is synced across your computers.

Password Vault Manager

(passwordvaultmanager.com) is another useful tool that stores and manages passwords, login details and other info. The free edition is fine for home users and has some interesting features. Run it and click the New Entry button. You can then select a category, such as Social, and choose the service from a list, such as Twitter, Facebook, Reddit, LinkedIn and many more.

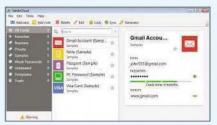
TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

More advanced tips for if you're feeling brave

Store your passwords in the cloud

Storing passwords online means you can access them from anywhere, on any computer or device, even if your main PC breaks or is stolen. Some password managers use their own online storage, but SafeInCloud Password Manager (safe-in-cloud .com) uses your choice of storage and is free for the PC and Mac.

When SafeInCloud is first run, it asks you to select an online storage service such as Google Drive, OneDrive or Dropbox. After authorising the program to access your online drive, it creates a new password database. It has ready-made templates for credit cards, email accounts, memberships and others; just select one and fill in the form. As you enter your password, SafeInCloud tells you how long it would take to crack, ranging from 'instantly' to 'months'. You should consider changing any passwords that could be easily cracked.



Store your passwords in Google Drive, OneDrive or Dropbox with SafeInCloud

SafeInCloud organises passwords using labels displayed in the left panel. Use the file menu to add your own labels to the ones provided. When a new item is created or viewed, a link appears to add one or more labels. Selecting a label on the left shows only those items tagged with it. You could create a Finance label, for instance, and add login details for online banks and credit cards.

There is a sync button to save any changes to your online drive, but it syncs automatically anyway and is always up to date. There are extensions for Chrome (bit.ly/sic362) and Firefox (bit.ly/sicff362), which let you access passwords and login details without leaving the browser. Click the button in the toolbar for an option to paste in the password.

LastPass offline

LastPass is an online service, so if for

some reason you can't get online, you won't be able to access your passwords or any other stored info such as credit card or bank details. To enable offline access and to back up everything, go to bit.ly/lpdl362, select the Windows tab, scroll down to the bottom of the page and download LastPass Pocket.



LastPass Pocket makes your encrypted passwords available when you're offline

Run it and you'll see an option to download your account or load it from your hard drive. Download it, then select File, Export and save the file to your hard drive as an encrypted file. Repeat this regularly, once a month or even once a week, to keep the file up to date. If you cannot get online, run LastPass Pocket and load the file to access your passwords and other information. The password for the file is the same as your online LastPass password

Change all your passwords

Dashlane has a useful password manager with similar features to the other programs covered here, and its Password Changer (bit.ly/dash362). lets you change passwords on multiple websites at the same time. It's not publicly available yet, but you can sign up for the beta. It only works with a limited number of websites (see bit.ly/dashlist362), but more are promised and it's definitely worth watching.



Password Changer makes it easy to change passwords on several sites

Ask the Expert

Roland Waddilove computer programmer and PC journalist since 1981, answers all your technical questions. Email us for help at webuser@dennis.co.uk



BROWSERS

Chrome keeps crashing

Have you heard about problems with Chrome crashing, especially when you use it with Yahoo? I've tried to sort it out but it just gets worse.

Armin Freimark, via email

Chrome should work fine with Yahoo. If it is crashing, it may be because of an extension or other software that's conflicting with it. There may be corrupt files or incorrect Registry settings on your PC.

Try resetting Chrome. Go to the menu, then click Settings and 'Show advanced settings'. Scroll down to the bottom and click 'Reset settings'. Another way to reset Chrome is to use the software removal tool (bit.ly/ srt362), which scans your PC for programs that are known to cause problems with the browser and removes them.

If problems with Chrome persist, go to the Control Panel and uninstall it. Better still, use a dedicated tool such as IObit Uninstaller (bit.ly/uninst362),



Opera is a good alternative to Chrome with a similar range of features

which runs a program's uninstaller, then scans your PC for leftover files and Registry entries, removing any it finds. When Chrome has been completely erased, restart Windows, then download and install Chrome again.

If for some reason the latest version of Chrome is incompatible with your computer, you might want to consider using Opera (www.opera.com). It's based on Chromium, just as Chrome is, so they perform very similarly. Another alternative, also based on Chromium, is Comodo Chromium Secure (bit.ly/comodo362). It's very similar to Chrome but has extra security features.

on to the internet and search for Windows 7 versions of their drivers. Save them to a USB flash drive.

Windows 7 should install from the DVD and you can then install the drivers after it has finished. If it only gets part of the way through the installation, it could be that your PC is incompatible or the DVD is scratched or dirty. Try cleaning it. The Windows 7 DVD must be new, unused and have a licence key.

AOL spam problem

I use AOL and have recently been getting multiple messages of the type: "Hello, Philip? I have downloaded several hot photos Need to share with someone to discuss my tan You want to exchange something like this, dont you? mavp." Obviously, I did not reply and, after the first few standard deletes, I entered each address in my spam filter.

The problem is that I continue to be bombarded with these messages that now come from various email addresses. Why do they want me to reply? There isn't even an attachment so it's not trying to get me to open a virus-infected file. They obviously want me to reply asking them to stop. What would happen if I did reply? Finally, is there any way of stopping messages like this that come from multiple addresses?

Philip D Welsby, via email

Never reply to spammers because they will most likely just send you more spam on the assumption that you are responsive to whatever rubbish they are peddling. And never click links in spam because the website could be a fake one, set up for phishing and scams, or it might contain malware.



Create your own spam filters to deal with unwanted email messages automatically

GENERAL PC

Downgrading to Windows 7

I have been using Windows 7 since it was released and I still have the installation disc. A couple of months ago, I purchased a new PC with Windows 8.1 installed and I must admit there are a few improvements, including faster start up and shut down, but I still prefer Windows 7. When I tried to install the older OS, it went so far but then I got the troubleshooting screen and had to perform a recovery. When I queried this at PC World, they told me I could not put Windows 7 onto a Windows 8.1 PC because it doesn't have the drivers. But I miss Windows 7. Is there anything I can do to run it on my new PC?

J Rosamond, via email

A computer designed for Windows 8.1 that comes with it pre-installed on the hard drive may not have been tested with Windows 7. This means it is possible that it contains hardware that is not supported by the older OS, so you might not be able to downgrade. However, this would be unusual because Windows 7 is good at coping with a diverse range of hardware.

The best way to downgrade is to first find out what drivers you need. Press Windows+X to open the menu in the bottom-left corner and select Device Manager. Expand the following sections: Bluetooth; 'Display adapters'; 'Imaging devices'; 'Network adapters'; and Printers. This shows the names of key hardware components, so you can go

Spammers often use multiple email addresses to prevent them from being blacklisted and added to spam lists. In your case, blocking the sender hasn't helped, so a different method of blocking is required. All webmail services and email software have filters or rules that let you perform automated actions on incoming messages. For example, you could delete certain messages, move them to a specific folder, tag or flag them, and so on.

If you log into AOL Mail using a browser, go to your inbox. On the Actions menu, you'll find an option to create a filter. This displays a form in which you define a trigger and select an action. Enter a name for the filter at the top, then enter a word or phrase in either the Subject or Message Body Contains boxes that will identify the junk emails. In your case, something like 'hot photos' might work because it's a phrase that won't appear in normal emails, but is in the spam. At the bottom of the form, you'll find 'Do the following with matched messages' where you can choose an action, such as moving them to the Spam folder.

You can create as many filters as you need, and they are very useful for keeping your inbox clear of repetitive junk email messages.

TABLETS

Facebook fails on new iPad

I recently purchased a 64GB iPad Air 2. I used iCloud to download almost everything from my old iPad 2 without any problems. The only exception was Facebook, where I don't seem to be able to log in or store any of my passwords. When I go to view a page, it asks me to sign in and I then get an email to tell me that Facebook has been accessed. I've tried everything but I can't seem to resolve it.

Roy Hollihead, via email

It's a good idea to try resetting everything because it may well clear the problem. Log out of Facebook on the iPad and delete the app by pressing the icon until it wiggles, then tap the cross. Go to Settings, Facebook and make sure the account has been removed.

Go to Facebook on a computer using a browser, click the down arrow in the top-right corner of the page and select Settings from the menu. Click Security, click Edit next to Login Approvals, clear the tick box and click Save Changes. Click Where You're Logged In and click



Facebook tracks all the locations and devices used to log into the service

End All Activity. Return to the iPad and install Facebook, then sign in. It should now be fine.

GENERAL PC

Excel won't change colour

I've used numerous versions of Windows and Office over the years and have always used a High Contrast Black accessibility colour scheme, which puts white text on black cells in my Excel spreadsheets. Previously, if I changed the font colour to blue, for example, it showed blue on screen and printed blue. But since I started using Windows 7 and Office 2010, I find that the changed font colour does not show on screen, although it still prints as it should.

This seems like a backward step and makes it difficult to work with. Is there a way of changing it so I can see the changed colours on screen?

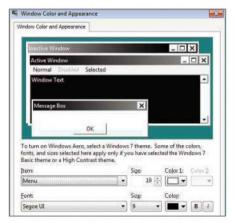
Phil McKeown, via email

A high-contrast scheme aids visibility for people with limited vision. In an effort to maintain the high

visibility, colours applied in Excel are not displayed on the screen, but they are still there, as can be seen when a spreadsheet is printed. If Excel were to display the true colours, some people might have difficulty seeing the spreadsheet.

Try choosing a normal Windows colour scheme and then manually set the Excel spreadsheet to use the colours you want. Click Start and type window color, then click 'Change window colors and metrics'. A window opens that lets you set the colour for the Desktop, windows, menus, title bars and so on. You can define your own custom high-contrast colour scheme.

Back in Excel, click the button in the top-left corner of the sheet to select all the cells. Set the background colour to black and the foreground colour to white. This mimics the high-contrast colour scheme without actually using it.



The colours of all Windows elements can be defined separately

SECURITY

Decode pictures

Are there any programs that can decode photos and documents that have been encrypted by malware or ransomware? Ransomware somehow gets on our computers regularly and ruins many of our important files.

Try Qwert, via email

Decrypting encrypted files is very difficult and can often be impossible. What you should be looking for is a program to prevent ransomware getting on your computers in the first place. There are lots of great security programs available and some are free, such as AVG AntiVirus Free 2015 (www.avg



Security software is essential for keeping your files safe

.com), Avira Free AntiVirus 2015 (www.avira.com), Panda Cloud Antivirus (www.cloudantivirus.com), and Avast Free Antivirus (www.avast .com). Paid-for programs provide even greater security and should be considered if your PCs are frequently infected.



This fortnight Roland has spent too much time in his car testing Android satnav apps when he should be working

Your Top Tips

Our pick of the best advice from our readers. To get help or offer it to others,

visit forum.webuser.co.uk

TOP TIP



Discover which messaging apps you can trust

Following the well-publicised iCloud leaks and various scandals surrounding messaging services such as Snapchat and WhatsApp. I've become increasingly concerned about mobile security and privacy. If you are worried about such issues, you might be interested in the Secure Messaging Scorecard (bit.ly/messaging362) from the Electronic Frontier Foundation, which examines a range of popular messaging services and rates them on a number of important security practices. I found it invaluable when deciding which messaging apps to trust and which to be more wary of.

If you're not sure of the technical terms, there's also a handy key at the

	Encrypted in transito	Encrypted to the periode car't read	Cer you yetly streamy identifies?	Are part carries sense il puis heps are stolant	ti the order agento independent review!	It security design properly descenerated?	No three been any mosts code audio
Asieten	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Googy Rangests Chie Nill rate (mint)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
datasiat	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Manage	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dated	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Compare security measures employed by popular messaging apps

bottom of the page explaining what each criteria means.

Alex Peachey, via email

GENERAL PC

Use Windows' numerical keypad

A numeric keypad is very useful if you have a lot of figures to type. If your keyboard doesn't have one, you can use the virtual Windows one instead. To activate it. search for 'On-Screen Keyboard' in the Start menu. Once you've launched the program, click the Options key and tick the box to 'Turn on numeric keypad.' The virtual keyboard floats above everything else, so you can switch between programs and it will still be visible on your screen.

FratPark, Web User Forums



Windows' virtual keyboard can be used in conjunction with any program

INTERNET

Recover a Microsoft account

Some time ago, a friend of mine lost access to her Microsoft account. She tried everything to regain access, including contacting Microsoft, but got nowhere. Maybe someone hacked into her account. Anyway, if you ever lose access to your account, there is a secret recovery code you can use. I'm assuming it helps to prove that you are the account owner when contacting Microsoft.

To get the recovery code, log in to outlook.com or onedrive.live.com and click your name in the top-right corner. Select 'Account settings' in the menu and,

> after logging in, click the 'Security & privacy' heading. Click 'Manage advanced security'. You may have to prove you're the owner of the account to access this page, by getting a code sent to your phone or another email address. About halfway down the page is 'Recovery code'. Click the



link to display the code. You should print it or write it down and keep it somewhere safe, because you might need it one day.

Jake Tinkler, via email



Get a recovery code for your Microsoft account and keep it in a safe place

SEARCH

Make Bing faster

Here is a little trick to make the Bing homepage load more quickly. Go to www .bing.com and click the gear in the topright corner. Select Homepage and choose 'Show a smaller image'. Bing's homepage images look great but smaller ones will download and display faster. Also select 'Show a still image' so the browser has less work to do.

Kristin Stubbs, via email

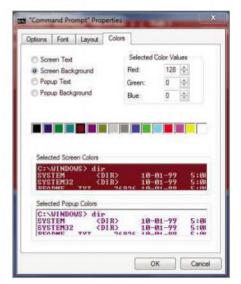


Change Bing's settings to make it faster

GENERAL PC

Add colour to the Command **Prompt**

I often use the Command Prompt but its white text on a black background is extremely dull. Fortunately, I've realised that there's a way you can change this. To see an overview of the available colours, run Command Prompt (Windows+R,



Liven up the Command Prompt by changing the text and background colours

type cmd then press Enter), type color /? and press Enter. You'll see a list of numbers and letters you can use to assign new background and text colours. By typing color followed by a value for the background colour and a value for the text colour, (with no spaces between the two colours), you can change it to any configuration you want. color 02, for example, gives you green text on a black background. You can't go too badly wrong because Command Prompt won't let you set the text and background as the same colour. If you don't like the combination you've used, you can reset it by closing the program.

To set a new combination permanently, you'll need to select the Command Prompt icon in the top-left corner of the program, then click Properties. On the Colors tab, you can preview your colour changes. Click OK to save them until your next session.

Tim, via email

WINDOWS 8.1

Create a Windows 8.1 installation disc

I recently wanted to perform a clean installation on my Windows 8.1 laptop, but since I upgraded to 8.1 from Windows 8 (and Microsoft doesn't provide you with any physical installation media when you upgrade), I would have had to reinstall Windows 8 then upgrade to the newer OS afterwards. I feared this would



Microsoft's website guides you through creating a Windows 8.1 disc

be a lengthy process and talked myself out of doing it.

Fortunately, however, I've since discovered that Microsoft has a mediacreation tool (bit.ly/windows362) that lets you make a Windows 8.1 installation disc or USB drive. Once you've downloaded and run the tool, select the language and edition of Windows you require along with your PC's architecture (32- or 64-bit) to create the installation files. I copied these files to a DVD and have since performed a clean installation on my laptop. I'm so grateful that I was able to do this using an official tool, rather than something from an unknown source, that I wanted to let others know that it exists!

Margaret, via email

SECURITY

Keep text files safe on your

If you want to store passwords and other notes on your PC, and keep them safe from prying eyes, I've found a great program called SecureEdit (bit.ly/ secure362) that does this. It encrypts your notes with the well-known Blowfish algorithm, so they can only be accessed with your password. SecureEdit doesn't have some of the fancy features of other password managers, which can copy passwords into websites or save them to the cloud, but it's perfect for keeping local text files safe. Before you save a file, you need to enter your chosen password for that document in the box at the top of the screen. That's all there is to it!

Jake, via email

TABLETS

Improve your touch

I upgraded my old Android tablet to a Microsoft Surface running Windows 8. The problem is that it is designed mainly for the Start screen and full-screen apps from the Windows Store. Touch is not so useful on the Desktop; in fact, it's downright awkward. However, there is a way to make touch work better on the Desktop. TouchMousePointer (bit.ly/ point362) is a sort of virtual trackpad, which lets you use the Surface or tablet much more easily. It's free, and everyone I have shown it to has liked it.

Ryan Honeyball, via email

BROWSERS

Stop adverts in Firefox's New Tab page

Not long ago, Mozilla started displaying 'sponsored' tiles in Firefox's New Tabs page in order to generate revenue. If this bothers you, you'll be pleased to know that it's very easy to turn off. To do so, open a new tab, then click the gear icon



Select Classic view on Firefox's New Tab page to block sponsored tiles

in the top-right corner of the page. Enhanced is selected by default, but you'll also see two other options: Classic and Blank. Classic restores the New Tab page to how it used to look in previous versions of the browser; Blank, as its name suggests, just shows a blank screen.

Ed Wright, via email

WINDOWS 8

Fix Windows Update

I have seen quite a few people experiencing various Windows Update problems and I recently came across a tool that can sometimes help Windows 8 users. The problem is often due to corrupted Windows system files and repairing them can allow Windows Update to function properly again.

Press Windows+S to open the search pane and type command prompt. Rightclick Command Prompt in the search results and select 'Run as administrator'. In the command prompt window, type DISM.exe/Online/Cleanup-image/ Restorehealth.

You can find more information on this at bit.ly/update362. It's worth bookmarking the page, in case you have Windows Update problems in the future.

Dave Aspell, via email

MUSIC

Use iTunes in safe mode

If you are having problems with iTunes, it might be worth starting it in Safe Mode to see if it makes a difference. To do this, hold down Ctrl+Shift as you double-click the iTunes icon to start the program, then keep them held down until you see the Safe Mode message. This disables any add-ons and other extras, so if iTunes now works OK, you'll know that the problem you were having is caused by something you've added.

G Richards, via email



Start iTunes in Safe Mode to avoid problems with add-ons and plug-ins



Readers' Helpdesk

Our pick of the best solutions posted on our reader forums. Visit forum.webuser.co.uk - it's friendly and free!

SECURITY

Why does Firefox flag a Java update as a security risk?

......

I am trying unsuccessfully to use the word-cloud generator Wordle (www .wordle.net). Although I have the latest version of Java installed, a message appears asking me to install Java SE 8 U. I have no idea what this is and Firefox is warning me that it's a security risk. Can anyone shed any light on this? Are there any other programs that I might be able to use instead?

Minnehaha, Web User Forums



Visit bit.ly/gallery362 to see a collection of word clouds made with Tagxedo

You say you already have the latest version of Java installed, but Java SE 8 (the SE stands for Standard Edition) is actually the most recent version for Windows Vista, 7 and 8, so downloading the update from the official site (bit.ly/ javase362) should fix any problems you're having.

If you're still not sure about using Wordle, try searching Google for 'Wordle alternatives'. This produces several reputable word-cloud generators. My personal favourite is Tagxedo (bit.ly/ tagxedo362), which is capable of producing some impressive results. Once you've installed it, simply click the Load link to start using your own words. You can customise the results using the Respins and Options sections.

Stewart 40 and Moonshine, Web User **Forums**

FILES

How can I transfer music from Android to iPod?

Can anyone recommend a program that will let my daughter transfer music from her Android smartphone to an iPod Nano? She can do this via her PC, if necessary.

Tonyl, Web User Forums

You can move the files from your phone to a PC by connecting the two with a USB cable and selecting the mode that allows you to browse the phone as a

mass-storage device. Alternatively, you could use a cloud service such as Dropbox (www.dropbox.com) or Google Drive (drive.google.com) to move the files from your phone. Most laptops have Bluetooth, so you could possibly use this, too.

Once you've done that, I'd suggest using iTunes to transfer the music to the iPod. Apple's iPod 101 page at bit.ly/itunes362 tells you which file



Navigate to your phone's Music folder to copy

formats are compatible and you'll need to import the tracks into your iTunes library before you can move them.

If you're worried that your files aren't compatible, you might want to try Wondershare TunesGo Retro (bit.ly/ tunes362), which converts incompatible files to suitable formats, before transferring the music to your iPod.

difarn, izzit, Web User Forums

WEB

Why won't a National Geographic web page load?

The December issue of National Geographic includes an advertisement promoting the Lumia 830 smartphone. One of the magazine's photographers used it to record his visits to the seven natural wonders of the world, so I thought it would be interesting to see the results. However, my first attempt to visit the web page

It's just you. http://webuser.co.uk is up. Check another site? Short URL at involve

Use www.downforeveryoneorjustme.com to check if websites are down or not

(www.nationalgeographic.com/

microsoft) showing the images returned the message "Not Found: link has been moved or does not exist." When I tried to visit it again, a message appeared stating that I did not have permission to view the page from my browser, regardless of which browser I used. Can anyone suggest how I might resolve this problem?

FratPark, Web User Forums

The link works fine for me in Firefox, so it's most likely that the website was down, regardless of who was trying to look at it or what browser they were using. You can try using the handy website www.downforeveryoneorjustme .com to check if a website is down or not in the future.

> Difarn, Moonshine and uncleub, Web **User Forums**









Star Email

Online stores should be clearer about delivery

did most of my Christmas shopping online, which was very convenient, but I frequently became irritated at sites that failed to make clear their delivery costs and times until I reached the checkout. It is very frustrating to go all the way through filling in your details in a long online form, only to have an extra fiver added to the price just before you click the final button. It's equally annoying to place an order and find out that the item won't be dispatched for another week.

Why can't these shops be more upfront about the total cost of buying from them and the length of time it will take to get your stuff? I think it's because they know you won't bother to cancel once you've gone through all the hassle of entering your details. One



thing I ordered didn't even arrive in time for Christmas because the shop was deceptive about how long delivery would take. I suppose they would say they don't tell you delivery costs and times until late on because they offer a choice of

delivery options, for example Free, Standard and Express, but it can't be that hard to include the choices in a drop-down menu on the product page. Even Amazon, which is usually pretty good at providing delivery costs and estimates, can sometimes catch you out when you buy something from one of its Marketplace

I know this is a "first world problem". but I still think it should be addressed or customers will be forced back onto the high street where at least we can see the true cost of what we're paying for. Mind you, that also means queues, crowds, rude shop assistants and cold, wet weather, so I'd much rather they just fixed the delivery information problem on websites.

Owen Hanson, via email

Hiding Android bloatware works a treat

I would just like to say thanks for the excellent article in issue 359 (bit.ly/ webuser359) about fixing the worst Android problems, in particular the advice about how to deal with bloatware on your phone or tablet. I have so much crap on my Nexus 7 that I'd like to get rid



of but I can't because Google makes it impossible to do so without rooting the tablet. I downloaded the Disable Bloatware app (bit.ly/

disable359) straight away and hid all the stuff I don't need. At least I know now how to hide these pesky apps and stop them consuming resources, even if they can't be completely uninstalled.

Seanoc, Web User Forums

Get your facts right about Tesco's terrific Hudl

In response to Babbo45's email in Issue 360 (bit.ly/webuser360), 'The Hudl can't hold a candle to Lenovo' - oh yes it can. It costs £65 (with Tesco Clubcard points) compared to £112; it offers full HD, Bluetooth 4 and dual-band Wi-Fi; and it has good speakers and very good GPS. Also, as far as I know, you don't have to 'mount' the microSD card (whatever that means).

Babbo45 should read the specifications before rushing into ill-informed print regarding a tablet about which they clearly know little.

Jim, via email



Why the BFI Player won't work in Firefox

In Issue 359, your 'Site of the Fortnight' was the excellent BFI player. Unfortunately, if you use a Mozilla browser, you will be unable to play films you have purchased, although free films and clips are okay and other browsers such as Chrome and Safari are not affected.



The problem is due to DRM (Digital Rights Management), and the BFI isn't sure when it will be resolved. I managed to get a refund from the BFI and have suggested that it highlights this problem on its homepage.

Wolfie, Web User Forums

Barry's bang-on about the back-up problem

Congratulations to Barry Collins on his excellent article in Issue 359, bemoaning Windows' lack of any decent back-up system. Our computers do indeed contain some of our most precious documents and pictures. I'm a published poet and my current laptops contain all my work from the last 15 years - and



You can let us know your views and opinions via:

webuser@dennis.co.uk, www.facebook.com/webusermagazine, www.twitter.com/webusermagazine and forum.webuser.co.uk

some very expensive publicity photos. Of course I have hard copies, but now everyone wants almost everything in digital format.

I do back up documents and photos to CDs (it's a laborious process because Windows has never worked well with discs!) and I also now put a further copy of important files on OneDrive. But I have never even attempted to back up my system. So I entirely agree with Barry that Microsoft urgently needs to develop easy back-up methods, for files and a



computer's system, to back-up to hardware and to the 'cloud'. Please keep telling them, Barry!

Alison Brackenbury, via email

Barry's out of order about the Amazon Fire Phone

Frankly, Barry Collins can shove it if he doesn't like the

Amazon Fire Phone (Page 404, Issue 360). There's nothing wrong with how it works and it's easy to use. I bet he is the sort of person who spends £700 on an iPhone when you could buy a Kindle Fire Phone for only £199 before Christmas. I am sick of people slagging it



off when they haven't even used it. The only thing wrong with the Fire phone is that there aren't as many apps as for other phones, but there still are enough to be going on with.

Rhys Davies, via email

Why I've switched from Chrome to Firefox

I just want to make a comment about Firefox and Google Chrome after receiving Issue 359 of *Web User*. First, I must say that at 68, I am no tech whizz-kid. I first looked into using a computer in 2008, which is quite late in life to learn, and I have gleaned most of my knowledge through mistakes (being self-taught), from magazines like yours and from what I have dared to experiment with.

I have always used Chrome because I felt the browser is safe, and also because I have a Gmail account. I still have Chrome installed, but I have switched to Firefox on each of my



WOULD YOU LIKE FACEBOOK TO ADD A DISLIKE BUTTON?

It's a great idea, I'm all for that. Let's give the thumbs down to the totally banal and mundane crap that litters Facebook.

Geoffrey Boow

Yes! I'd never stop using it.

Thomas West

I don't care, but if it balanced out unwanted 'likes', then who knows, it could be okay.

Richard Bond

Being able to express a wider range of emotions would be good. Sometimes there are posts made where you don't want or need to comment, but you still want to show appreciation of it. Sometimes a 'like' isn't the right emotion to convey.

John Wells

No. It encourages negativity and there's enough of that on social media as it is. The only time a 'dislike' would be needed is if it was for a status that said someone was ill or had bad news.

Emmy UpTo-NoGood

W HICH MICROSOFT OFFICE PROGRAM DO YOU USE THE MOST?

Word. It's a college student's companion.

Matt McCallion

Word followed by Excel. I don't really use any of the others.

Adam Law

Word for letters and reports. I do more writing than figurework or presentations.

Lynn Sharpe

Outlook and Excel at work, Word at home. That's just the way it happens.

Martin Walker @MartinWalker666

Word followed by Excel. I use them when running my business. I own every version of Office since 1997.

Chris Armstrong

Since I started working for myself, I've not been tied down to any of these. I always used OpenOffice, then LibreOffice on Windows. Now I simply use Pages, Numbers and so on (which are all now free) on my Mac.

James McGinnis

ORE PEOPLE NOW USE INSTAGRAM THAN TWITTER. WHICH ONE DO YOU PREFER?

Twitter. I used Instagram for a while, but couldn't suss it out.

Trace Ford

I use both, and prefer Twitter. But overall I prefer Facebook.

lain James Lewis

Twitter by a country mile. Instagram is pointless. Overall I prefer Ello (https://ello.co) because it has a rock-solid privacy policy.

Jack @onejackgold









three computers because I had to update Google manually when I noticed it running slow. It also crashed quite frequently, which persuaded

me to make the change. I now use DuckDuckGo as my search engine, Adblock Plus to block ads and Firefox's new 'forget' button to clear my browsing history. I use the browser toolbar for quick access to my email accounts and Facebook, and I have set Bing as my homepage. I also use a master password to protect all my saved passwords, which gives me double the security. So, for all these reasons, I am a Firefox convert.

Nicholas Carter, Facebook

We should be grateful that **CCleaner** is free

In reply to John Lockett's email in Issue 360, 'Why I'm giving CCleaner the

brush-off', I think it's a bit strong to compare the program to ransomware just because of the pop-up about the paid-for version. I've been using CCleaner for years and this has never bothered me. In fact, I can't even remember the last time I saw it or indeed if I ever have. It's a free program, for goodness sake, so it seems petty to complain that it



occasionally suggests that you might want to upgrade to help support its development. Unlike many

free clean-up

tools, CCleaner offers a full set of features and doesn't come bundled with junk, so Mr Lockett should be grateful for such a safe, efficient and useful program. It's certainly less restrictive than, say, Glary Utilities, which teases you with tools that aren't available unless you buy the Pro edition.

And as for saying that clicking the pop-up "completely disabled the program", I find this very hard to believe and it makes me wonder if Mr Lockett was even using the real version of CCleaner or a dodgy imitation!

Spencer Rowe, via email

Rummage tested my patience

Did anyone else try the Desktop-search tool Rummage (getrummage.com), which was featured on page 40 of Web User Issue 360? I thought I'd give it a go



but on the third day of it scanning, I have given up. It seemed like a good idea at the time, but it made me grind what few teeth I have left.

Richard Bond, Facebook

You can't really compare them - they are different. Twitter is the one I spend most time on, with occasional trips over to Instagram. They both have their place.

Robert Slater @Mistyrobert

HAT DO YOU THINK OF FACEBOOK'S PLAN TO FILTER **EMBARRASSING DRUNKEN** PHOTOS (bit.ly/drunken362)?

......

I call it censorship. If Facebook becomes too strict, people will go elsewhere. If people want to post their drunken photos online, that's their own choice, and no one should meddle with that. I think Facebook has become too powerful and should be stopped, just as they did with Google in Europe.

Dave Prcovich

On reflection, it's often only after seeing images of themselves when bladdered that leads many of our young to think about their drinking.

Richard Morgan

It isn't going to stop pictures being posted. What it will do is ask if you're sure you want them posted first. The

poster can still post if they so wish. I'm sure some will be happy they were asked the question.

John Wells

I already have Facebook set up to ask me if a photo can appear on my timeline. It saves a lot of embarrassment!

Isabelle Marsden

ILL YOU BUY A **CHROMECAST IN 2015?**

You could just buy an HDML cable from the pound shop, then place your computer by the TV.

Gordon Little

Why be tied to the computer with a cable when you can cast directly from your tablet or phone wirelessly? Yes, it's cheaper, but not as convenient! We have three Chromecasts now.

Caroline Rooney

My main problem is that it more than likely won't work with my Galaxy Tab 2.

Gerrit Max

The Chromecast is the tool of the Devil.

But yes, I probably will buy one.

Ewan Morris

AN YOU REMEMBER THE **FIRST GAME YOU PLAYED ONLINE?**

.....

Darkness: Episode 1 (bit.ly/ darkness362). It was pretty scary at the time.

Matt McCallio

Slingshot Santa (bit.ly/santa362).

Si Mellor

Space Invaders (bit.ly/space362). I still play it.

Chris Cole

Lego Studio Backlot (www.templar .com/games/backlot/LegoStudios .htm). I spent quite a lot of time playing that game. It's a shame not many people remember it.

Jack Dodds

It was one of those point-and-click games. It was too hard so I gave up in the end, but I've played games since.

Ryan Lerner

A Page 404

Barry Collins rails against the BBC for charging us twice for its TV programmes

Give us back our **BBC TV shows!**

know it's a bit late for Christmas cracker jokes, but here's a good one: what's the difference between the BBC iPlayer and a parking ticket? Only one of them is a state-sanctioned rip-off. Not funny? No, you're right, it didn't make me laugh either.

If you get caught parking on a double-yellow line, you'll be hit with a £60 Penalty Charge Notice, reduced to £30 if you pay within 14 days. Miss a program on the iPlayer and you'll also be hit with a penalty charge after 30 days, because you'll have to pay again to watch it.

Take, for example, the BBC's big showpiece drama series, The Fall, which concluded shortly before Christmas. At the time of writing, in the third week of December, it was five episodes through the second series. Already, episode one of the second series has dropped off the iPlayer, having passed its 30-day window, and the whole of the first series has long gone. The only way you can (legally) catch up now is if you've

already recorded it or you buy it online.

Seduced by the promise of Gillian Anderson's softly spoken detective, there are plenty of people who've done just that. At the time of writing, the first series of The Fall is at Number 2 in the iTunes TV series charts, while Series 2

is at Number 4, at a combined cost of almost £26. Or, to put that another way, almost a fifth of your licence fee

again to watch something you've already paid for.

Netflix subscribers may at this point be suppressing a wry grin, smug in the knowledge that much of the BBC's output ends up on the £7-a-month streaming service. Well, titter ye not because the second series of The Fall is indeed coming to Netflix this month, but not in the UK - only the US and Latin America. After all, the BBC wouldn't want to stop people paying for it on

iTunes or spending their Christmas money on the DVD boxset (released Boxing Day).

It's not just The Fall, of course. All three series of Sherlock will cost you £15 each on iTunes, the last series of Doctor Who adds another £20 the bill, the six

episodes of Sir David We're being priced out of Story cost £13 and even one-offs such as the unspeakably brilliant Marvellous - Toby Jones'

> portrayal of Stoke City's kit man, Neil Baldwin - costs a tenner. We're being priced out of what is arguably our richest national archive.

what is arguably our richest

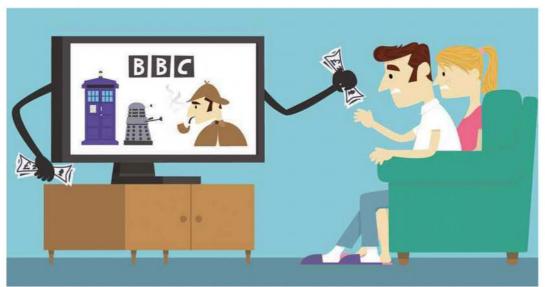
national archive 🥊 🕊

I've got no problem with the BBC charging international audiences for its content - after all, they haven't paid a penny towards its production in the first place. But when I've already contributed well over £2,000 to the BBC over the course of my adult life, I resent being asked to pay even more to watch its

> programmes, just because I missed an arbitrary iPlayer window.

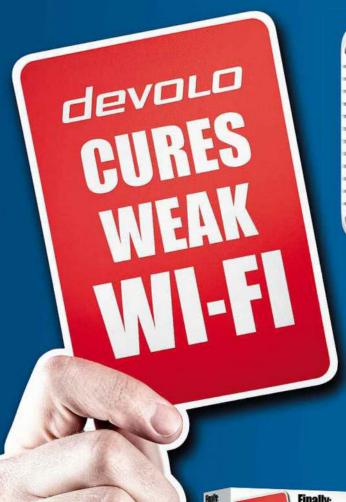
Nothing should expire on the iPlayer, in the same way Dennis Publishing has no right to knock on your door and demand this magazine back after 30 days. You paid for it, you keep it. Enter your annually renewed licence-fee number and you should have access to the entire BBC archive on demand. These are our programmes and the BBC has no right to sell them back to us.





Ilustration: Andrew Torrens

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